



Career Planners **First-Time Jobseeker's Guide**

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Rookie Mistakes

How to handle — and prevent
— job search blunders

Gimme More

How to negotiate — professionally
— and get what you want



- Dress to Impress
- Social Media Clean Up
- Why Workplace Culture Matters

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FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER'S GUIDE



First-time negotiator's guide to getting what you want

BY LISA IANNUCCI
CTW FEATURES

Congratulations! You've had a really good interview and you are hopeful the employer will offer you the job, but perhaps you want a bigger salary, more vacation time or time off, or the ability to work from home. Should you negotiate these during the interview?

"Elements of the offer can be negotiated, such as salary, vacation time and flex time/scheduling," says Jim Wojtak, Senior Career Coach, IMPACT Group, who says to not ask for anything during the first interviews. Instead, wait until an actual offer is made and then start to negotiate.

"Until the offer is made, you are



selling your skills and abilities to the employer," he says. "Once the offer is made, then you become the buyer and are able to begin negotiations."

Steven Rothberg, founder of the job search site, College Recruiter, explains there are two types of compensation to negotiate: hard and

soft. "Hard compensation includes salary and benefits such as health insurance, 401(k), disability and dental coverage," he says. "All employees receive these and they tend to hit the budget of the hiring manager. Soft benefits are typically not enjoyed by all employees and do not hit the budget of the hiring manager. First negotiate your hard and then the soft benefits as you're more likely to get most of what you want if you follow that process."

Negotiating can work in your favor, too, according to a recent survey by The Creative Group, which showed that more than half of advertising and marketing executives (57 percent) said they are at least somewhat willing to negotiate compensation when extending a job offer to a top candidate.

However, there some things are harder to negotiate than others. "It is difficult to negotiate significant devi-

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER’S GUIDE



ations on health benefits and paid time off,” says Dave Arnold, president, Arnold Partners, LLC, a boutique executive search firm. “Generally, companies cannot discriminate on plans that are offered to everyone.”

How you negotiate is important, too. “If you are working through a recruiter, it is very important to use the recruiter as a go-between you and the employer, Arnold says. “If you are doing this all on your own, it pays to be patient and make your requests as clear as possible without any threats or ultimatums.”

When negotiating for more money, one example of what to say is: “I am excited about the prospects of joining your organization with the offer you made to me on December 10. I know I have what it takes to be successful. You made a starting salary offer of \$30K. Based on my salary research for Social Media Editor my solid internship experience in social media marketing, I’d like to suggest a starting salary between \$34,000 and \$37,000 to start.

The interviewer might respond with, “As I pointed out before, our starting range is lower than your request. We want to hire you. We may be able to work out something, however, we won’t be able to offer the high end of your range.”

Wojtak says you should respond with, “I appreciate that you are working within a budget. However, I believe the skills, experience and commitment to performance I will bring to

your organization justify my value.” Of course you hope to hear: We’re eager to hire you and are prepared to start you out at the top of the range at \$37,000.

“At this point, re-confirm their new salary offer,” Wojtak says. “Then move on to other elements you wish to discuss, using the same format, i.e. ‘You offered ... and then I’d like to suggest X.’ Wait for a response after each one and be prepared to briefly explain your request, if asked.”

If an employer’s hands are tied when it comes to negotiations, especially your salary, Diane Domeyer, executive director of The Creative Group, says to consider other things that you may be able to negotiate, like a shorter work week, flexible schedule, remote work arrangement, additional vacation time or professional development opportunities.

“Another option is to ask to revisit your salary in six months with the hopes of negotiating a raise then,” she says. “If negotiations aren’t successful and you decide to walk away from an opportunity, remember to do so gracefully. You never know when you might encounter the hiring manager again.”

Do not negotiate during the interview, make sure you practice what you want to say and start negotiations once the offer has been made. You might not get everything you want, but may negotiate your way right into a higher salary or better benefits.

1/2 PAGE AD

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER'S GUIDE



Join the Culture Club?

