

THE
COMPLETE
GUIDE

HOW TO BUILD A ROCKSTAR RESUME

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2BY22.BLOG

2

by 22

LETTER TO READER



Hey!

Did you know the average job posting has 250 applicants? And that's for average jobs... I bet you're aiming for above-average or industry-leading jobs.

Among other things, you will need to have a top-notch resume to stand out. That's why I wrote this guide -- to consolidate my thoughts on resume writing into one, central place.

These insights work for the most competitive jobs and are derived from both my personal recruiting journey and my friend who spent 2 years at McKinsey. On top of that, this guide has the stamp of approval from friends who work at top technology companies, consulting firms, investment banks, and more.

Writing a resume is not rocket science, but it is also not intuitive. At UC Berkeley, I relied on older friends and mentors to help with the nitty gritty of recruiting, like writing a resume.

My goal with 2 by 22 is to be that mentor -- someone who's been through what you're struggling with. Through my weekly emails, I will give you specific and tactical career advice to help you manage your future.

Subscribe for my free weekly emails below, and let's kick ass together. Oh, and as a bonus for signing up I'll send you [my exact resume template](#).

Best,
Rohan
Founder of 2 by 22

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Note: There is no such thing as a 1-size-fits all resume guide. The same resume will not be effective for both a neuroscience research position and investment banking internship. That being said, this guide is intended to cover the most important basics which apply to the vast majority of new-graduate jobs and internships. It is a fantastic starting point from which you can tailor to your specific career interests.

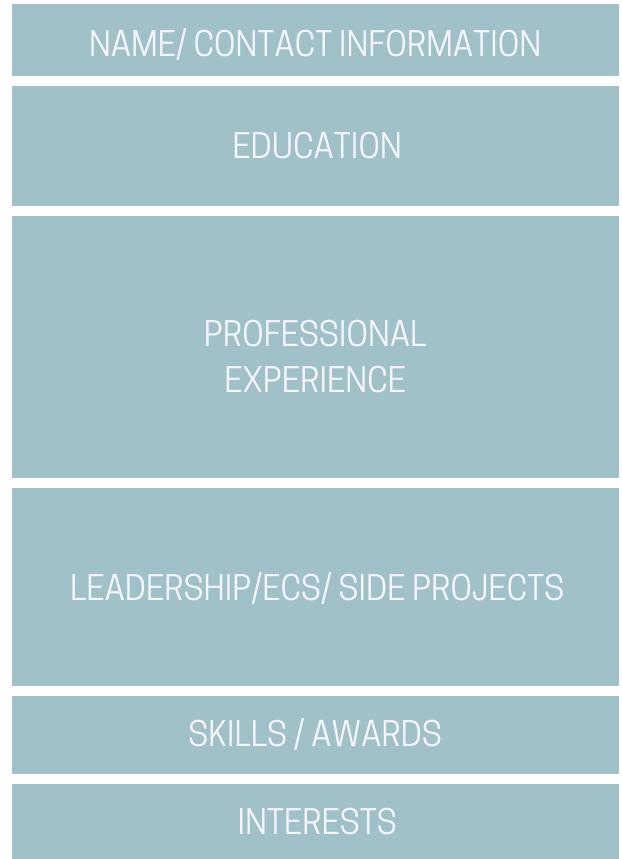
THE MOST IMPORTANT SECTIONS IN YOUR RESUME

Let's start with the basic:

What content do you include in your resume?

The most effective resumes I've seen have the following sections:

1. Name and Contact Info (always at the top)
2. Education (always the first section)
3. Professional Experience
4. Leadership/Extracurriculars/Side Projects
5. Awards/Skills (optional)
6. Interests



Visual Layout of Resume by Section

NAME / CONTACT INFORMATION

This is self explanatory, make sure your name is at the top in **BIG** and **bold** lettering. Your name should be significantly larger than the next largest font size used on your resume.

Underneath your name, include your contact information such as your address, email (no email handles from 6th grade), phone number, personal website, etc. Aside from your LinkedIn URL (optional), do not put social media profiles on your resume.

