

# PRSSA



2025–2026

# Career Resource Manual

# Table of Contents

Careers .....	3
Networking .....	5
Resumes .....	8
Cover Letters .....	9
Portfolios and LinkedIn .....	10
The Interview .....	12
Negotiation and Salary .....	14
Professional Transition .....	15
General Career Tips .....	16
Appendix .....	17

# Careers

Many industries employ public relations practitioners, and charting your course can be challenging. This section lists many areas where public relations practitioners can help organizations and companies. Under each sector is a list of potential job functions that can be used to search for roles. Public relations is a vast and dynamic industry, so this is not a comprehensive list of all titles and opportunities in the field, but it provides a solid background to figure out what areas of the industries suit your interests.

To find your niche, consult with professionals who work in the area you are interested in and talk to your professors, as they usually have a variety of experiences. Learning as much as possible about various public relations careers will help you find the right fit for your skills and interests.

**Agencies and Public Relations Firms:** This client-based area of public relations serves all types of organizations such as businesses, nonprofits, government agencies and high-profile individuals. Often, firms conduct programming, research and campaigns, interact with the media and write/edit content. In a firm you can expect to work on a variety of projects for multiple clients.

- Account coordinator.
- Account executive/manager.
- Account supervisor.
- Senior account executive.

**Corporate (Global) Communications:** This area of public relations and strategic communications often means working for a company in-house. Responsibilities include trend analysis, issues management and public opinion evaluation. These roles can be responsible for messaging to internal and external audiences with a focus on maintaining overall brand reputation.

- Investor relations.
- Employee communications.
- CEO communications.
- Media relations.

**Government and Political Communications:** Political public relations practitioners assist candidates running for office with speechwriting, strategizing, policy and publicity. They also often serve as strategic advisers to elected officials.

- Political campaign strategist.
- Press secretary.
- Investor/donor relations.
- Fundraising.

**Health care:** In these roles, practitioners can be tasked with many different jobs. From promoting new medicines to writing about scientific breakthroughs, health care practitioners share medical information with their organization's publics.

- Lobbying.
- Hospital communications.
- Insurance communications.
- Pharmaceutical communications.
- Community relations.
- Fundraising.

**Insights and Analytics:** In these roles, practitioners track trends and media sentiment around their brand or organization. Although all types of public relations require research, those focused on insights and analytics tend to develop organized campaigns and research projects to monitor and predict conversations.

- Analyst.
- Market researcher.

**Nonprofit Organizations:** Public relations practitioners can be valuable in a variety of nonprofit organizations such as schools and universities, hospitals and human and social service agencies. These roles can focus on awareness programs, fundraising programs, social media and volunteer recruiting.

- Communications coordinator/manager.
- Social media specialist.
- Fundraising.
- Volunteer relations.
- Community relations.

**Public Affairs:** Public affairs focuses on issues of politics and policy. Often, in the area of public affairs, practitioners advocate for issues of public interest. Public affairs can be practiced in an agency, government or corporate setting. Many agencies have public affairs clients; most corporations have government relations and public affairs teams; and the communicators in the government and military have clear policy aspects to their jobs.

- Lobbying.
- Public information officer.
- Military public affairs officer.
- Nongovernmental organizations.

**Some specific industries where these public relations roles may be needed include:**

- Banking and finance.
- Entertainment and music.
- Food and beverage.
- Higher education.
- Manufacturing.
- Sports.
- Travel and tourism.
- Transportation and aviation.
- Technology.

# Networking

Networking is a supportive system of sharing information and services among individuals who have a common interest. Essentially, networking is creating relationships with others in the industries and organizations that you are interested in.

## The Benefits of Networking

Networking can help connect you with career opportunities such as internships or jobs, now or in the future. Often, after creating and nurturing relationships, those industry professionals can introduce you to someone else who is hiring or can give you information about organizations that have openings.

## Create a Spreadsheet of Contacts

As you grow your network by attending conferences, hearing from speakers and going to PRSSA Chapter meetings, keep a list of the professionals you have met. With careful follow-up and attention to detail, these are all people who can become part of your professional network.