How to tell if the organization is a right fit for you

BY LISA IANNUCCI
CTW FEATURES

You are on an interview and like what you're learning about the job so far, but you don't know if you would really like working at the company. How you can find out what a company's work culture is really like and if it's a fit for you before you sign on the dotted line and show up for work?

According to Scott Samuels, founder & CEO of Horizon Hospitality, a company's culture is more about the personality of a company. However, he says it's difficult to ascertain through a question and answer session during an interview.

"Culture needs to be seen and felt in the workplace environment," he says. "Employers have a tendency to answer questions in a positive manner that, many times, doesn't truly reflect their company's culture."



If you want to find out more about the company's culture, your research can begin on the internet before you even show up for your interview.

"Look at review sites in advance, like Indeed or Glassdoor that provides employee-ratings of compa-

nies," says Laura Handrick, Human Resources Analyst at FitSmallBusiness.com.

For example on Glassdoor, you can search the company you are interviewing with by name and then review the section that says 'Working

at ...' Here you will find company reviews, salaries and more information. If someone has written a Glassdoor review of that company you will find that here, including any complaints, criticisms and compliments. Workers will tell you the pros

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER'S GUIDE



and cons of working at that company. The company is given a rating out of five stars and the higher the number the better.

“Based on those ratings, you can ask follow-up questions during the interview,” Handrick says. “For example, on one site, I read that employees are given lots of perks and flex time for one company, but not much opportunity for advancement. So I would ask during a final interview, ‘What advancement opportunities are there if I do a great job in the first 1 to 2 years?’”

You can also review LinkedIn profiles for the same commentary from employees.

Samuels says there is a growing trend to have a jobseeker spend a half or full day shadowing a current employee within a company to gain additional clarity about the company's true work culture.

“Jobseekers should feel comfortable in asking, ‘In order to ensure I am the right long-term fit for XYZ company and that XYZ company will be an excellent long-term fit for me, would it be possible to spend a few hours with one of your employees who is current performing a similar role to what I would be doing?’” Samuels say.

If there are not any shadowing opportunities and you still want to see the current company culture, Dave Arnold, president of Arnold Partners, a CFO search company, suggests arriving to the interview early and observing everyone from the lobby for a short period of time.

“What are people wearing?” Arnold says. “Do they seem happy? Are they in groups? You should also ask to meet a cross section of employees in your interviewing process, not just your supervisor and human resources, but peers in your department and maybe someone from a complementary department that you would interact with.”

Ask about the company's culture during these meetings. “You should also ask how the department you are interviewing for is perceived by other departments in the company,” Arnold says. “Also ask what kind of turnover and promotions there have been. The more information you can gather the better. You need to get the clearest picture you can get before accepting a role.”

Once you find out if the company's culture is a fit, you can move forward in deciding if the rest of the job is right for you, too.

1/2 PAGE AD

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER'S GUIDE



Social Superstar

How to show off your best self to a potential employer on social media

BY DARCI SWISHER
CTW FEATURES

Looking for a job? Consider being less social, and more savvy, on your social media accounts, and doing some light housekeeping before interviewing.

"A smart thing for a job seeker to do is to be very aware of the fact that they're going to be looked at by

potential employers and to be strategic about it," says Jodi Wehling, managing consultant of People Matters, a Lansing, Michigan-based human resources consulting firm.

A recent survey of hiring managers and human resource professionals revealed that 70 percent of employers use social media to screen candidates before hiring them, up from 60 percent in 2016 – and 11 percent in

2006. Just over half of employers – 54 percent – decided not to hire a candidate because of content they found on social media, the 2017 survey by Harris Poll for CareerBuilder found. Topping those reasons: provocative or inappropriate photos and videos; information about drinking or using drugs; discriminatory comments related to race, gender, religion; and bad-mouthing of a previous

company or fellow employee.

