

Helping Students Tell Their Stories

Clues emerge from a recent employer survey

Background

- Why we decided to conduct surveys
- How we developed questions
- Who received the surveys (744)
- How many responded (170 = 23%)

Survey structure

- 17 survey questions
- Application Process questions (11)
- Hiring Process questions (6)

Survey participants' positions

Did respondents work in Human Resources?	
HUMAN RESOURCES ROLE	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS
YES	48%
NO	52%

Participating organization types

ORGANIZATION TYPE	PERCENT
Corporation	53%
Not for profit	32%
Government	10%
Other	5%

Application Process: data analysis and implications

Survey Qs: Application Process

2018 APPLICATION QUESTION TOPICS:

- LinkedIn
- Cover Letters
- Résumé format, objective, scanning
- International student work authorization
- Candidates' follow-up after submitting applications
- Recruiters' follow-up after receiving applications

1. Please indicate how frequently you post positions on LinkedIn.

Mixed bag

- 57% rarely or never use LinkedIn
- Similar to 2014 survey response (no=60%) to “Do you routinely use LinkedIn to post positions?”

IMPLICATION

Students should still use LinkedIn.

A substantial minority of employers use LinkedIn frequently (22% of corporate employers).

2. When you receive application materials by email, how do you prefer to receive the cover letter?

Employers agree

- Of those who read cover letters (84%), 76% prefer cover letters attached as a document, instead of in the body of the email message.

IMPLICATION

When applying for positions by email, attach both cover letter & résumé as PDFs.

The body of the email should be a brief message naming the position, and directing the recruiter to the attachments.

3. Is it okay not to sign a digital cover letter?

Employers mostly agree

- 78% indicate think it's okay
- 22% want an actual signature

(The survey included images of the two options)

IMPLICATION

It's usually okay to omit your signature on a digital cover letter.

But applicants might want to scan a JPEG of their signature that can be inserted prior to converting cover letters to PDF.

4. Please select which resume format you prefer (Standard or Two-column)

Gabrielle Student gabriellestudent@capital.edu
614-555-1212

EDUCATION
CAPITAL UNIVERSITY, Columbus, Ohio
Bachelor of Arts, May 2018
Major: Communications with an emphasis in Electronic Media and Film
Minor: Digital Design
GPA: 3.2/4.0

MEDIA EXPERIENCE
CAPTIV GENERAL MANAGER Academic Year 2017-18
Capital University, Columbus, Ohio

- Oversee on-campus TV studio
- Produce annual film festivals (Just an Independent Film Festival, 48- Hour Film Royale)
- Manage student participants within the CapTV student organization
- Coordinate communication and donations with and from local businesses
- Promote events and student organization
- Create promotional videos for CapTV

FREELANCE LOGO WORK September 2017-present
Shop Athens Ohio, Athens, Ohio
Capital University, Columbus, Ohio

- Re-create logos of businesses local to Athens, Ohio for promotional use
- Build official logos for CapTV, events, & shows

CAPTIV MEMBER September 2015-present
Capital University, Columbus, Ohio

- Participate in the production of new shows for CapTV
- Operate all TV studio equipment

EQUIPMENT
Camera: Canon 60D, Sony HXR-NX5U, Sony HVR-HD1000U, Blackmagic Design Studio Camera HD
Tablet: Wacom Intuos, Wacom Bamboo

SOFTWARE
Proficient: Adobe Story, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint
Competent: Adobe Photoshop
Beginner: Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Premier CS6, Adobe Premier CC

AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS
FIRST PLACE for *The Making of a Masterpiece* film submitted to CapTV's 3rd Annual 48 Hour Film Festival (September 2017)
PRESIDENTS PURCHASE AWARD for *Cityscope II* digital art piece Submitted to Capital University's Student Art Exhibit (April 2016)
CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT for *Managing a Film Festival* Presented at Capital University's Honors Symposium (April 2016)

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE
SHIFT MANAGER February 2017-present
Jimmy John's, Bexley, Ohio

- Supervise employees and manage work shifts

Standard résumé

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Blackmagic Design
Studio Camera HD

Tablet
Wacom Intuos
Wacom Bamboo

FILM
Cinematography
Writing
Editing
Directing
Producing

SOFTWARE
Proficient
Adobe Story
Microsoft Word
Microsoft PowerPoint

Competent
Adobe Photoshop

Beginner
Adobe Illustrator
Adobe Premier CS6
Adobe Premier CC

Two-column résumé

4. Please select which resume format you prefer (Standard or Two-column)

Fewer employers prefer two-column resumes

- 38%: Standard
- 16%: Two-column
- 46%: No preference

IMPLICATION

In general, use standard format.

Specific employment fields might prefer the two-column format, especially the creative fields. They might also prefer the use of color and other design elements.

5. Please rate the importance of a brief, direct objective statement on a résumé like the example below. (Example was provided)

Important, but not as much as in 2014

- 73% think that it is at least “Somewhat Important”
- Decrease from 83% in 2014 survey

IMPLICATION

A résumé should usually include an Objective.

If job search focus is completely clear based on major and experience, applicants don't need the objective.

6. Does your organization scan résumés with computer software to screen candidates?

Not typically

- **86%: No**
- **2014 survey result was 95%: No**

IMPLICATION

Write your résumé with a human in mind.

Almost always, a human is looking at your résumé, although that might be slowly changing.

