

# *Making an impression*

Personal Brand Week 2.0  
eBook

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## **An introduction from Paula Loop**

### ***Welcome to Personal Brand Week 2.0.***

If you joined us for last year's first-ever Personal Brand Week, you know that we provided daily resources to help you define and grow your professional identity. Thanks in part to the terrific feedback we received, this year we want to provide you with even more tools to help you develop your personal brand.

As one of the largest employers of recent college graduates in the United States, PwC has unique insights into what makes students stand out and we want to share those insights with you. As you will learn, we believe that personal branding can be a powerful tool for professional success. Your personal brand is your “X” factor that differentiates you and makes you indispensable.

During Personal Brand Week 2.0, we'll walk you through five new daily themes to help you take your personal brand to the next level. We've also added an exciting contest, which gives college students the opportunity to pitch their personal brand for a big prize—for more information on the contest, please visit [facebook.com/pwcuscareers](https://facebook.com/pwcuscareers)

I encourage you to read through the materials in this ebook and use the worksheets to become more aware of the skills that make you unique. And remember to take our recommended actions each day to help build your professional identity and enhance your unique personal brand.

We hope that you find these materials useful and fun. And, as always, we welcome your feedback. Please visit us at [facebook.com/pwcuscareers](https://facebook.com/pwcuscareers) to add your thoughts and comments.

Kind regards,



Paula Loop  
US & Global Talent Leader  
PwC

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Day 1

**Monday Worksheet**

# *Building your network*

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## **Building your network**

**Follow these steps to strengthen your professional networking efforts**

**Compile a master list of contacts**

Keeping track of the people you know is an essential component of networking.

Once a month or so, export all of your contacts (from your email account, phone, contact list from social media sites, etc.) into one master list.

**Create a networking wish list**

What kinds of people would you like to meet as you build your career? Entrepreneurs? Programmers? MBAs? CPAs? Published writers? Teachers? People who've worked internationally? Make a list below of the kinds of people you'd like to meet and talk to—for general advice or about specific job opportunities:

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**Schedule at least one networking activity per week**

Next, it's time to take action to increase the odds that you'll meet the people you want to know. You must put yourself in situations where you'll interact with new people, both online and offline. Here are some suggestions—check off the ones you will add to your schedule.

- Send 3 emails to people you haven't seen in a while...and ask if there's any way you can support them
- Attend a workshop, speech or networking event on campus...and introduce yourself to the speaker
- Join a professional industry group on LinkedIn...and thoughtfully comment on a discussion topic
- Set up coffee with a recent alum who works in the field you want to join...and send a thank you note afterwards
- Attend a "tweetup" in your area...and ask questions about how Twitter helps the attendees professionally

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## **Building your network**

### **Follow up with a personal touch**

It's easy to go out and collect a lot of business cards; what's meaningful is following up in a personal and authentic way with the people you meet and want to keep in touch with. That is how real relationships are born. Here are some suggestions:

- Send a personalized LinkedIn connection request (not the generic connection message) within 24 hours of meeting or reconnecting with someone. A simple, polite note, "I really enjoyed meeting you at XYZ event and would like to keep in touch," should do the trick.
- Forward the person an article, link or some information that you discussed when you met. For instance, "Here is the article I mentioned on great restaurants in my hometown of Austin—I hope this is helpful the next time you travel there." This shows you were truly listening when you met the person and demonstrates that you are eager to help them as much as you hope they might help you.
- Say thank you. Whether by email or a handwritten note, it's always a good relationship practice to thank someone who has helped you in any way. For example, "Thank you for the great advice you gave me" or "Thank you for providing such helpful information at your resume workshop." People always appreciate—and remember—expressions of gratitude.

### **Share your progress and get new ideas**

Become a fan of PwC US Careers on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/PwCUSCareers>) and tweet with the hashtag #PwCBrandWeek to join the discussion about building your professional network and personal brand.

Day 1

**Monday Article**

by Holly Paul, US Recruiting Leader

# *Articulate Your Personal Brand Through Your Social Network*

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Article by Holly Paul, US Recruiting Leader

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Business guru Jack Canfield says that you are the average of the five people you spend most of your time with.