Easy, right? On to the next!

EDUCATION

One of the most important sections for college students. Given that most students do not have years of work experience, employers rely on basic your academic background as a proxy to assess your intelligence and fit for their firm.

Below is a list of 5 things you should consider including in your education section:

1. Name of all universities you've attended (study abroad included) with expected graduation year
 - ▶ Including your study abroad university can be a great way to spark conversation with your interviewer!
 - ▶ If you do not put your graduation year, many companies will assume you are not qualified and auto-reject your resume
 - ▶ If you're a Freshman, you can leave your high school name and GPA on your resume, but try to move away from that as soon as possible
2. Your major(s), minor(s), and any concentrations
3. Your GPA (optional)

This one depends heavily on your major and type of jobs you are applying to. For general business-related jobs, you will want your GPA on your resume. Even for jobs that don't care about GPA, if you have over a 3.5 you should include it on your resume. If you have a significantly higher *major* GPA than *cumulative*, use that. Above all else, if your GPA is low (<3.0), omit it from your resume -- it will only hurt you.

4. Your SAT/ACT score (optional)

This is a very controversial one but follows a similar story to GPA. Your gut reaction might be "Isn't SAT a high school thing?" You're right, but that doesn't stop employers from caring -- especially for business-related jobs.

If you have a high standardized test score (>31 ACT, >2100 SAT), definitely include it on your resume. It is a helpful data point for employers to assess you -- similar to GPA. If you have a lower composite score but a high quantitative score, you can include just that component on your resume.

This is a way of signaling that you can do math. Lastly, if you have low standardized test scores all around, completely omit it from your resume.

If you are an engineer, science background, or are generally not aiming for business-related jobs, you can omit standardized test scores from your resume.

5. Relevant coursework to the job you are applying to (more specific is better):

Given that I was a business major with a concentration in technology, my relevant coursework section includes: Buy-side Investing, Corporate Finance, Product Management, Strategy Consulting, Accounting, Negotiations and Conflict Resolution

- ▶ I did not put generic classes (prerequisites) like Calculus, English, etc. That's not very relevant
- ▶ I like to put more elective classes than core classes because it can spark a conversation. "Oh I see you took negotiations, that was my favorite class" vs. "oh nice, basic accounting and calculus" (said nobody ever)
- ▶ If you are a freshmen or sophomore and have not taken any interesting elective or core classes, it's okay to put prerequisites like calculus and english. Just try to move away from that as soon as possible

Note: The GPA and standardized test scores are just guidelines. Some firms have solid cutoffs, while others don't care as much. Use your judgement to decide whether to include it on your resume or not.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

This is the big one! You want to put all relevant professional experience on your resume in chronological order.

When you are younger (*Freshmen or Sophomore*) with little experience -- let alone relevant experience -- it is okay to include retail jobs or other work experience from high school. In doing so...

1. Make sure you tie those experiences into your story when in an interview or informational coffee chat
2. Try to get enough relevant experience in college to drop that old/irrelevant experience from your resume as soon as possible

As you get older and rack up more professional experience, it gets harder to fit everything on 1 page. When this happens, prioritize the most important internships or jobs for the role you are applying to.

When I applied to full time jobs my senior year, I showcased 3 out of 5 internships on my resume. They were my 3 strongest and most relevant. For some jobs, I opted to showcase older internships that were more relevant (*industry or experience-wise*).

In general, aim to have 2-4 professional experiences on your resume. With each professional experience, put the company name in bold letters, the location of the job, and position title. Also put the date during which you worked at that company. Example:

EXPERIENCE

The Walt Disney Company, Burbank, CA

June 2016 – Current

Corporate Strategy and Business Development Summer Analyst (In-House Strategy and M&A Team)

Below each professional experience headline, write 3 bullets of content (*minimum 2, no more than 4*).

But wait, how do I write rockstar bullets? Slow down, we'll get there!

Note: If you received a return offer, you can put that as an extra short bullet or next to your position title in the header. Letting your prospective employer know you received a return offer in your last internship is helpful. That being said, it usually only carries weight if your last internship was with a brand name company.

