

Career Advice From the Future

Idea In Short

New graduates should create a LinkedIn profile, craft a targeted resume, develop an elevator pitch and build a visible portfolio of work. Learn selfishly, make time for the search, ask smart questions of serious people and play to your strengths. Future-proof your career against disruption.

The job market is challenging right now for several reasons. Interest rates are high compared to the last 30 years, geopolitics taints business decisions and Chief Executive Officers hesitate to hire. Generative Artificial Intelligence [GenAI] is getting smarter, better and easier, which will disrupt a lot of white-collar work.

Create a LinkedIn Profile

Creating a LinkedIn profile is crazy basic and important. Add a professional photo, not one where a former partner is cropped out. List your education, skills, experiences and bona fides. Benchmark against people you know and respect, and study how they craft their online resume. Marketing means making it easy to buy, so make it easy for companies to find you. I emphasize that thoroughly filled-out profiles appear first in recruiter searches.

Spending one-tenth the time you spend on other social media on your LinkedIn profile will boost your salary and understanding of business. This is the single most accessible lever for new graduates, yet many neglect it.

Craft Your Resume as Bait

Your resume is bait, so show off what you know and have done. Tailor it to different kinds of jobs you are targeting, whether consulting, sales or marketing. Ask friends who are discerning and grumpy to pick it apart. The resume should be clean, tight, relevant, thoughtful and full of evidence of your capabilities.

When you have a job description, first confirm it is a live one. Find someone in the company to verify the role has not been filled already. Then use ChatGPT to decode the description, identifying the kind of work, the kind of people they want and the key skills to emphasize. Do not lie, but do align your strengths with their needs.

Use Your Career Management Center

The Career Management Center [CMC] at most business schools exists to help you get a job. Staff know who is hiring, what employers look for and which alumni could help. If you have access to a CMC, use it fully rather than navigating the search alone.

Many people want to help you, but it is your job to find them. Be clear about how they can help, then be professional and respectful. Successful older people love helping coachable, eager and fun people who ask for advice genuinely.

Develop an Elevator Pitch

In the age of short-form content, you need to explain yourself concisely in one to two minutes. 2 highlights the importance of a clear value proposition tailored to your audience. Define what problems you solve, why you are the right person and what benefits clients get.

Practice until the pitch feels natural rather than forced. You are not selling but making it easy for people to understand what you do. After two minutes, listeners should know whether to continue the conversation or recognize they are not a qualified buyer. Both outcomes are valuable.

Learn Selfishly and Make the Time

Learn like an adult with intention and selfishness. Continually ask what you could learn this month that helps customers, projects and your career. Determine whether you can hardwire learning into a product or service you can sell. Identify 10 people who know a lot about your field and get on their radar.

The excuse of not having time does not hold. Track how much time you spend on entertainment apps and divide it by three. Dedicate that time to your job search through Coursera courses, informational interviews, audiobooks and experimentation. Finding three

job offers is work, not a hobby, so treat it as the valuable, competitive and time-intensive effort it is.

Ask Smart Questions and Create a Portfolio

Network and conduct informational interviews to stay curious about opportunities. Find out who in your ecosystem is thriving, who is hiring and who has a problem they cannot solve. Ask people for advice, because successful older people love helping coachable people.

We live in the show-me era, where employers want to see what you have done rather than hear about potential. For a sales job, show what you have sold. For a marketing job, show what you have marketed. For a consulting job, show who you have consulted. Display your work on Substack, YouTube, LinkedIn, GitHub, Figma, Quora or a personal blog.

Get More Reps and Play to Strengths

A film professor once divided a class into two groups. One group submitted a large quantity of photos, while the other submitted only one great photo. The quantity group produced better work because they kept experimenting and improving. 3 reinforces that rare, valuable skills are what make you indispensable.

Play to your strengths because this is a terrible time to be average. Identify what you were naturally good at as a kid, what is difficult for others and when you experience flow. Determine what people compliment you on and what you do that others get paid to do. Lean into that uniqueness.

Future-Proof Yourself and Keep Grinding

Where is the demand and what do people want? If you were opening a store, you would find out what people want before stocking shelves. Do not spend five years getting good at something that is going away. Future-proof your career by finding paths with a good runway and relevance in the age of GenAI.

Dream bigger, because big dreams require big motivation. Thomas Friedman had it right in 2005 that the world is flat, and now GenAI agents and digital employees add new pressure. On a scale of commitment from one to nine, determine where you stand. At nine, you care

about the craft and keep asking clients how to improve. Find ways to set yourself up for success by rewiring habits, and ask what you would not mind spending three years getting even better at.

- 1LinkedIn Profile Tips For Job Seekers
- 2Elevator Pitch And Networking Advice
- 3Cal Newport's So Good They Can't Ignore You

Summary

The job market is tough but opportunity remains for those who hustle. Create a professional presence, show your work publicly and keep getting reps. Dream bigger, stay motivated and remember that big success easily takes 10 to 20 years. The tools available today make this the best time in history to experiment, learn and thrive.