A network spreadsheet is simply a way to keep your contacts organized and in one place. While you accumulate many contacts, actually reaching out to anyone is difficult without knowing how to connect with them — a problem easily solved by creating a network spreadsheet.

**Your spreadsheet could include:**

- Contact name.
- Company.
- Title.
- Email address.
- The nature of this connection (i.e., met at the PRSSA International Conference Career Development Exhibition).
- A comments section that details any meetings you have had or emails you have sent.
- Where they are based.
- Their industry or the type of public relations they do.

**Here is a sample spreadsheet:**

Where You Met	Company Name	Location	Industry	Contact Name	Title
2023 District Conference	Edelman	NYC	Agency	Name	Account Executive
PRSSA Leadership Assembly	Boys and Girls Club of America	Atlanta	Nonprofit	Name	Communications Manager
PRSSA Meeting Spring 2024	ESPN	Austin, Texas	Sports	Name	Media Relations Specialist

## Reaching Out to Contacts

It can be intimidating to reach out to public relations professionals. Many of them have been working in the industry for a long time, and students often are afraid to take that first step. Within PRSA and PRSSA, people are happy to help a student who is looking to begin their career. All professionals had to start somewhere.

When you begin writing the initial email or LinkedIn message after meeting at a conference or event, be articulate, speak naturally and with confidence.

Here is an example of what you can say to a potential contact:

“Hello, \_\_Their Name\_\_\_\_\_,

My name is   Your Name   and I enjoyed meeting you/hearing you speak at   Conference/Event  . I am a student at   Your University   looking to work in the public relations industry. If you are available for a short 30-minute chat in the next few weeks, I would love to hear more about your role at   Company  . I look forward to hearing from you.

Remember, once you begin developing a relationship with professionals, colleagues and friends — or anyone for that matter — you must nurture that relationship. Maintain communication by sharing updates on your semesters at school or opportunities you have taken advantage of. Ask them about their role and experiences. Your first ask should not be about receiving an internship or job. Instead, nurture the relationship, ask for career advice and naturally bring up your interest in working for their company or organization.

**Pro Tip:** “Lead with the value you can provide to others. Focus on relationship-based networking, not short-term transactions with people. Especially in the world of PR, relationships and supporting others goes a long way.” – *Monique Kelley Gigliotti, Associate Professor – Strategic Communication, and PRSSA Faculty Adviser, Boston University*

## The Art of the Follow-up

The best networking happens after a networking event. If you want to make a lasting impact on a professional and enhance your career, following up with intentionality and specificity will help you stand out. Set up a time to continue your conversation or send an email to thank the professional for their time.

**Pro Tip:** You can set up Google Alerts on people you’ve met or their companies. If they appear in the news, you can use this as a talking point to start the next conversation with them.

## PRSSA Resources To Connect With Professionals

- **Attending Conferences:** Conferences like ICON, District Conferences and the PRSSA National Leadership Assembly can be great opportunities to meet and network with professionals and other students. Come prepared with a notebook, business cards (or QR code with your contact information) and an open mind to make the most of these events.
- **Champions for PRSSA:** Champions help PRSSA members prepare for entering the workforce, connect them with professionals in their area and help them understand more about the public relations profession. These PRSA members have signed up to give back to students and contain a wealth of knowledge about the industry.

- **Career and Internship Fairs:** PRSSA offers an annual Virtual Career and Internship Fair where students can network with professionals and learn about more opportunities in the career field. Also, attending internship and career fairs at your university and in your city can help you connect with local professionals.
- **PRSA Events:** Connect with your PRSA Chapter and host joint events with students and professionals. If your PRSA Chapter is holding an event, see if they have a discounted student ticket or offer scholarships for students.
- **PRSA Member Directory:** Through the PRSA Member Directory on [MyPRSA](#) you can search for members by location, company, industry and more. This can be an asset to finding connections if you know there are specific industries or companies you would like to work for.
- **PRSA Mentor Connect:** Through this resource on [MyPRSA](#) you can sign up to be a mentee. Mentees will be able to view mentor profiles and request a mentor based on their preferences.