LEADERSHIP, EXTRACURRICULARS, AND SIDE PROJECTS

This is the other big one that is often overlooked by students but should be close in size to the professional experience section. Somebody once told me “*McKinsey likes presidents and founders of organizations, not members or followers.*”

While I think that’s a bit of a snobby oversimplification, there seems to be some truth to it. Many companies in consulting, finance, technology, and other competitive industries crave students who showcase their leadership experience and entrepreneurial endeavors outside of the university curriculum. Lets these experiences shine in this section with the same format as those from the Professional Experience section.

Some examples of experiences to include are:

- Student club/organization involvement (preferably leadership role)
- Side projects with tangible results (*startup/business endeavor, graphic design, programming projects, etc*)
- Nonprofit work
- Captain of sports team
- Student body

If you don’t have any leadership experience (*maybe you’re a Freshmen or Sophomore*), put your role in the club -- even if it is just “*member*.” As a member, take on leadership responsibilities even though you don’t have the title. You want to show that you were an impactful member who takes initiative. As you progress through college, strive for those leadership positions.

Why is leadership so important?

This is what I always tell my friends who consider running for president/leadership of a student organization: “*Once you graduate, when is the next time you will be responsible for managing and leading 50+ people?*”

Being the president of an organization teaches you about organizational structure, culture, and teamwork far more than any class will. It’s a great way to get this type of experience early in your career. Likely the next time you will lead this many people is if you’re an executive of a company, so don’t miss out on the opportunity to learn “executive” lessons in college.

AWARDS AND SKILLS

This is an optional section. If you do include it, keep it brief. This is where you want to list the following:

- Awards
- Scholarships
- Competitions
- Academic Honors

For each award, give some description of how selective the award is. For example:

- Summa Cum laude (top 5% of class)
- Coca-Cola Scholarship (awarded to 150 students nationwide)
- 2nd place Goldman Sachs Case Competition (2nd out of 20 teams)

This helps convey the importance of each award and will be especially useful for lesser-known awards you may have. If the award is well known (coincidentally all 3 of the above examples are fairly well known awards), you can omit the selectivity description.

In this section you can also include relevant skills. One of the biggest mistakes I see on 80% of resumes is the use of *irrelevant* skills.

For example, do not waste valuable words on your resume citing that you are skilled with Microsoft Word. You should probably never have Microsoft Word as a skill for any job... if 10-year olds are using Snapchat it is assumed you know how to use a word processor. Relevant skills are skills that are directly applicable to the job you are applying to. Some example for various roles:

- Data Analyst: Proficient in SQL and R statistical analysis, Excel modeling
- Graphic Designer: Balsamiq wireframing, advanced Photoshop
- Business Analyst: Storyboarding and decking, financial modeling, data analysis with Excel (pivot tables, V-lookups, index match)

A few things I want to call out here:

1. Try to use words like “*proficient*” or “*advanced*” when applicable to indicate your experience with the skill. On paper, there’s no difference between an experienced graphic designer listing “*photoshop*” on their resume and a complete novice also listing “*photoshop*” as a skill. Emphasize your strongest skills to stand out
2. Use adjectives to describe your depth of understanding. For example, Powerpoint is a fairly basic skill. However, someone familiar with more advanced use cases of Powerpoint would appreciate the phrases “*storyboarding*” and “*decking*”. This is a great way to add industry-relevant jargon. Same idea with Excel, where I indicated a few common functions that are well-known for data analysis and modeling
3. Limit your skills to 2 lines on your resume. It’s helpful to score easy points in an interview or resume screen, but will likely not get you the job

INTERESTS

This is the last section in your resume (*and the most fun!*)! The purpose of the Interests section is to humanize your resume.

Use these last 1-2 lines to list out a few *very specific* interests or hobbies you have. While these generally should not be professional, keep in mind your prospective employer will see this so use your judgement.

Lets first talk about what *not* to do. Many students write the following:

- Interests: Traveling, hiking, basketball, reading, dining...