Not all social media is bad – it can give potential employers a better sense of a candidate, Wehling says. "When we interview folks, we know we're not seeing the whole person, we're seeing the person trying to present themselves a certain way," she explains. "To some degree, it's nice to have some stuff out there about who you are."

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER’S GUIDE



According to the CareerBuilder survey, 44 percent of employers have found content on social media that led them to hire a candidate. For this reason, Wehling recommends cleaning up a Facebook page rather than making it private, or deleting the account altogether. “It’s good to do kind of a self-audit,” she says. The goal: to present your true self but also your best self, somebody that you would want to hire if you were looking for an employee.

That entails going through your Facebook timeline post by post to adjust the privacy settings, as well as photos albums and photos that others may have tagged you in, too. Also, ensure the details in the “about” section match your resume, she says.

Twitter users are especially vulnerable, since most have their accounts open for all to see, says Kiki Weingarten, a New York City-based career and executive coach specializing in career transitions. “I definitely caution people, ‘Clean up your account before you start looking,’” she says.

The immediacy of Twitter often leads people to tweet — and retweet, perhaps with comments — without first considering the consequences, Weingarten says. “So it’s out there,” she adds.

“I definitely caution people, ‘Clean up your account before you start looking.’ ”

Kiki Weingarten
New York City-based career
and executive coach

On Twitter, that may include highly politicized views contrary to a potential employer’s, although Weingarten notes that isn’t always a bad thing. “There are some issues that for people would be, ‘Anyone who does not feel this way, is not someone I can work with anyway,’” she explains. “There are a few things you have to know about yourself. You have to have your line in the sand.”

Essentially, she says, you need to be able to say: “I don’t want to work for a company that has X, Y or Z policy, so I’m not losing anything.” Still, she adds, “Be very careful, unless it’s a hill you’re ready to die on, it’s an issue that for you is a deal breaker.”

Weingarten recommends taking advantage of Twitter’s archiving option, which yields a downloadable file of every tweet since the account was established, then choosing a date in the not-so-recent past and deleting any tweets before it from view.

1/2 PAGE AD

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER’S GUIDE

One social media platform to beef up, instead of trim down, is LinkedIn. “It really starts to paint a picture of you as a professional in your career as opposed to Twitter and Facebook,” says Brendan Hagman, co-founder of Global Talent Recruiting in Holland, Michigan. “I bet 99.9 percent of recruiters use LinkedIn.”

The more complete your LinkedIn profile, the better, he adds. Always include both the months and years for work experiences, residency or work authorization if unclear, accreditations and degrees, GPA and volunteer and extra-curricular activities, he advises.

Most important, be sure to update your contact information, Hagman says.

“There are too many people that still have their college email address that we see, and then we’re trying to contact them about some great opportunities and it just goes off into never never-land.”

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1/2 PAGE AD

Everybody Makes Mistakes



How to handle — and prevent — job search blunders

BY TERESA ODLE
CTW FEATURES

Chalk it up to nerves, lack of confidence or simple naivete about how to hunt for jobs. No matter the reason, first-time jobseekers naturally make their share of mistakes. Sometimes, mistakes are just carelessness, says Robin Ryan, career counselor in Seattle and best-selling author of “60 Seconds & You’re Hired!” (Penguin Books, 2016). But jobseekers can learn to be more careful and prepared. “People go into an interview and haven’t thought about how they’re going to answer the questions,” Ryan says.

Top Rookie Mistakes

Rehearsing or writing out answers to common interview questions, such as “Why should we hire you?” is just part of the preparation. First-time jobseekers face lots of unfamiliar territory, but can prevent or recover from most common mistakes.

Don Georgevich, personal career coach and founder of Job Interview Tools in Cleveland, Ohio, cites the blame game as a top job-seeker mistake. For example, an interviewer might ask applicants why they got a C- in a course and the first thing a job seeker says is, “My teacher was the worst,” before launching into a barrage of blame, such as “she just didn’t like me.” According to Georgevich, placing blame like this is a huge mistake. “If your first response is to blame somebody else for your failures, you’re toast,” he says.