# Resumes

## Resume Basics

The first step in writing a resume is to make a list of everything significant that you have done professionally. Review what you have written and try to establish a pattern of interests. It is important to create a snapshot of your experiences and interests so that you can pique the interest of potential employers.

Employers only spend approximately 15–30 seconds looking at a resume for the first time. Many companies are now scanning resumes into a database, so you need to keep your resume simple.

A great resume is tailored to the job listing and company you are applying for. By using the same key words and phrases to describe your experiences, your resume shows employers that you are fit for the job.

### Four Tips for Writing a Great Resume

1. **Keep it to one page.** Think of ways to phrase your experiences into a few key bullet points.
2. **Quantify your experiences.** Use numbers to back up your impact and the lessons you learned in the role. Think about impressions or reach of articles you wrote, pickup of news stories you wrote, engagement on social media, etc. Be as specific as possible.
3. **Organize it chronologically.** Put your most recent experience at the top and go back in time as you go down the page. If you don't have a lot of internship experience, start with an education section. You may think about highlighting classes you took to increase your acumen. Don't forget to include any related PRSSA work as experience!
4. **Use action words.** See the next page for a full list of action words to describe your experiences.

**Pro Tip:** Don't put a photo of yourself on the resume. Think about if you really need an objective. A lot of times it doesn't add to the content of the resume and takes up space. You don't need to put "References requested" on a resume, or your home address. Save that space!

**Pro Tip:** "When applying for a role, send PDFs of your resume, cover letter, etc. (not Word docs) and clean up the file names!" – *Ann Mulvany, Co-Owner and COO, Slide Nine Agency*

For more resume tips, visit the [PRSA Jobcenter](#) and [Harvard University Mignone Center for Career Services](#) website.

## Resume Appearance

Along with effective organization and content, the appearance of your resume can influence whether you are asked back for an interview. When creating your resume, keep the following points in mind:

### Font, format and feel:

- Keep the font easy to read, with clean lines and letter sizing between nine and 12 points, depending on the content. Clearly list your name at the top of the document.
- The format should highlight your accomplishments, not draw attention away from them. Using bullet points will best separate your duties and skills.
- When printing a resume to bring to interviews or job fairs, use resume quality paper. This is thicker than traditional printer paper and can be white, off-white or cream.



## Action Words

Successful resumes use action words to describe the contributions that they made to an organization. Instead of saying that you were responsible for certain tasks, say that you initiated a successful new program or that you generated new business leads.

These are some of the action words you can include in your resume:

- Addressed
- Analyzed
- Arranged
- Assisted
- Attained
- Budgeted
- Chartered
- Coached
- Collected
- Communicated
- Completed
- Computed
- Coordinated
- Created
- Delegated
- Designed
- Documented
- Edited
- Enforced
- Established
- Evaluated
- Expanded
- Facilitated
- Formulated
- Gathered
- Generated
- Guided
- Implemented
- Improved
- Increased
- Initiated
- Interpreted
- Maintained
- Managed
- Mentored
- Observed
- Obtained
- Operated
- Organized
- Participated
- Performed
- Produced
- Publicized
- Recruited
- Reduced
- Served
- Utilized
- Volunteered
- Wrote

# Cover Letters

The purpose of a cover letter is to obtain an interview. The focus should be on your qualifications and what you would bring to the company. Reading the job listing is a great way to figure out what experiences to highlight in your cover letter. If the cover letter is a test, think of the job listing as the answer key. The best cover letters connect former experiences listed on your resume with the exact needs of the company or organization as listed in the job posting.

A cover letter is directed at a specific person and position within a company, and personally addresses the company's needs. If you cannot find the hiring manager's name for your cover letter, put To Whom It May Concern or Hiring Manager.

**Pro Tip:** Use LinkedIn or Google to find out who the recruiter/hiring manager is.

It's always advantageous to research and write a cover letter that includes the company, hiring manager and position for which you are applying. Sometimes, however, writing a specific cover letter is not an option. In these cases, write a general cover letter that focuses on not only your qualifications but also what you would bring to the company.

