

A MESSAGE TO THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2020

When the Times Square ball dropped on New Year's Eve to kick off 2020, no one could have predicted the way this year's college graduation ceremonies would take place this month. Virtual ceremonies replaced "walking the stage" for thousands of graduates around the country and Zoom commencement speeches replaced stadiums filled with graduates and their loved ones. Now, after all the diplomas are mailed and the caps and gowns are stored away, an entire graduating class faces an uncertain economy and imploding job market, no doubt a scary world of unknowns.

While there previously have been occasions when college students graduated into economic recessions, there is no precedent for the situation the Class of 2020 faces. Which means there really is no solid advice to learn from or viable solutions to rely on for help. The silver lining—if there is one—is that employers are navigating the same economy and therefore understand the situation that graduates are in.

This crisis has highlighted the importance of, among other things, compassion, trust, agility, patience, diligence, and empathy. Keeping those in mind, and adding persistence to the list, here are a couple of things you can do as a post-grad job seeker in this market:

- **Tighten up your resume.** It is a living document and you should update it regularly with any new information regarding relevant projects, papers, clubs, committees, work-study programs, internships, athletics, volunteer activities, awards, and Greek life. Most employers will want to see a resume, so spend the time to keep yours updated.
- **Update your LinkedIn profile.** If you don't have one, create one. Consider it the e-version of your resume. Employers will use your resume and LinkedIn profile to find out more about you. Make sure company names, dates, and job titles all match your resume. And before you can ask, yes, you need a picture, and if at all possible, have it be a professional one.

Once you have your resume and LinkedIn profile aligned, here are three things you can do everyday to get closer to your first job "in the real world."



Network, network, network

Most people say, "It's not what you know, but who you know." Realistically it's not even *who you know*, but *who knows you*. Write down a list of 10 people you know in the industry you want a job in and call them. Tell them you just graduated and ask them who they can connect with you. Invite these contacts to join your LinkedIn network and always look for other ways to build your list of contacts.



Take the starter job

Unfortunately, dream jobs are not that abundant right now. If you cannot do what you love, then look for a job where you can love what you do. Take a part-time job or two. Take a temp job for three or six months. Be flexible today and get any experience you can. Employers will want to see how hungry and motivated you are during this time.



Stand out in your crowd

Create a resume that will catch the eye of a recruiter or hiring manager. Try different tactics such as developing a video or a website. When defaulting to a written resume, white space is good. Use color and font themes. You can also get creative with your LinkedIn profile background image and headline. Again, keep it professional but unique.

While this may seem like an impossible job market right now, rest assured, things will get better. Set goals, stay focused, keep a positive mental attitude, and do not be afraid to ask for help! Build your network, use your network, and share your network.

It might be overused and a tired statement these days, but we are all in this together.

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