Of course, sometimes an applicant has a legitimate excuse for mistakes, such as being late to an interview. Regardless, some employers figure if you’re late for something as critical as a job interview, you’re going to be late for work if hired. So, prevention is the best cure; do all you can to avoid being late. Ryan suggests jobseekers try to find the interview location the weekend or day before so they know how to get there.

Ryan also notes how first-time jobseekers prefer texting to talking on the phone or sending e-mails, but reminds candidates that busy managers and HR professionals don’t want to hear from them via text message. “The worst mistake is not having voicemail so they can contact you,” Ryan says. She reminds applicants to leave their phone ringers on when job hunting and answer when it rings. If the candidate is in a noisy café or otherwise unable to

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER'S GUIDE



talk, Ryan suggests saying it's not a good time and asking if to call the person back in 20 minutes. If it's a scheduled call, the applicant should take it in a quiet environment. "Turn the TV off," Ryan adds.

Another common mistake of job-seekers is to make the process about themselves and what a company can do for them. Georgevich has found college students and other jobseekers often think more about how a company can help the graduate advance his or her career goals, not how the applicant can help the company. Although benefits can be mutual, the job search should be about meeting the specific needs of a company. "But all too often, job-seekers just think those companies are there for them, at their disposal," Georgevich says.

Other common mistakes of first-time jobseekers are resume or cover letter typos, trying to be a jack of all trades instead of focusing on criteria employer set, failing to show courtesy and enthusiasm and not showing up at all for an interview.

Turning Around Mistakes

Applicants can learn from mistakes, and sometimes turn them around to maintain some favor. "If you're going to be late, call them," Georgevich says. And apologize, says Ryan, even adding a guarantee such as "If I get the position, I will take an earlier

bus," she suggests.

Most importantly, Georgevich says to own a mistake. "I want somebody who has the courage to stand up and own it," he says. Truth works, but savvy interviewers can spot blamers. Courtesy also paints a favorable picture, so an interviewer is less likely to fault a candidate for a typo, poor answer or being five minutes late if the candidate makes a great first impression when introduced. "Reach out and give them a firm handshake while you're making eye contact with them," Georgevich says.

An Ounce of Prevention

Preventing mistakes is most important. "Have somebody else proof your resume and read it out loud," says Ryan of preventing typos and more serious offenses like using the wrong name on a cover letter. Further, focus cover letters, resumes and rehearsed interview responses to match the job description. According to Georgevich, companies clearly state the experience and skills they desire. He recommends going through a job description with highlighters to spot repeated words and concepts and focusing on those instead of listing every skill an applicant has.

Better preparation alone should make a job seeker more confident. To overcome inevitable nerves, Georgevich recommends getting to

1/2 PAGE AD

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER’S GUIDE



the parking lot or sitting down for a phone interview up to 30 minutes before the scheduled time. “Close your eyes and think about yourself, things you are personally grateful for,” Georgevich says. Once in a positive mindset with gratitude for family, for example, it’s time to move on to

positive thoughts about the job. “Visualize yourself in the position like you’re already there,” Georgevich says. The positive mindset will increase confidence and focus and lessen nerves, helping prevent mistakes.

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1/4 PAGE AD

1/2 PAGE AD

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Scan and Style Superstars



How to make your resume stand out in the digital age

BY TERESA ODLE
CTW FEATURES

If you want to stand out when applying for jobs, you have to tell potential employers your story – why you can meet the needs they've expressed in a job posting. A resume is more than a list of activities and experience, says Louise Kursmark, Master Resume Writer and author of "Modernize Your Resume" (Emerald Career

Publishing, 2016). The biggest mistake of rookie and experienced job seekers is failing to set themselves apart, she says. "Your unique achievements and contributions are evidence you possess specific skills," Kursmark adds.