**Pro Tip:** "Let your resume list your accomplishments and let your cover letter introduce yourself to the hiring manager. Make your cover letter professionally personal. Share an anecdote that is job-related, share something you learned the hard way. Make yourself human and make yourself stand out. Don't rehash your resume." – *Mary Ellen Smalley, Director of Brand and Cause Awareness, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption*

## Four Tips for Writing a Great Cover Letter

1. Do your research. Understand the company and role you are applying for. If someone referred you to the position, let the company know in the cover letter.
2. Get to the point. Make an immediate connection to the position or company.
3. Show your skills. Your cover letter should show the skills that helped you achieve the accomplishments listed on your resume.
4. Check your grammar and spelling, then check again. Professional, clear writing is the key to a good cover letter, especially in communications.

# Portfolios and LinkedIn

A professional portfolio is a reflection of you as a professional. It showcases your professional development, skills in public relations tasks and accomplishments in the industry thus far. Your LinkedIn page can serve as a portfolio, but many students choose to create a website to showcase their portfolio.

Website platforms that are frequently used to create portfolios include Wix, Weebly, Squarespace and Adobe portfolio.

## The Benefits of Building a Professional Portfolio

- Marketing your public relations capabilities in job interviews.
- Negotiating promotions and raises.
- Applying for bonuses, scholarships or grants.
- Documenting the quality of your professional development.

Gathering material is the most challenging aspect of putting together a good portfolio. The best advice is to keep everything that you work on during internships, PRSSA and extracurricular activities; you can decide later what to include. Remember, keep editable versions of the documents so you can make adjustments later.

### Items typically found in professional public relations portfolios include:

- Resume.
- Evidence of specific skills such as leadership, writing and public speaking.
- Work samples produced during classes, internships, extra curriculars, Student-run Firm work, media writing, blogging, etc.
- Licenses or certifications.
- Awards and honors.

**Pro Tip:** Start keeping a folder with potential portfolio items from the first day of college and add to it. The list will change as your experience grows, but you'll have it in one place.

As you start an internship, keep a running list of all your projects with results so you have a full picture of everything you need to put in a resume later.

In your professional portfolio, you do not need to include everything that you wrote while in college — just the outstanding pieces that showcase your abilities. This will impress the employer more than a large portfolio that includes mediocre work alongside your best work.

## Using LinkedIn To Showcase Your Work

Posting on LinkedIn can be a great opportunity to share work you have done for a class or internship. This professional social media platform allows you to share your skills and accomplishments with a network of peers and professionals. When posting on LinkedIn, be descriptive but concise and ensure you proofread your posts. Your LinkedIn and portfolio are key aspects to your personal brand, and you want to ensure you are putting your best foot forward.

**Pro Tip:** Make sure your LinkedIn and resume match.

# The Interview

The most important part of interviewing is to ask yourself before you go into the interview what you want the interviewer to know about you. Having clear points that you would like to get across will keep you focused and concise. Take some time to review your resume, cover letter and any materials about the company that you think are important. These can include company values, mottos, social media accounts and press releases.

Before the interview, make sure that you know and understand the location of the interview. Arrive 15 minutes early. If meeting virtually, be conscious of your background.

## Traits of a Good Interviewee

- Is nice to all people they interact with from the parking agent to the interviewer.
- Shows genuine interest in the job.
- Articulates skills from previous experiences that would help them in this new role.
- Is dressed professionally.
- Is up to date on current events.
- Is considerate of the interviewer's time.
- Has a solid handshake.
- Has a focus, even if they do not know what to do in the future yet.
- Demonstrates confidence in abilities without being overconfident or arrogant.
- Does not leave the interview without asking a few great questions.

## Common Interview Questions

Many interviewers practice the STAR Method. STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action and Results. In these kinds of questions, interviewers want to learn how you respond to difficult situations and your ability to learn from experiences. STAR questions may sound like:

- Describe a time when you worked with a team to achieve a common goal.
- Tell me about a time when you failed.
- Talk about a time when you had to make a hard deadline.
- Share a time when you had to have a difficult conversation with a close friend or colleague.

### Interviewers also may ask more basic questions like:

- What is your greatest strength?
- What is your greatest weakness?
- Why do you want to work here?
- What makes you stand out from all of the other candidates?