It makes sense, right? The people in your personal and professional networks have an extraordinary effect on who you are and how you see the world. They affect how you spend your time. They affect many of the decisions you make. They affect the way other people see you. In short, your network and how you interact with people in it are key components of your personal brand.

### ***The Care and Feeding of Relationships***

It's surprising, then, that people don't pay more attention to building and nurturing their professional relationships. The reality is that you need to pay as much, if not more, attention to building your relationships as you do to building your skills and abilities. Genuine professional relationships, just like personal ones, take time, care and commitment to sustain; the return on your investment will be more than worth the effort. People often think about networking if they need something—a job, a reference, some advice—but they often don't think about how their relationships directly shape them as a professional. If you only pay attention to your network when it's convenient or when you need something, your relationships won't be very strong or authentic. In turn, your personal brand and career development will suffer.

### ***Keep Better Track***

The first step to managing your relationships better is to literally manage them better. Make sure you have an accurate, up-to-date database or address book application where everyone you know is listed. Don't use your cell phone as your only address book in case you lose it! In addition to keeping track of people's e-mail addresses and phone numbers, keep a record of other important information that will help you build strong relationships, such as people's birthdays, Twitter names and snail mail addresses for those times you'll want to send a handwritten note. It's also a good idea to jot down when and where you met someone or another specific detail, such as the person's favorite football team or children's names.

### ***Connect Online***

Next, be sure to follow the people in your network on various social media sites. For professional purposes, LinkedIn and Twitter are the most important. This way you can keep up with people's news and occasionally send a hello or forward an article that might be of interest. Small gestures on social media demonstrate to others that your personal brand includes generosity and a true interest in the careers and lives of the people you know.

### ***Broaden Your Thinking***

As you continue to build your career and increase your networking activity, you'll want to associate yourself not just with individuals, but also with groups. Group involvement shows people that you value community, sharing and helping others.

Without a doubt, these groups should include your university alumni community, with whom you can connect through Listservs, LinkedIn groups, in-person alumni clubs and reunions. It's likely your alma mater helped you grow as a professional and influenced your personal brand, so it's valuable to maintain a connection and give back to others who shared the same college experience. Strong personal brands include demonstrating pride and loyalty to the institutions that have shaped you.

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You should also look into joining professional associations related to your field of interest. Most professional associations have local, state and national groups. Some even have an international presence. Depending on your interests and goals, other potential communities include volunteer organizations, your local Chamber of Commerce, arts organizations, running clubs and any other online or offline group that appeals to you. Such memberships provide countless ways to meet others, learn about yourself and discover new skills and opportunities that will enhance your personal brand.

If you are trying to build your experience in a new field, then it's even more important to take part in communities associated with your desired profession. Even if you've never officially worked in public relations, for instance, you can include your interest in PR in your personal brand by joining the Public Relations Society of America, following their tweets and attending their in-person events. This will help you learn the lingo, find out about potential opportunities and build relationships with people in the field you want to enter.

### ***Go the Extra Mile***

No matter where or how you are connecting with people, a crucial piece of your personal brand involves how you interact with the people you know. When you see that it's someone's birthday on Facebook, write a quick "Happy Birthday" wall post. When you invite someone to connect on LinkedIn, always customize your request with a polite and gracious note instead of using the generic message. Occasionally reach out to people in your network to say hello and ask if there is anything you can do to support them. Send holiday cards. You'll become known as someone who is thoughtful and always goes the extra mile. And, in turn, people will be more likely to go the extra mile for you.

### ***Share Your News***

Finally, don't be shy about keeping your network posted on what you're up to. Remember that networking and personal branding are not just about who you know; they're about who knows you. While staying conscious of not posting sensitive personal, client or privileged information, update your social networking status at least once a week with news about what you're doing, what you're reading or what events you're attending. If you're speaking on a panel, invite people in your network to attend. If you're walking in a charity fundraiser, invite people to participate or support your efforts. If you've built truly genuine professional relationships, people will want to know how your personal brand is evolving and how they can support you.