Jacqui Barrett-Poindexter agrees that first-timers in particular focus too much on duties and responsibilities, not on achievements. Barrett-Poindexter is a master resume writer and CEO of Career Trend. "Even the

most junior of job seekers can cull experience – whether part-time roles, internships, group projects at school, or volunteer positions – that prove they offer bottom-line value," Barrett-Poindexter says.

With a little tweaking, first-time job seekers can make any experience and skills they have stand out in a well-written and laid out resume.

Scanning and Keywords

Most companies use an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to scan and store candidate resumes, says Kursmark. Although the systems

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER'S GUIDE



have become better at reading resume files, applicants still should use the right keywords to match the job. “Even more than in the past, they should take the time to match the content of their resume to a specific job posting,” Kursmark says.

Still, both Kursmark and Barrett-Poindexter recommend working keywords into the resume naturally or organically. “Most ATS look for keywords in context,” Kursmark says. Employers want to see how you demonstrate those keywords in action. Barrett-Poindexter adds: “For example, if ‘visionary’ is a keyword, include an initiative that proves, from start to finish, that you envisioned, then developed, then delivered upon a new product or service.”

Hiring managers can select any combination of keywords for their ATS searches, but most likely, they’ll search for terms in the job posting. “Bottom line, you can’t know for sure exactly what keywords are being used for a search,” Kursmark says. “The best approach is to be inclusive in your resume and cross-check to be sure you’re used the most common terms from the posting,” she says.

Tips for Getting Noticed

To customize each resume but save time, it helps to keep a resume “template” ready for each job search. The template tells the story of how an applicant can perform his or her

“Your resume is your unique career story. It should not describe ‘any’ candidate but rather a very specific person — you!”

Louise Kursmark
Master Resume Writer and author

ideal role. This template can be customized for each job application, including keywords specific to a job position in concise stories that demonstrate the applicant’s skills, Barrett-Poindexter says.

Focusing the resume story to an employer’s needs is the best way to stand out. “Your resume is your unique career story,” Kursmark says. “It should not describe ‘any’ candidate but rather a very specific person — you!”

While emphasizing a potential employer’s needs, applicants need to know themselves as well. “Focus in on work you not only do well, but which you like doing, or are willing to do,” Barrett-Poindexter says.

Finally, remember that most people find jobs through networking and referrals, Kursmark says. So, applicants should work on their templates and spend some time customizing resumes, but not spend too much time trying to be the “perfect fit,” she says.

1/2 PAGE AD

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER'S GUIDE

10 Tips to Consider When Creating a Unique Resume Layout

Advanced technology has enabled key-word scanning and use of color and graphics to enhance a traditional resume's design, "including dabs of color, charts and graphs, or other visual images," says Jacqui Barrett-Poindexter. Here are a few tips for creating a unique layout:

1. Use images or color, but don't go overboard with colors and several fonts.

2. Convert one of each customized resume to plain text format for uploading into applicant tracking systems and a visual version rich in color and graphics for traditional use, because people eventually study the resume too!

3. For screening, "it's best to use a straightforward format and arrange information in a logical way," says Louise Kursmark.

4. Don't worry about length of resumes, but quality of content. It's more important to tell your story using precise and concise

language than "emaciating your resume by trying to fulfill some arbitrary page-length requirements" says Barrett-Poindexter. But be aware of maximum word counts if uploading a resume online.

5. Infographics are great for resumes you send by e-mail, but won't work in ATS software.

6. Use a modern font.

7. Make the top of the resume count. Instead of a "career objective," grab attention while you can with a few key strengths.

8. Add links to online information, such as a personal website or LinkedIn account, at the top of the resume or in a sidebar.

9. Bullet point key skills and highlights in a sidebar.

10. Be sure to include your name and contact information.

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1/2 PAGE AD

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Be a Showoff



Why you need a digital portfolio

BY DARCI SWISHER
CTW FEATURES

The days of choosing the perfect shade of cream, heavyweight paper for your resume, then mailing it off in a matching envelope on a wing and prayer, are gone.

Long gone.