## Using AI To Help You Prepare for an Interview

One way to anticipate questions that an interviewer may ask is to use generative artificial intelligence. Prompt the AI to write five to 10 questions for an interview based on the job description. These questions may not be the ones specifically asked by the interviewer, but can help you understand the role description and find stories that you can share that apply to what the company or organization is looking for.

## Questions for the Interviewer

A good candidate comes up with intelligent questions to ask throughout as well as at the end of an interview. Remember you also are interviewing them as much as they are interviewing you, so it's important to ask questions that you care about. Consider asking the below questions:

- What has your career path looked like within this company?
- What do you look for in an intern or employee?
- What is the company culture at this organization?
- What gets you excited about work every day?
- How do you promote work/life balance?
- Why is the position open?
- Is there anything else on your mind that I can address?

Remember, you also can ask questions unique to the organization or interviewer. For example, if you know your interviewer has extensive experience in internal communication, ask questions specifically about that experience. This will show two things: that you've done your research and that you are truly investing in becoming an employee at the organization.

After the interview, make a list of pros and cons about the job. Attach your notes to the information you have on the company. This may help in making a decision later. Always send a thank you afterward, thanking the interview team for their time and consideration. To truly stand out, an email AND handwritten thank you note can go a long way.

**Pro Tip:** “Ask more questions than you answer. Do everything you can to turn the interview into a discussion. Curiosity is a superpower, especially in entry-level positions.” – *Kelsey Nelson, Founder, Friday Night PR*

# Negotiation and Salary

The salary for an entry-level public relations job in the United States typically ranges from \$33,092 to \$69,443 per year, with an average salary of around \$47,937 per year. However, this can vary based on location, company size and other factors, according to Indeed.

When you receive the offer letter, salary is not the only thing you should look at. Benefits can make up a significant part of your compensation package. Because their value is often less obvious than the salary, it is important to carefully review this part of the contract.

**Some important questions to ask when you are reviewing your offer letter include:**

- What is the sick and vacation leave allowance?
- What are the premiums for health savings accounts?
- What types of insurance policies are available?
- What contributions will the company pay toward a pension or 401(k)?
- Are there any additional benefits offered, like travel reimbursements or paid time off?

**If you plan to negotiate your contract follow these five steps:**

**1. Do your research.**

- Market rate: Understand the average salary and benefits for the role and industry in your geographic location. Websites like Glassdoor, LinkedIn Salary and PayScale can provide valuable insights.
- Company standards: Research the company's compensation structure and benefits. This can sometimes be gleaned from company reviews, talking to current or former employees, or through industry reports.

**2. Evaluate the initial offer.**

- Break down the offer into salary, bonuses, benefits, work/life balance and any other perks. Make a list of what is important to you such as salary, vacation days, flexible working conditions or career development opportunities (e.g., if the organization will pay for your PRSA membership).

**3. Highlight your value.**

- Be able to articulate how your skills, experience and achievements justify a higher offer. Quantify your accomplishments and how they align with the company's needs.

**4. Initiate the conversation.**

- Express your enthusiasm for the role and the company and explain that you would like to discuss the offer further. Be specific about what you want to see changed in your offer letter.

**5. Understand their perspective.**

- Listen to the employer's response and be prepared for counteroffers or alternative solutions. Be willing to find a middle ground.

When you are ready to make a decision, be professional. If the offer meets your needs, accept it. If not, be prepared for the conversation and accept or decline based on your career goals and personal situation.

For more information about negotiating a job offer, check out this article: [hbr.org/2014/04/15-rules-for-negotiating-a-job-offer](https://hbr.org/2014/04/15-rules-for-negotiating-a-job-offer).

# Professional Transition

The fourth year of college is particularly stressful for students. Many students are waiting to graduate, and on top of completing their studies, are simultaneously beginning the job search. The transition from student to professional can, at times, be difficult. This page gives tips on how to make the transition process successful.

**Strengthen Your Network:** A solid network of professional contacts is a significant asset in any job search or professional transition. During your entire college career, you are building your network; however, at the start of your senior year, begin strategic efforts to connect with professionals in specializations that interest you. To build your network, attend PRSA Chapter meetings and events and conduct informational interviews.