So, look around right now at your relationships. Glance at the last three people who IM-ed you today. Find your last five Facebook friend requests. What can you do for each of these people? What can you do to strengthen each of these relationships? What should they know about you? Attend to your network daily so that not just your personal brand, but your entire life, will be better for it.

Day 2

**Tuesday Worksheet**

# *You are what you write*

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## **You are what you write**

**Use this checklist before sending any professional email message to make sure you are making the best written impression you can**

- Determine if email is, in fact, the best medium for the information you need to convey. While text messaging and instant messaging are not appropriate in professional communications, you should consider whether a phone call or in-person meeting would be more appropriate; e.g., if you are negotiating salary, discussing a sensitive personal issue or declining a job offer.
- Create a descriptive subject line that entices the recipient to open your message.
- Personalize the salutation (with “Mr.” or “Ms.” and the person’s last name) and double-check the spelling of the recipient’s name.
- Get to the point! Make sure the purpose of your communication appears in the first or second paragraph (in case the reader is short on time or attention).
- Avoid writing only about yourself. Communications with too many “I’s” can turn off a reader.
- Do not share too much personal information. Remain professional and on-point.
- Edit yourself for conciseness. Long sentences and long paragraphs are difficult to read (especially on a computer screen or mobile device), so break up your thoughts into shorter sections.
- Avoid using all lower case or all capital letters. The former can make you look immature and the latter LOOKS LIKE YOU ARE YELLING.
- Delete any emoticons (smiley faces), text message abbreviations or excessive exclamation points. Save those for personal communications.
- Include a signature line at the bottom of every professional email message that includes your contact information and the URL of your professional LinkedIn profile.
- Before clicking send, always proofread (or have a trusted friend, family member or career services professional proofread) your communications for professionalism, accuracy and typos. (Don’t trust spell check alone!). Many mistakes can be avoided by taking the time to give every message a once-over.

### **Share your progress and get new tips**

Become a fan of PwC US Careers on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/PwCUSCareers>) and tweet with the hashtag #PwCBrandWeek to join the discussion about building your professional network and personal brand.

Day 2

**Tuesday Quiz**

# *Professional writing quiz*

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## **Professional writing quiz**

Are you presenting yourself professionally on paper? Take this quiz to test your career-related written communication skills, which are an essential component of your personal brand.

- 1. True or False: The best salutation for a cover letter is “To whom it may concern.”**
- 2. Which of the following is the best subject line for a professional networking email?**
  - a. “Networking”
  - b. “Hello”
  - c. “Marketing Student Seeking Career Advice”
  - d. No subject line is necessary for a networking email.
- 3. The appropriate length of an entry-level resume is:**
  - a. 1 page
  - b. 2 pages
  - c. As many pages as you require to share your experience
- 4. True or False: When making a request in an email message, it’s best to provide detailed information first, and then build up to your “ask.”**
- 5. True or False: Email thank you notes are now considered acceptable after a job interview.**
- 6. Which of the following should not be used in a professional communication?**
  - a. Emoticons (smiley faces)
  - b. Text message abbreviations (LOL, BRB)
  - c. Multiple exclamation points
  - d. All of the above

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## **Professional writing quiz**

**7. The best closing for a professional email message is:**

- a. Best,
- b. Best regards,
- c. Thank you,
- d. Sincerely,
- e. Any of the above would be acceptable

**8. True or False: When sending a connection request on LinkedIn, the professional social network, always use the standard message provided (“I’d like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn.”).**

**9. For which of the following reasons have recruiters reported not pursuing a job applicant?**

- a. Listing an unprofessional email address on a resume (e.g., catlover@xyz.com)
- b. Making a spelling error on a resume
- c. Submitting a cover letter for the company’s biggest competitor
- d. Instant messaging a recruiter
- e. All of the above

**10. What do entry-level employers say is the skill that entry-level job seekers lack the most?**

- a. Professionalism
- b. Written communication
- c. Critical thinking
- d. Follow-up