7. At what point is it appropriate for an international student to bring up their work authorization status?

Majority say “during application”

- 61% on résumé or in cover letter
- 27% during initial interview
- 12% are not familiar with work authorization issues

IMPLICATION

Include the information in the résumé or cover letter.

Although 30% of those who are familiar with work authorization indicate the initial interview as the appropriate time, they would likely not be annoyed by the information being provided earlier.

8. After you receive applications for positions, how effective is it for applicants to follow up with you if you didn't respond to them?

Apparently, it's effective.

FOLLOW UP

- 40%: Very effective
- 44%: Somewhat effective
- 16%: Not effective

In 2012, we asked: After applying for a position, if a candidate has not heard back from you within two weeks, how should they contact you to check on the hiring process?

We were surprised in 2012

FOLLOW UP

- 46%: **Email**
- 8%: **Phone**
- 23%: **Either** email OR phone
- 23%: **Prefer no follow-up**

In 2014, we asked: When is it effective for a candidate to follow up with you after they have applied for a position?

We were surprised **again** in 2014

FOLLOW UP

- 42%: **Always**; it demonstrates the interest and initiative that I want to see
- 46%: **Sometimes**; it depends on the situation
- 12%: **Never**; No time to respond to all the applicants, so I find it annoying

IMPLICATION

Follow up with caution.

An astounding 84% of employers indicate that this is at least somewhat effective. See caveats revealed in next two follow-up questions.

9. [If response to #8 was "effective"] When should the applicant follow up if they have not heard from you?

1-2 weeks after applying

FOLLOW UP TIME FRAME

- 54%: **One week** after applying
- 33%: **Two weeks** after applying
- 16%: **Three weeks** after applying
- 2%: **Beyond three weeks** after applying

IMPLICATION

Waiting two weeks is safest.

Although it's apparently (?) often okay to follow up one week after applying, waiting two weeks is safer. And you should wait three weeks if you're applying for a government position (42%).

10. [If response to #8 was "effective"] If an applicant (with whom you have not interacted) should follow up with you, how should that applicant follow up?

Employers agree

FOLLOW UP METHOD

- **91%: Email**
- **9%: Phone**

IMPLICATION

If you do follow up, use email.

When following up, use email unless you are applying for a sales position. NOTE: In 2014, we asked the similar question "How should the candidate follow up if they haven't heard from you?"

85% Email

15% Phone

11. Do you follow up with all applicants in some way (even those you are not interested in)?

Mixed bag

EMPLOYER FOLLOW UP

- 50%: Always
- 26%: Depends on the position
- 24%: We only follow up with candidates invited to next step in recruiting process

IMPLICATION

Don't expect employer follow-up

Your application will likely be acknowledged only about half the time. Don't be surprised when you don't hear back from an employer after you've applied.

Hiring Process: data analysis and implications

Survey Qs: Hiring Process

2018 HIRING PROCESS QUESTION TOPICS:

- Social media
- Remote interview preference: Video vs Phone
- Note-taking during interviews (use of devices)
- After interview, candidates' follow-up with recruiter
- Salary negotiation

12. At what point in the hiring process do you use social media, excluding LinkedIn (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.)?

Most use it, but at different times

- 22%: After viewing/receiving the resume
- 22%: After the initial interview
- 13%: Just before the decision to hire
- 43%: We never use social media to screen candidates
- Survey question evolved over time

IMPLICATION

Over half of all employers use social media to screen candidates.

It makes sense to keep professional every bit of you that is publicly accessible.

13. Please rate how frequently you use LinkedIn to view candidates.

A slim majority of employers use it at least occasionally

- 16%: Very frequently
- 16%: Frequently
- 24%: Sometimes/Occasionally
- 30%: Rarely
- 14%: Never

IMPLICATION

Unless your career field doesn't use LinkedIn, it's a good idea to create a professional profile.

Interestingly, LinkedIn appears to be more popular with employers for viewing candidates than for posting positions.

14. For screening, do you prefer video interviews (e.g., Skype), or phone interviews?

Few employers prefer video

- 12%: Video
- 58%: Phone
- 30%: No preference

IMPLICATION

Video interviews aren't usually the "right answer"

When you are asked by an employer if you'd rather have a Skype or phone interview, it's not a trick question. It's okay to say "phone" (which is much easier for you for a variety of reasons).

15. Which of the following devices are appropriate for candidates to use during an interview for note-taking? (Check all that apply)

Employers agree on one answer

- 100%: Pen and paper
- 20%: Laptop
- 43%: iPad or similar
- 14%: Phone

IMPLICATION

Use a pen and paper for note-taking during an interview.

Although other devices might be acceptable to specific employers, why take the risk?

16. When waiting for a hiring decision, how soon should a candidate follow up via email?

Employers generally agree

- 71%: **One week** from last interview
- 22%: **Two weeks** from last interview
- 6%: **Three weeks** from last interview
- 1%: If longer, please explain (timeline longer)

IMPLICATION

After an interview, you can follow up between 1-2 weeks later if you haven't heard back from them.

Of course, you should send a thank-you within a day of the interview.

17. Is it appropriate for entry-level candidates to negotiate your salary offer?

Mixed bag, but a slim majority says "no".

- 10%: Always
- 32%: Usually
- 41%: Rarely
- 17%: Never

IMPLICATION

Students shouldn't feel that negotiation is expected.

In some fields, like Education, salary offers are firm. For government, almost 80% say "Rarely" or "Never". Still, there are appropriate ways to negotiate that will not be offensive in most cases.

Summary of survey topics

Application Process:

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Hiring Process:

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