Boring!! If I asked 10 of my friends if they like dining and traveling, all 10 of them would say yes. These are not specific or interesting enough.

You want your interest section to pop out and make the interviewer say “*wow, that’s interesting, tell me more about that.*” This can make interviews a lot more comfortable and earn you serious credibility.

Let’s try this again:

- Interests: Backpacking in Southeast Asia, hiking in Yosemite, pickup basketball (Warriors fan), science fiction novels, hole-in-the-wall Mexican food

See how we can take the same experiences and make them sound much more interesting?

Some other examples of great interests I’ve seen include: spearfishing, sailing on the Marina, reef diving (80ft), espresso barista, classical violin, etc. You can even include a TV show or movie that you love, like “*Game of Thrones*” or “*Blade Runner*.”

Of course, only list interests that are real. Do not try to fake this. It’s disingenuous and you will have difficulty talking about the subject when asked.

HOW TO WRITE POWERFUL, IMPACT-DRIVEN BULLETS

Resume readers scan your resume for less than 30 seconds. I know it sounds crazy, but trust me it's 100% true at many companies. With hundreds or thousands of high-quality resumes per job, readers don't have time to give each resume the care and dedication it deserves.

Welcome to the real world.

In fact, many resume readers just skim the bolded headlines and first few words of each bullet. So how do you catch a reader's attention?

Impact-driven bullets.

With poorly written bullets, the reader will not be interested in your experience. Conversely, well-written and impact-driven bullets will entice the reader into your experiences.

Start your bullet with the impact or outcome followed by what you did. Write out what you did, then ask yourself "*what was the impact of this*" or "*so what?*" Once you figure out the impact/*so what*, rewrite the bullet with the impact first followed by what you did and how you did it afterwards (*how is optional*). This is the reverse of what most students do.

Bonus points if you can quantify your impact (percentage, dollars, etc). I realize this is hard. It's okay to take liberties with how you calculate the percent or dollar impact, but make sure your impact is believable. As an alternative to numerical quantification, you can mention who you presented your work to (the more senior the better). And don't lie. Never *lie*. You don't want the resume reader to second guess your honesty because you claimed to save the company \$50M in a 3-month internship.

Here are three examples of the first few words of action-oriented bullets:

- "Reduced customer service response time by 10%..."
- "Spearheaded \$5M cost-savings strategy..."
- "Increased customer engagement by 5% (\$300k annually) by..."

When skimming these bullets, the reader immediately thinks “wow this person gets shit done.” That’s the exact response you want to elicit.

Unfortunately, here’s an example of a typical student-written bullet (tells reader what he/she did):

- Utilized proprietary analytics platform to identify assumptions and drivers for security market to locate 7 new sales opportunities

Now, this is what a high-quality, impact-driven bullet looks like (quantifies impact):

- Identified \$150,000 in new sales opportunities through a market analysis of the consumer security market using SQL, Excel and proprietary analytics platforms

A few takeaways:

1. The second bullet catches your attention immediately. Wow... \$150,000 in sales... tell me more. Yet all this person did was convert “*7 new sales opportunities*” to an estimated dollar value. Small change, big impact

2. Make your analysis clearly relatable to the jobs you are applying to. Writing “*identify assumptions and drivers for security market*” leaves me wondering what assumptions and drivers were identified? Instead, the phrase “*market analysis of consumer security market*” uses transferable language that is well known to professionals in business strategy (which this person was applying to)

3. Similarly, it’s important to make your skills stand out as easily transferable to the job you are applying to. “*Utilized proprietary analytics platform*” doesn’t mean much to a new employer

- Firstly, they literally don’t know what you did. Did you write lines of code and run complex analysis or click a button on an automated software that does the heavy lifting?
- Secondly, if the analytics platform is proprietary, why would your future employer care about it? By simply adding two popular data analysis tools “*SQL and Excel*,” this bullet better conveys the applicant’s relevant skills

4. It’s also okay if not all your bullets have quantified impact. However, every bullet should start with action oriented verbs. After writing your resume, go through each verb and use this chart from Stanford’s Graduate School of Business to replace existing verbs with stronger, action-oriented ones

5. Write each bullet using professional language. Don't use casual words like "I, my, we." If you're not great with professional language, do your best and have a friend look it over.