## **Professional writing quiz**

### **Answers**

1. Answer: False. “To whom it may concern” is akin to “Dear Occupant”—it doesn’t entice someone to read further. When at all possible, address a cover letter to a particular recruiter or HR contact. For example, “Dear Ms. Smith” or “Dear Mr. Jones.” And remember to double-check the spelling of that person’s name!
2. Answer: c. Subject lines are very important in professional emails. This is what determines whether or not someone will open your message. The more specific the subject line is, the better.
3. Answer: a. A resume is not an exhaustive list of your accomplishments; it is a marketing document. Recruiters are looking at your ability to edit your skills and experience to meet their hiring needs. One page should provide plenty of room.
4. Answer: False. As journalists say, don’t bury the lead! Because people are busy and sometimes don’t read to the end of email messages, it’s best to place your request in the first or second paragraph of an email.
5. Answer: True. In the majority of industries, it is now acceptable to send an email thank you after a job interview, as long as that email is professional and free of any spelling or grammar errors. With the pace of business today, snail mail can take too long. However, note that in some industries and situations, a handwritten note is still preferred—check with your career services office if you’re unsure.
6. Answer: d. Emoticons, text message speak and multiple exclamation points have no place in professional communications. Show your enthusiasm with your experience and passion, not with your keyboard.
7. Answer: e. All of these examples are appropriately professional.
8. False. It is better to personalize every connection request you send so that recipients know why you want to connect. This is particularly important if you are attempting to connect with someone you have never met in person. And, even though LinkedIn is a social network, make sure all communications you send through the site are professional and free of spelling or grammar mistakes. Every communication you write is contributing to your professional reputation and personal brand.
9. Answer: e. These are actually some of the most common mistakes job applicants make when applying for positions! Remember that instant messaging is not an appropriate communication method to use with a recruiter, nor is using a too-personal email address. Always proofread (or have a trusted friend, family member or career services professional proofread) your communications for professionalism, accuracy and typos before sending to a potential employer. Don’t underestimate the importance of good spelling and grammar—and don’t trust your computer to catch errors!
10. Answer: b. According to a recent report, nearly half of HR executives surveyed said that entry-level job candidates lack writing skills. This means that good writing skills can really help you stand out from the crowd. If your grammar, spelling or writing etiquette could use improvement, it’s worth taking the time to brush up on the basics.

Day 3

**Wednesday Worksheet**

# *Your online image makeover*

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## **Your online image makeover**

***Last year during Personal Brand Week we focused on the basics of what to do and not to do online. This year, we're focusing on how to take your existing online presence and make it stronger***

### ***Study the online profiles of people you admire***

One of the great things about the web is that you can research the way other people, from student leaders to CEOs, present themselves online.

Take some time to research and bookmark the online presences of people who have the kind of career you aspire to. Search Google (to find blogs and personal websites), LinkedIn, Twitter, your university's alumni database and professional association directories.

Then, ask yourself these questions:

- Where do these people appear online where you'd like to appear? Could you set up profiles on the same sites?
- What keywords do these people use to describe themselves that would be appropriate for you to use?
- What kinds of status updates do they post? Could you post similar updates?

### ***Beef up your LinkedIn profile***

Having a presence on LinkedIn is essential for career-minded students and recent grads. Follow these steps to make sure your profile is the best it can be:

- Create a strong profile headline that includes your career aspirations, any major leadership position, and/or industry you plan to enter. Examples: Honors Finance Student at XYZ University; Student Government Secretary & Pre-Law Student at XYZ.
- Fill the "Specialties" section of your LinkedIn profile with keywords that relate to the kinds of jobs or internships you'd like to attract. Find these words in the job postings that interest you.
- Complete the "Experience" section with internships, substantive volunteer work, freelancing and part-time work. This section is not just for full-time, paid positions.
- Take advantage of LinkedIn apps that will show off your professional work and interests, such as those built for presentation sharing or providing book reviews.
- Collect at least two recommendations. When possible, try to obtain them from people who have directly managed or supervised you. Remind each recommender of the key elements of your personal brand (your biggest accomplishments, your top skills and your professional goals) to make sure their recommendations support the rest of your profile.