**Informational Interviews:** At the start of your last year of college, begin scheduling informational interviews, also called coffee chats, with professionals in various positions at different companies that interest you. Inquire about the company, the hiring process, the work atmosphere and any other questions that you may have. This is an opportunity for you to get your questions answered and your name out there.

**Resume and Portfolio Review:** Reach out to your professional network, former professors, your university's career center and anyone else who you trust to look over your job application materials. Ensure that your resume is up to date and your portfolio is an overview of your full college and pre-professional experience.

**Certificate in Principles of Public Relations:** As you approach graduation, adding the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations to your resume could be the leg up you need to secure the position you want. The process, which is summarized on the Certificate's site, complements coursework and can be used to finish your college career on top.

**PRSA Associate Membership:** PRSSA members are eligible to join PRSA as an Associate Member up to five months before or two years after you graduate. Associate Member dues are \$67. As an Associate Member you receive a free, one-year membership in PRSA's New Professionals Section. New professionals will have the opportunity to involve themselves in PRSA Chapter activities and networking opportunities. If you choose to join your local PRSA Chapter, there may be additional Chapter dues.

**PRSA New Professionals Section:** The New Professionals Section is a community of PRSA members with less than three years' experience in the public relations profession that is dedicated to helping ease the transition into a professional career in public relations. This Section offers its members networking opportunities, access to New Professionals webinars and advanced professional development. Price: \$20 per year or free for PRSSA students.

## Benefits of New Professionals Section:

- Networking.
- Resources: articles and case studies.
- Webinars.
- Discounted networking events.
- Newsletter.
- Volunteer opportunities.

For more information regarding PRSA New Professionals, contact the Section chair.

# General Career Tips

The transition from student to professional is challenging; however, if you keep in mind these 10 tips, the transition will be much easier.

1. Strive for excellence in everything you do.
2. Cultivate your personal brand.
3. Raise your hand for new projects and take advantage of opportunities to learn through volunteer opportunities, shadowing others in the organization, in-house training, etc.
4. Stay true to your word.
5. Be flexible.
6. Listen to understand not to respond.
7. Take care of your mental and emotional wellbeing.
8. Do what you say you will do.
9. Be respectful of other people's time.
10. Never stop growing your network.

**Pro Tip:** It is incredibly important to get to know colleagues when you first start a new job. Learning more about the office culture, what your colleagues like to do in the city you live in and how to adapt to postgraduate work/life will ease the transition from college. Setting up coffee chats and eating lunch with coworkers can relieve some of the stress of starting a full-time position.

## Advice From the PRO's

"When it comes to all of it — the answer is no if you don't ask. So ask anyway. Whether it's asking someone to make a connection for you, or whether a job is available, or the types of benefits you are seeking, the answer is no if you don't ask. Why not ask (professionally and respectfully) and get a possible yes?" – *Reace Smith, Head of Communications and Brand, Liberty Steel U.S.*

"Understand analytics! Data-driven decision-making is a critical skill. Knowing how to interpret analytics and measure the impact of your campaigns is essential. I wish I had taken more courses or workshops on analytics to better understand how to leverage data to drive PR strategies." – *Jennifer Kramer, APR, AMPP*

"Life, career and success are nonlinear. The journey **is** the destination!" – *Andrea Bunce, APR, Manager, Communications Business Partner, Cardinal Health*

"Network, network, network! And work to keep nurturing those relationships." – *Katie Logan, Adviser, Media and Public Relations, OhioHealth*

"I wish I would have taken a broadcast class or participated in the on-campus television or radio station. I've found myself giving interviews so many times and had to learn on-the-job rather than walking in prepared." – *Kelli West, APR, TMP, Senior Manager, Division of Tourism/Chickasaw Country*



### First and Last Name

Email • Phone • LinkedIn • Portfolio

#### Education

University City, State  
Major/Degree Month/Year Started – Month/Year Ended  
Minor  
Awards and Honor Rolls, GPA: If you are proud of it.

#### Work Experience

**Student-run Firm** Start – End Date

Position

- Overview of role.
- Description of work.
- Include active words and quantifiable statistics.