In today's electronic world, jobseekers impress through digital portfolios not paper stock. "Finding ways to show how you can do the work, and what you've done in the past, if pos-

sible, is always preferred versus talking about it or the dry resume," says Greg Ambrose, co-founder and CEO of Stack Talent, a candidate search firm in Chicago.

Cesar Rodriguez, a graphic designer in Chicago, says an online portfolio is essential for finding a job in his field. "If you don't have a website, especially as a graphic designer, you're toast," he says. Rodriguez has even referred to it during interviews, bringing his laptop out to showcase his work.

But digital portfolios are applicable to more than creative fields like graphic design and photography. They can be helpful to anyone searching for a job, especially those seeking a career change or who have limited professional experience, according to Dana Leavy-Detrick, founder of New York-based Brooklyn Resume Studio.

"It gives you a little bit of an extra polish to your whole brand presence," she says. "You can have, obviously, the resume, the cover letter, the LinkedIn profile, but when you see someone who's put a lot of thought into their digital presence,

and it's consistent across different platforms, I think that really shows a lot of effort, and a lot of integrity as well."

There are a few must-haves for digital portfolios, Leavy-Detrick points out. Top on her list: A bio. A couple well-thought out paragraphs can provide more insight into the jobseeker as a person, in a way that's not possible on a resume or even a LinkedIn profile, she says.

"We're talking about a job market where culture fit is such a huge deal in terms of hiring the right candidate," she says. "So, it gives a little bit more of a look for employers, of

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER'S GUIDE



1/2 PAGE AD

who a candidate is, what's important to them, their personality."

The bio is valuable real estate for those looking to transition to a new career, as they can talk about their reasons for the change, Leavy-Detrick adds. "Sometimes those things can be a little bit difficult to communicate on a formal resume," she says.

Also important are work samples that showcase skills or side projects; a web-based resume, perhaps available for prospective employers to download as a PDF; and a contact page with an email address, a phone number or a form to fill out. Leavy-

Detrick says to add a photo and links to personal social media pages – LinkedIn as well as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – only if their content is appropriate.

There are websites and online tools for building portfolios galore, and many have user-friendly templates for creating a static page or basic website, Leavy-Detrick says. She suggests checking out About.me or SquareSpace.

"You can be as creative as you want without any technical skill," Ambrose adds. "You don't even have to create your own domain, although it's not a bad idea."

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER’S GUIDE

As a freelance data journalist, Sabrina Karl is always seeking work with potential “employers.” Karl sprung for a professional account with JournoPortfolio.com, currently \$90 a year, so she could use the domain name she purchased.

“My work being a visual medium definitely drove my desire to create an online gallery-style portfolio,” says Karl, who is based in Madison, Wisconsin. “Since I want to demonstrate I’m skilled in telling numeric stories with visuals that engage readers more than stories based on words alone, my portfolio clearly needs to show that with images, not tell it with words.”

Karl includes a link to her digital portfolio in her email signature, and references it in emails seeking work. She also tracks hits using Google Analytics, and often conducts searches to see if anyone she’s contacted has visited her portfolio as a result.

She admits spending around 30 hours putting her website together initially, and then another chunk of time rejiggering how she presented her work samples a few months later. “Nowadays, though, it’s not much work,” she says. “Since my design is set, I just need to prep each new graphic I want to include.”

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1/2 PAGE AD

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A group of five business professionals, three men and two women, are seated in a row, smiling at the camera. They are dressed in professional business attire, including suits and blouses. The woman in the foreground is holding a white folder. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office environment.

**Don't 'Wear' Out
Your Welcome**

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER’S GUIDE

Dress for success to ace your job interview by following these tips

BY ERIK J. MARTIN
CTW FEATURES

You’ve thoroughly researched the company. You’ve rehearsed the likely questions and answers. Your resume and portfolio look spotless. But despite all this diligent prep, you could fail the job interview upon your first foot in the door. Why? Because first impressions can make all the difference – and your attire may not be up to snuff.