6. Do not let any spelling, grammar, or formatting errors slip by. This document is the one thing you have complete control over in the recruiting process -- take the time to make sure it is 100% right. After writing your resume, print it out and read every word. It's much easier to catch mistakes on a paper than on the computer screen. For extra points, send your resume to 2 trusted friends to check for any mistakes you may have missed.

(Friends don't let friends write crappy resumes... right?)

Now that you know the theory behind strong bullets, check out the following 10 examples from my friends. I've split these examples into 3 categories:

1. 3 professional experiences
2. 4 leadership experiences
3. 3 Freshman/Sophomore experiences (for younger students reading this)

Professional Experiences (mostly from Juniors and Seniors):

Note: my friends have a bias towards business strategy and finance jobs, but the underlying principles are the same for anyone:

- Identified 11% annual savings in carbon emissions for Fortune 100 global company by developing a data-driven energy efficiency model with R and Excel
- Recommended 18 new market-entry opportunities by analyzing emerging markets using macroeconomic indicators, socioeconomic demographics, and digital adoption/media consumption; presented findings to senior vice president
- Advised a major film studio on the creation of a [redacted] by creating a business plan and validating content roadmap with consumers through surveys and regression analyses

Leadership/EC/Side Project Experiences:

- Increased applicant pool by 75% in one month by executing a disciplined growth strategy focused on targeted marketing; achieved highest number of applicants in organization's history
- Raised \$3,000 for first annual external event with growth plan to increase sponsorship to \$10,000 in 3 years by establishing long-term partnerships with leading [Redacted]

- Spearheaded the transition of the most exclusive student organization at [Redacted] (1.5% acceptance rate) from hosting networking events on campus to providing strategy and operations consulting services to local businesses
- Led team of 4 undergraduates while managing client expectations to develop market opportunity assessment and product pricing model for B2B [Redacted] startup

Freshmen and Sophomore Experiences:

- Raised over \$2,000 per year and increased hospital awareness by planning and executing millennial-targeted events with the [Redacted] such as bake sales, food fundraisers, and book drives
- Increased client engagement by 5% by sending targeted email advertisements to upsell clients and potential clients on [Redacted] products
- Increased parent membership by 100% and event attendance by 50% through consistent email outreach and engagement to improve overall sorority culture

Yes, you can be impact-driven even with a bake sale.