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## **Your online image makeover**

### **Add professional elements to your Facebook profile**

These days, there's less of a divide between one's personal and professional selves. For this reason, it's wise to incorporate some professional elements on Facebook and any other personally oriented sites you frequent. You never know when a friend might have a professional lead for you.

- Add your current work information to your Facebook profile.
- Become a fan of pages that relate to your professional interests, such as people, books, professional organizations and companies you admire (or might want to work for someday).
- RSVP to professional events on Facebook (company information sessions, career workshops, professional conferences, etc.) so you can show that you're out there networking—and check out the other attendees before an event.
- As always, make sure your Facebook profile is free of any inappropriate or potentially offensive photos, videos, wall posts, updates or any other elements that might damage the personal brand you're working so hard to build. Even when your privacy settings are tight, you never know who might see your profile.

### **Use Twitter to your advantage**

If you use Twitter, be aware that recruiters and potential networking contacts are all over this growing social network. There are several ways you can use Twitter in a professional way:

- Research if Twitter is a popular medium in the industry you want to join. In certain fields—public relations, politics, tech start-ups, journalism—Twitter is extremely popular and should be part of your personal branding efforts.
- Follow companies and people you admire or would like to meet someday and occasionally reply or retweet their messages. You might just get noticed.
- Tweet about events you're attending, books you're reading and articles you find interesting. All of this information contributes to a strong professional reputation.
- If you tweet in a professionally appropriate way, include your Twitter name or profile URL on your LinkedIn profile and/or your email signature line.
- Be careful about tweeting anything inappropriate or too personal. While it may seem that Twitter posts come and go quickly, you never know who might be watching at any given moment.

### **Share your progress and get new ideas**

Become a fan of PwC US Careers on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/PwCUSCareers>) and tweet with the hashtag #PwCBrandWeek to join the discussion about personal branding.

Day 3

**Wednesday Article**

by Holly Paul, US Recruiting Leader

# *How to Monitor Your Reputation on Social Networks*

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*Article by Holly Paul, US Recruiting Leader*

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Skim any news website these days and you are likely to find a story about online privacy—and the lack of it. All of the buzz is justified: There are still very few rules in place about what people can and can't do online.

This means that you have to be proactive and diligent about managing your online reputation and privacy in this Wild West world. In many cases people will “meet” you online before they meet you in person, so it's important to make sure your online image accurately reflects the real you.

By far the best way to manage your online reputation is to actively post positive, professional content associated with your name, and regularly visit the sites where you are active. If you have a good reputation, people will give you the benefit of the doubt and realize that something is amiss if they receive a spam message from you or see something distasteful related to your name. As with so many things in life and on the Internet, good common sense is the first line of defense.

### ***Get Seriously Social***

Having a profile you wouldn't be ashamed to show your mother on all of the major social networks—LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Google Profiles—is the first step in controlling your online reputation. All of these sites generally zoom up the Google rankings and will likely appear on the first page of results when someone searches on your name. Make sure any profiles you post are complete, accurate and regularly updated.

To go one step further, it's a good idea to sign up for other major social networks—even those you don't use—to “claim” your name on these sites so no one else claims to be you. Check out <http://namechk.com> to find out which sites have your username available, and register for the most popular networks.

Personal branding expert Dan Schawbel recommends claiming your name on Twitter, Facebook, WordPress, LinkedIn, Technorati, Tumblr and YouTube, for starters. It's also smart to buy your domain name, for instance, JaneDoe.com. Even if you never put up a website, you'll ensure that no one else will launch one in your name.

### ***Monitor Your Reputation***

When you are active on the Internet, it can happen that someone posts a not-so-nice comment about you on a social network. Or you might have a blemish on your reputation from the past that comes back to haunt you in a blog post, article or video. If you face this issue, don't panic. There are several things you can do.

First you should un-tag yourself from any and all content that is incorrect or damaging to your reputation. If you don't have access to a particular comment or photo, try reaching out to the person who has posted the negative content and ask him or her to remove it. If you are polite and persistent, most reasonable people will agree.

