

I WANT TO HIRE YOU BUT YOUR RESUME SUCKS

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EDUCATION

School of Hard Knocks & Business Administration
University of Oklahoma

Bachelor of Science, Marketing – May 2009

– Entrepreneurs' Club, Cricket Club, Australian Fiction Club

– GPA 3.5

Central United States Clown Academy
Undisclosed location in central Kansas

Bachelor of Art, Clowning – May 2003

– Entertainers' Alliance Member, Big Brother in Big Shoes volunteer

– GPA 2.8

EXPERIENCE

SUMMER 2009

Idea Incubator

New Venture Consultant

Advised ventures on issues relating to marketing, competitive strategy, and early stage financing.

– Negotiated a term sheet with a venture capital firm. Largely responsible for the inclusion of revenue milestones in the equity vesting agreement.

– Wrote the business plan for a financial services venture, helping the firm secure investor financing by summer's end. Served as the VP of Business Development.

SEPT 2003 –
NOV 2005

Kidz Partyz Inc.

Supervisor

Supervised a team of 24 entertainment professionals.

– Drafted faux-flower operation and communication manual

– Spearheaded the efficient transportation initiative requiring at least 11 members of each team to travel in the same vehicle

– Managed billing and inventory for footwear distension program and product launch

SUMMER 2003

Badgertown Media

Communications Intern

Managed direct mail campaigns for Badgertown Magazine as well as acting as webmaster for the original Badgertown Media website.

– coded entire content management and blogging system for Badgertown media

– was part of the team that initiated the switch from static code to using WordPress to manage all internal and front-facing content.

30 TIPS TO HELP YOU GET A JOB

WRITTEN BY

Other Skills

HTML, CSS, marketing, e-mail management, blogging, writing, editing, toilet cleaning, soda replacement, WordPress, ebook cover design, dangerous animal control (specifically dealing with *Mellivora capensis* (more commonly known as the honey badger)), Star Trek trivia, iPhone photography, LEGO building.

CORY MILLER

I Want To Hire You, But Your Resume Sucks

30+ Tips To Help You Get a Job

By Cory J. Miller

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About This Book

Books should be more like software.

Every book has bugs in it that need to be fixed (they are simply called errors or typos). As with software, I'm sure every author and editor also wants to do feature enhancements along the way (adding new stories, data, research, or just thoughts we missed).

With the rising popularity of digital books (ebooks) like this one, it is now time to leverage the technology to ensure maximum quality for you — the end users, the reader.

As such they should live and grow and not be imprisoned by the medium. Ideas should take flight easier than ever. You should be able to agree or disagree and let your opinion be known. Thus, throughout this book, you'll have the opportunity to go online to interact and share ideas and concepts that resonate or simply piss you off.

But in the meantime, if you'd like to receive updates for this book, and learn about others we're working on, simply signup for this book's community email list at: PurposefulPaychecks.com.

Enjoy!

Title: I Want To Hire You, But Your Resume Sucks

Author: Cory J. Miller

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Cover Letter (aka the Introduction)

Your resume sucks. Or most of the resumes I've seen do.

The state of resumes is pretty bad. But it isn't necessarily because of the paper they are printed on, or even how they are presented.

They suck because the person it belongs to:

- doesn't know what they really want out of a job
- doesn't see how or why work can connect and align with purpose and passion in all aspects of life
- lacks the experience and expertise for the job they **THINK** they want
- and, is simply focusing on the wrong things

As someone who regularly interviews people (as well as been interviewed by dozens of prospective employers), I want to help.

This book is about building a resume that doesn't suck, but we must start from the foundation up. That fancy, stupid cream letter bond paper that most people know as the "resume" is just a brochure of you.

But the physical piece of paper known as a resume -- and its layout and design -- is not what we're going to be discussing here. This book isn't about improving your actual printed resume. (There are a ton of other books on that subject.)

A resume is typically just a one or two page presentation stating all the reasons someone should hire you ... or give you an interview to state your case more thoroughly in person. It's a summary and reflection of what you've done to get the job you want (or need).