**Internship Experience** Start – End Date

Position

- Overview of role.
- Description of work.
- Include active words and quantifiable statistics.

**PRSSA Leadership Role** Start – End Date

Position

- Overview of role.
- Description of work.
- Include active words and quantifiable statistics.

**Volunteer Experience** Start – End Date

Position

- Overview of role.
- Description of work.
- Include active words and quantifiable statistics.

**Other Experience** Start – End Date

Position

- Overview of role.
- Description of work.
- Include active words and quantifiable statistics.

#### Awards and Recognitions

Scholarships | On-campus awards

#### Additional Involvement

Other organizations | Not necessary

#### Technicals Skills

Certifications | Special Skills | AP Style | Research Methods

## Sample Cover Letter

### First and Last Name

Email • Phone • LinkedIn • Portfolio

---

Month, Day, Year

Hiring Manager's Name

Company Name

Address Line One

Address Line Two

Dear Hiring Manager's Name,

I am a student at **university name** studying **major and other relevant areas of study**. I am writing to convey my interest in the **job title** position at **company name**. As a dedicated student with a proven commitment to the public relations industry, I believe that I would be a great fit for this role. **Talk about your excitement to learn and the contributions you would make to the company.**

**Use this paragraph to describe your previous work experiences and how they would help in the role you are applying for. Be specific and try to keep it limited to two previous experiences.**

In conclusion, my academic achievements, hands-on experiences and leadership roles would make me a great fit for **company name**. **If you received a reference for the role from someone, include it here and share what they like about their job that makes you want to work there.**

**Share about why you are interested in the company and the specific initiatives you are interested in.** Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my interest in this role with you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,  
**Your Name**

# Commonly Asked Interview Questions

## Warm-up Questions

- What made you apply for this position?
- How did you hear about this job opening?
- Briefly, would you summarize your work history and education for me?

## Work History

- What special aspects of your work experience have prepared you for this job?
- Can you describe for me one of two of your most important accomplishments?
- How much supervision have you typically received in your previous job?
- Describe for me one or two of the biggest disappointments in your work history?
- Why are you leaving your present job? (or, Why did you leave your last job?)
- What is important to you in a company? What things do you look for in an organization?

## Job Performance

- Everyone has strengths and weaknesses as workers. What are your strong points for this job?
- What would you say are areas needing improvement?
- How did your supervisor on your most recent job evaluate your job performance? What were some of the good points and bad points of that rating?
- When you have been told, or discovered for yourself, a problem in your job performance, what have you typically done? Can you give me an example?
- Do you prefer working alone or in groups?
- What kind of people do you find it most difficult to work with? Why?
- Starting with your last job, tell me about any of your achievements that were recognized by your superiors.
- Can you give me an example of your ability to manage or supervise others?
- What are some things you would like to avoid in a job? Why?
- In your previous job, what kind of pressures did you encounter?
- What would you say is the most important thing you are looking for in a job?
- What are some of the things on your job you feel you have done particularly well or in which you have achieved the greatest success? Why do you feel this way?

## Creativity

- In your work experience, what have you done that you consider truly creative?
- Can you think of a problem you have encountered when the old solutions didn't work and when you came up with new solutions?
- Of your creative accomplishments big or small, at work or home, what gave you the most satisfaction?
- What kind of problems have people recently called on you to solve? Tell me what you have devised.

## Decisiveness

- Do you consider yourself to be thoughtful, analytical or do you usually make up your mind fast? Give an example. (Watch time taken to respond.)
- What was your most difficult decision in the last six months? What made it difficult?
- The last time you did not know what decision to make, what did you do?
- How do you go about making an important decision affecting your career?
- What was the last major problem that you were confronted with? What action did you take on it?

## **Range of Interests**

- What organizations do you belong to?
- Tell me specifically what you do in the civic activities in which you participate. (Leading questions in selected areas, i.e. sports, economics, current events, finance.)
- How do you keep up with what's going on in your company/your industry/your profession?