If that doesn't work, the best way to “cover up” something negative is to post as much positive content as possible and push down the negative content in the search results for your name. In addition to being active on social networks, you can write book reviews on Amazon.com contribute articles to industry association websites and comment on professional blogs using your real name. Even if you can't entirely remove negative content about yourself, your reputation will stay intact if the vast majority of online information about you is positive and accurate.

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**Stay Diligent**

Now how do you best protect yourself from any negative online content in the future? One of the best ways to monitor your online reputation is to set up a Google alert to receive an e-mail anytime your name is mentioned on the Web, including news sites, video sites, social networks and more. Be sure to set up alerts for variations of the spelling of your name, and include your middle name or initial as well. If you see something incorrect in one of your alerts, you can deal with it immediately.

You also need to protect the privacy of any personal information posted online. Demographically speaking, some groups appear to be more active with regard to protecting their privacy than others. In a recent Pew study, researchers found that people ages 18 to 29 were more apt to monitor privacy settings than older adults are, and they more often delete comments or remove their names from photos so they cannot be identified.

As you continue to build your personal brand on the Web, keep track of privacy developments and stay diligent about monitoring your online existence. In the information age, reputation management is more important than ever. Your online presence should be just as impressive, professional and fabulous as your real-world one.

Day 4

**Thursday Worksheet**

# *Prepare for career fairs & interviews*

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## **Prepare for career fairs & interviews**

**Here are some entry-level recruiters' top tips to help you make a great in-person impression**

### **Before a Networking Event/Career Fair/Formal Job or Interview**

- Practice introducing yourself in a concise and confident way. (Check out [our worksheet](#) on creating your elevator pitch for help.)
- Plan a neat and appropriate outfit to wear. If you're unsure of the dress code, it's okay to contact the organization or your university career center to ask.
- Review your resume thoroughly—you never know what information a recruiter might ask you to discuss.
- Spend at least 30 to 60 minutes researching the organization whose event or interview you are attending so you can show why your skill set is a good fit. Review the organization's website to learn about its mission, lines of business, culture and entry-level positions. Do a general web search to review any recent news about the organization and the overall industry in which it operates. Ask members of your career center staff to tell you more about the organization and its history with your university.
- Prepare at least three questions to ask. When a recruiter says, "What questions do you have?" you want to be prepared. The best questions show that you've done your homework on the organization and that you are genuinely interested in learning more. For instance, "I read that the company just implemented a new green initiative and I'm really interested in environmentalism. Can you tell me more about that?"

### **During a Networking Event/Career Fair/Formal Job or Internship Interview**

- Turn off your cell phone or switch it to vibrate and put it away for the entire duration of the event.
- When you meet a recruiter or company representative, shake his or her hand confidently and make direct eye contact.
- Remember to listen as much (if not more) than you talk. Yes, you are promoting yourself, but you don't want to dominate the entire conversation.
- Request a business card from the recruiter or any professional contacts you meet so you can follow up after the event.

### **After a Networking Event/Career Fair/Formal Job or Internship Interview**

- After a formal job interview, send a thank you note or email within 12 to 24 hours. This is a great idea after a recruiting event or other networking meeting as well (For example: "Thank you for taking the time to chat with me at your event," or, "Thank you for the advice you provided on how to improve my resume").
- Mark any additional follow-up or deadlines in your calendar (e.g., RSVP to another event a recruiter mentioned).
- Assess your performance at the event or interview. What did you do well? Is there anything you would do differently next time? Events are not just networking opportunities; they are learning opportunities as well.

### **Share your progress and get new ideas.**

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Day 4

**Thursday Article**

by Holly Paul, US Recruiting Leader

# *View from the Other Side: Inside the Mind of Your Corporate Recruiter*

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*Article by Holly Paul, US Recruiting Leader*

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I remember how I felt when I went through the campus recruiting process during my college days. I was nervous, excited and, above all, eager to know what was going through the mind of that recruiter who was shaking my hand and asking me to tell her a little about myself.

Now that I work on the other side of the equation as US Recruiting Leader at PwC, one of the largest employers of recent college graduates, I find that today's students are wondering the same thing: What is my recruiter thinking?