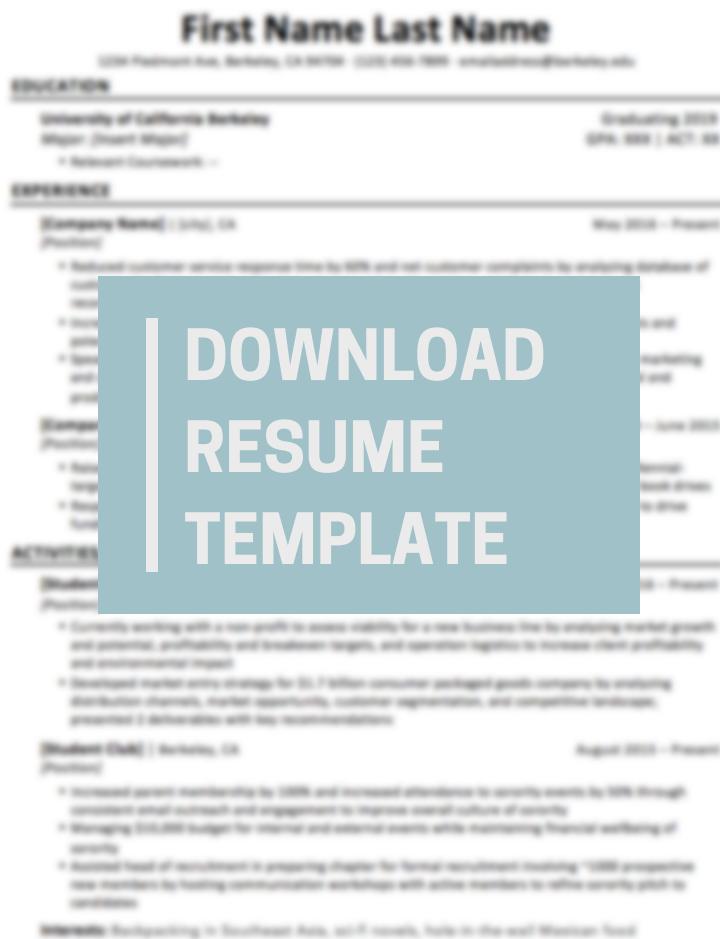
LAST GENERAL TIPS

1. For each internship or leadership experience, you should have 2-3 substantial bullets. If there's only 1 bullet under an experience, it's not meaningful enough to include on your resume.
2. Aim for each bullet to take up 2 lines, and max don't go past 3. It's funny how some students will bend over backwards to put together a bullet that is perfectly 1 line. Often these bullets are weak because it's difficult to explain impact in 1 line
 - On a similar note, don't fuss over getting a bullet to hit the other side of the page perfectly... it's okay if it takes up half a line (*a bullet that takes 1.5 or 2.5 lines is OK*)
3. Resumes are often screened through an automatic software to weed out people who have very little experience. It can help to sprinkle in a few buzz words and phrases directly from the job description to increase your chances of making it past the software
4. Explain your impact. People aren't interested in what you did, they're interested in your *impact*. Make sure each bullet explains the impact or "so what" of your work
5. Never let your resume get longer than one page. A student's (or recent student's) resume should not be multiple pages (*this rule may not apply for research positions or science-intensive roles*)
6. Always submit your resume as a PDF with your first and last name in the file name. When you send your resume as a word document, it gets distorted on the reader's computer due to Microsoft Word version issues. It is best practice to always send a resume as a PDF

RESUME FORMAT

Lastly, as promised here is the link for my exact resume template. Resume formatting is not nearly as important as many students think. Once you get an effective format, stick with it and focus on writing great content. A good format will not get you an interview, but a bad one can hurt your chances.

Try to stay away from Google/Microsoft default resume templates and anything that looks too fancy (flowery fonts, lots of colors, etc). These aren't effective at packing content onto one page and will hurt your ability to communicate your experiences. Of course I'm biased, but I would highly recommend downloading my template and never thinking about this again. There's bigger fish to fry :)



FINALLY...

I guarantee if you follow these steps you will have a rockstar resume. But you can't stop there!

The average job posting gets 250 applicants, many of whom also have strong resumes. We live in a world where anyone can apply to any job with just a few clicks. *What are you doing that's different from everyone else?*

Writing a great resume is just the tip of the iceberg. You still have to find jobs/internships that resonate with your passion, network and validate your interests, land interviews, kill the interview, and more.

There's SO much more to recruiting than applying to jobs online; it can be overwhelming.

But don't worry! Together we can chip away at that challenge with each of my weekly emails. You will find that life gets a lot less stressful when you are in control of your career. All you have to do is take the first step by subscribing below:

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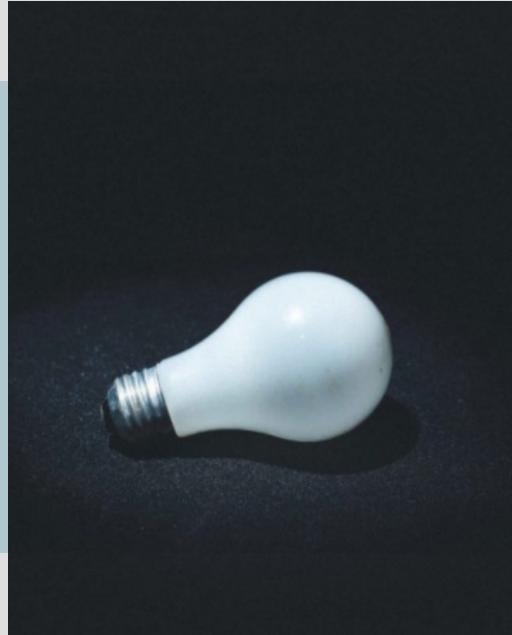
- Rohan

PS. You're welcome to send this to friends -- I always appreciate readers who spread the word. If you like what you read, drop a note at rohan.2by22@gmail.com.