Moral to the story? Dress like you mean business when meeting with a potential employer. Actually, take it a step further, advises Diane Huth, author of “Brand You! To Land Your Dream Job” (2016; Isla Publishing Group): dress like your future boss, or even your boss’s boss.

“Your appearance and the way you dress and groom yourself will be key factors in whether or not you get the job offer,” Huth says. “It will be used as an indicator of how well you fit in with the culture of the company. If you want to be hired and treated as a professional, you must look, talk and dress like one.”

Brandi Britton, district president for OfficeTeam in Los Angeles, agrees.

“A polished appearance can lend credibility, set you apart from the competition and help employers envision you as a valuable contributor to the team,” Britton says.

That means avoiding the urge to arrive in casual garb.

“If you show up wearing jeans and a t-shirt, you’re communicating that you’re not well prepared, as you wouldn’t dress like that if you were working for that organization,” says Steven Rothberg, president/founder of Minneapolis-based College Recruiter.

Experts concur that definitive wardrobe rules apply for candidates during the first and subsequent job interviews. The first garb guideline is to ensure that you look comfortable in an outfit that fits well, appears relatively new and allows for ease of movement – so ditch any tight, baggy or worn-out articles of clothing.

“Men should wear a suit that’s navy blue, dark grey, charcoal gray or black – preferably solid-colored,” Huth recommends. “Wear a crisp



white or pastel starched and freshly ironed long-sleeved shirt, preferably with buttoned cuffs instead of cufflinks. Avoid dark shirts, which can make you look like you’re in the mafia. Your shirt cuffs should stick out a half-inch below your suit sleeve cuff when standing with your arms down by your sides.”

Additionally, don a quality silk power tie sporting either solid colors (red or blue are best, Huth notes), thin stripes, or a fine pattern that ties the suit and tie together. Polished black or dark brown shoes that harmonize with the suit, as well as navy blue knee-high socks, are nice – and necessary – finishing touches.

Women should wear a high quality dress suit, suggests Jacquelyn Youst, founder/president of the Pennsylvania Academy of Protocol in Bethlehem, Pa.

1/2 PAGE AD

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER’S GUIDE

“Choose classic conservative colors that show female professionalism, like navy blue, black, and dark gray. Avoid short skirts, low-cut blouses and open toe shoes,” Youst says. “Classic pumps and stockings are a must.”

Female interviewees should be careful not to convey “glamorous” or “sexy,” experts add.

“Keep it simple. Your hair should be neat and pulled back – consider a low ponytail or a bun. Your earrings should be no bigger than the size of a nickel, and you should avoid overdoing it with make-up or fragrance,” Pamela Shand, HR expert and CEO of New York City-based Offer Stage Consulting, says.

If in doubt, or even if the recruiter who invites you to an interview suggests business casual attire, play it safe, cautions Jana Tulloch, HR professional with DevelopIntelligence in Boulder, Colo.

“I would lean toward dressing more formally. It’s better to be overdressed than underdressed,” Tulloch says.

Don’t wait until the last minute to have your outfit dry cleaned or ironed, either. And be sure to perform a “dress rehearsal” well before the big day.

“Try on the outfit you plan to wear, then take a look in the mirror and see how it looks from behind, as you sit down, and as you lean over,” Tulloch says.



1/2 PAGE AD

FIRST-TIME JOBSEEKER’S GUIDE



“Don’t wear items that may be at risk for a wardrobe malfunction.”

If you get called back for another interview, count on wearing the same formal caliber of clothing; try to wear a suit similar to the one you donned for the first interview.

“If you only have one good suit and can’t afford a second one, wear it with confidence but with a different colored or patterned shirt and tie for men or blouse and jewelry for

women,” says Huth.

Lastly, if it’s cold outside, wear a professional knee-length fine wool coat instead of a jacket or parka, but try to hang it up immediately when you enter the office.

“When making your entrance to the interview room, the goal is to be unencumbered, so keep your hands free for handshakes,” Youst says.

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1/4 PAGE AD

1/2 PAGE AD

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