To save you from some of the apprehension I felt, I asked a few of PwC's campus recruiters to give me the scoop and reveal their secrets: What really impresses them? What secretly irritates them? And, most importantly, what does it take to get a job offer from them?

What I learned above all is the importance of developing a personal brand that differentiates you from your peers in today's ultra-competitive environment. As one recruiter put it, "I have 100 students with good GPAs coming up to my table. What makes you stand out?"

***If you are not yet sure how to answer that question, here are some tips***

***Little things mean a lot***

While "personal brand" is a big concept, your brand is actually comprised of many small components, all of which add up to the overall professional impression you project. Recruiters told me that they notice every detail of your image and advise against wearing too much perfume or cologne, noisy jewelry, wrinkled clothing or anything else that "will distract from the qualities that are in your head." Keep your eyes on the prize.

Another recruiter pet peeve is lack of eye contact at recruiting events. "I frequently have students who are looking around when I'm talking. I get the impression they are looking for someone else to talk to," said one colleague I interviewed. "Focus on the person you are talking to and you'll make a good impression." Passion is contagious.

What else is a recruiter looking for in a face-to-face interaction? "I love when I meet when someone who is passionate about something," said one recruiter. "You can be passionate about fishing, horses, anything! Passion is interesting and memorable."

***Leaders rule***

When it comes to standing out on paper, recruiters are unanimous in their excitement about students with leadership positions on their resumes. They look for titles such as sports captain, student government officeholder and club president. "This shows that you're proactive and that you have the skills to fit into a leadership role when you're on the job," a recruiter explained. "Not everybody can be a leader all the time, but we want somebody who can step up when required."

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***Online recommendations matter***

In addition to your in-person and on-paper personas, recruiters today are considering your online image. In particular, they are impressed when a student's personal brand includes a professional LinkedIn profile. And one area of these profiles stands out more than others. "When I look at a student's LinkedIn profile, I'm impressed when they have recommendations from a professor, internship manager or other professional. It shows that they do such good work that someone else was willing to make the effort to vouch for them."

***Listening counts***

Finally, according to recruiters, too many students stand out in a negative way -- by not following directions. "All of the application and recruiting instructions are on our website and distributed at events, but half of students miss stuff and I have to follow up with them," lamented a recruiter. "The people who really stand out are the students I never have to chase down for information. They RSVP for events, they are on time for dinners, they send thank you notes afterwards. Following instructions consistently is another way to really impress me."

It seems that recruiting today isn't all that different from when I graduated from college. Companies want professionals with a strong work ethic, good manners and common sense. When your personal brand is built on these core attributes, you'll have the best chance to stand out from the crowd and land the job of your dreams.

Day 5

**Friday Worksheet**

# *How to perfect your pitch*

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## ***How to perfect your pitch***

### ***Use this checklist to help you make a great first impression in any professional situation***

- Practice, practice, practice your self-introduction. The best pitches are natural (not canned), but prepared. When possible, practice your pitch in front of a trusted friend, family member or career services professional and tape yourself to see how you come across.
- Make sure your image matches your pitch. You need to dress professionally, but it's okay to show some flair with a bright tie or a unique piece of jewelry. Do some research on the industry you want to join to learn what's appropriate. No matter what, look neat (iron everything) and groomed.
- Smile. It's simple, but a smile can go a long way towards making a good impression (and putting you at ease).
- Make direct eye contact with your listener. If your eyes are wandering or looking down, people will assume you're distracted or not very interested in talking to them.
- Say your name clearly. It's one of the most important elements you want your listener to remember.
- Be clear and concise. There's no need to tell someone your life story. Highlight the most important elements of your personal brand (what you're studying, your key experience, what you hope to do in the future) and then let the conversation flow from there.
- Show your passion. Recruiters consistently say that passion stands out. Let your enthusiasm shine through.
- Stop talking. After about 20 to 30 seconds, finish your introduction and let the other person speak. Listening skills are just as important as speaking skills.

### ***Share your progress and get new tips***

Become a fan of PwC US Careers on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/PwCUSCareers>) and tweet with the hashtag #PwCBrandWeek to join the discussion about building your professional network and personal brand.