MY BEST ARTICLES... (titles are clickable)

HOW TO FIND YOUR DREAM JOB USING THE HYPOTHESIS-DRIVEN CAREER

Don't know what kind of internship or job you want? Learn how to use an always-be-experimenting framework to build, test, and evaluate your career interests quickly.

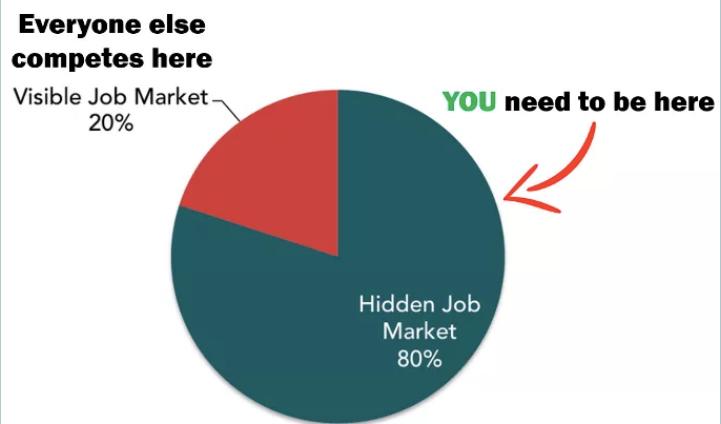


HOW TO USE CULTURE FIT TO IMPRESS YOUR INTERVIEWER

Students often make the mistake of underestimating the importance of culture. Here's how to ask tailored, unique questions to understand a company's culture and impress the interviewer.

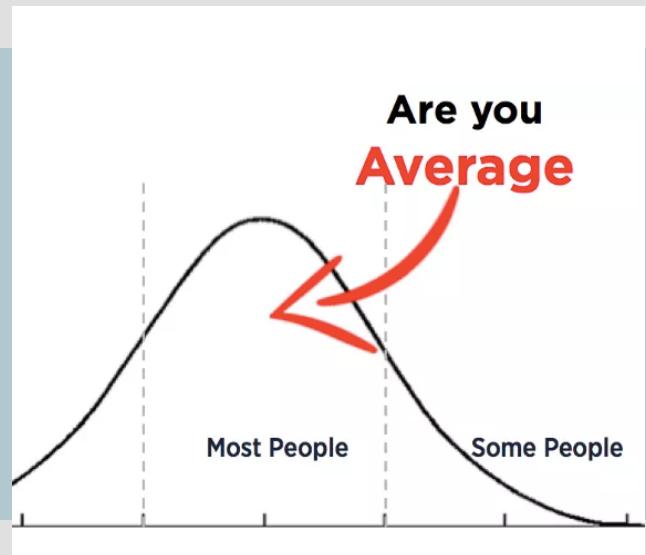
STOP MISSING OUT ON HIDDEN JOBS

Do you know the difference between being proactive and reactive? It's the difference between applying to visible jobs posting vs. finding hidden job opportunities. This can make or break your early career.



YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO BE AVERAGE

Are you doing the same thing as everyone else?
Doing average things leads to average results.
Here's how you can step up your game.



Change your odds.

Landing the Interview =
Strong App + + Luck
40% 40% 20%

PART 1: HOW TO STOP GETTING REJECTED FROM INTERVIEWS

How many internship and job listings have you applied to in the last month? This post explains why there is much more to recruiting than submitting your resume online.

WHY COLD EMAILING WILL DRAMATICALLY CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Cold-emailing was the single most useful thing I taught myself. Here's how it changed my life and why you should start cold-emailing now.