## **Motivation**

- What is your professional goal?
- Can you give me examples of experience on the job that you felt were satisfying?
- Do you have a long- and short-term plan for your department? Is it realistic? Did you achieve it last year?
- Describe how you determine what constitutes top priorities in the performance of your job.

## **Work Standards**

- What are your standards of success in your job?
- In your position, how would you define doing a good job? On what basis was your definition determined?
- When judging the performance of your subordinate, what factors or characteristics are most important to you?

## **Leadership**

- In your present job, what approach do you take to get your people together to establish a common approach to a problem?
- What approach do you take in getting your people to accept your ideas or department goals?
- What specifically do you do to set an example for your employees?
- How frequently do you meet with your immediate subordinates as a group?
- What sort of leader do your people feel you are? Are you satisfied?
- How do you get people who do not want to work together to establish a common approach to a problem? If you do not have much time and they hold seriously differing views, what would be your approach?
- How would you describe your basic leadership style? Give specific examples of how you practice this?
- Do you feel you work more effectively on a one-to-one basis or in a group situation?
- Have you ever led a task force or committee or any group who doesn't report to you, but from whom you have to get work? How did you do it? What were the satisfactions and disappointments? How would you handle the job differently?

## **Oral Presentation Skills**

- Have you ever done any public or group speaking? Recently? Why? How did it go?
- Have you made any individual presentations recently? How did you prepare?

## **Written Communication Skills**

- Would you rather write a report or give a verbal report? Why?
- What kind of writing have you done? For a group? For an individual?
- What is the extent of your participation in major reports that have to be written?

## **Flexibility**

- What was the most important idea or suggestion you received recently from your employees? What happened as a result?
- What do you think about the continuous changes in company operating policies and procedures?
- How effective has your company been in adapting its policies to fit a changing environment?
- What was the most significant change made in your company in the last six months that directly affected you, and how successfully do you think you implemented this change?

- What were some of the things about your last job that you found most difficult to do?
- What are some of the problems you encounter in doing your job? Which one frustrates you the most? What do you usually do about it?
- What are some things you particularly liked about your last job?
- Do you consider your progress on the job representative of your ability? Why?
- How do you feel about the way you and others in the department were managed by your supervisor?
- If I were to ask your present (most recent) employer about your ability as a \_\_\_\_\_, what would he/she say?

### **Education**

- What special aspects of your education or training have prepared you for this job?
- What courses in school have been of most help in doing your job?

### **Career Goals**

- What is your long-term employment or career objective?
- What kind of job do you see yourself holding five years from now?
- What do you feel you need to develop in terms of skill/knowledge in order to be ready for that opportunity?
- Why might you be successful in such a job?
- How does this job fit in with your overall career goals?
- Who or what in your life would you say influenced you most with your career objectives?
- Can you pinpoint specific things in your past experience that affected your present career objectives?
- What would you most like to accomplish if you had this job?
- What might make you leave this job?

### **Self Assessment**

- What kind of things do you feel most confident in doing?
- Can you describe for me a difficult obstacle you have had to overcome? How did you handle it? How do you feel this experience affected your personality or ability?
- How would you describe yourself as a person?
- What do you think are the most important characteristics and abilities a person must possess to become successful? How do you rate yourself in these areas?
- Do you consider yourself a self-starter? If so, explain why (and give examples).
- What do you consider to be your greatest achievements to date? Why?
- What things give you the greatest satisfaction at work?
- What things frustrate you the most? How do you usually cope with them?

### **Stress Tolerance**

- Do you feel pressure in your job? Tell me about it.
- What has been the highest pressure situation you have been under in recent years? How did you cope with it?

### **Stability and Maturity**

- Describe your most significant success and failure in the last two years.
- What do you like to do best?
- What do you like to do least?
- What in your last review did your supervisor suggest needed improvement? What have you done about it?

### **Interest in Self-Development**

- What has been the most important person or event in your own self-development?

- How much of your education did you earn?
- What kind of books and other publications do you read?
- Have you taken a management development course?
- How are you helping your subordinates develop themselves?



120 Wall St, 21<sup>st</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10005-4024  
[prssa.org](http://prssa.org) | [prssa@prsa.org](mailto:prssa@prsa.org) | (212) 460-1474