And most of those do suck. Bad. Not just because of the design ... but because most of the people writing them haven't done all the right things to make themselves truly stand out effectively.

This book is about all the **INGREDIENTS** that employers want to see from you -- the human being behind that piece of paper.

So ultimately, here I want to talk about doing the things that will get you hired and pay you well for your talents and passions. (And it ain't that piece of pulp.)

In this book, I want to help you:

- understand who you are fundamentally
- discover and follow your passions -- to find what drives you
- get the experiences and expertise you need to do what you love
- start connecting with the right people to land that dream job
- become a true professional and free agent that is in high demand

So that ...

- you will be more capable to change the world by applying your skills, talents, time in your work
- your "resume" will stick out to me and I'll want to hire you
- and, more importantly, in the process a lot of other people who have more positions and money will want to hire you!

Who's this intended for?

I've written this primarily with young people in mind. The 18 to 20-somethings of the world, who are just getting out of formal education (or better yet - those just now entering it!) ... and who actually want to secure a good job that pays them well to do what they love every day.

The fact is ... we need world changers. I believe your generation can. But you need some help. You need some coaching, maybe an old-fashioned butt kicking. To push you to invest in yourself and in the future.

Entrepreneurs like me and companies like mine (and bigger) need people like you with the skills and right attitude to connect with our teams and our mission and purpose.

There are some reasons why those resume templates exist, right? It's probably because that information is a good starting point to see if you have the skills, training, experiences that fit the position they are trying to fill.

If you read and do what I am telling you in this book, then you will not have to worry about what to put on your resume. You will be worrying about all of the wonderful information you won't be able to include!

So let's start picking apart your "resume."

And by extension I'll use the general categories on a typical resume only to illustrate some things I think you are missing and offer up some advice about beefing up those areas.

I'm basically just going to use those elements as a guide and platform to rant and riff on things you need to be doing, or getting better at.

So let's get going!

Name, Address, Contact Information

OK, so this tells the world your name and vitals. But I don't want to skip an opportunity to get you thinking about something even deeper related to it.

#1: You need to know yourself.

You put your name and information down, but do you really know WHO you are, what makes you tick and what things drive you and resonate deep in your soul? Do you know your personal [Why](#)? You need to know what you like, what you love, what you loathe, what you hate and despise. You need to know your passions, purpose, personality, and [strengths](#).

You need to know what truly gets you out of the bed in the morning ... or keeps you up at night.

This takes time, patience and work. It means testing out new experiences that stretch you and make you think. Then evaluating what you've learned about yourself.

Tip: Here are some of the tools I've used to learn more about who I am to get you started:

[Kiersey / Myers Briggs Personality Test Indicator](#) - took this in college and have come back to it almost every week since. I am an INFJ. A rich personality test I've used to continue learning who I am and how I function in the world.

[StrengthsFinder 2.0](#) - learn your top 5 strengths and how to leverage and maximize them for success doing what you're naturally good at. My top strengths are "Learner," "Individualization," "Maximizer," "Futuristic," and "Intellection."

[5 Love Languages](#) - this is one of THE best tools for an intimate relationship. But I also see value for it in your profession. My love language is "Words of Affirmation."

[Standout](#) - just like StrengthsFinder, it is a book with a code for the online assessment and author Marcus Buckingham was a Gallup researcher and writer and pioneer in the Strengths movement. I am a "Pioneer" and "Influencer."

[Kolbe](#) — I know very little about this one as I only took it this year. I'm a high "Quick Start" and essential or medium "Fact Finder."

Objective

I hate these statements on resumes because everybody just changes them for the job they are applying for even if they don't really mean any of it. It's not authentic. It's fluff. I tend to ignore it.

But I think your personal Objectives statement needs to resonate deeply within you and be a reflection of who you are and what you like or love to do.

So with that, here are some tips in this area that should illustrate your personal Objectives in life, talking broadly about some key elements that will help you stay on course, and how to make the most of your life:

#2: You need to know what the heck you actually want to DO with your life.

Or at least the first couple of years, or even months of your professional life.

How do you want to use your time and talents to make a difference in the world?

Listen. You have a finite time on this earth. Make a difference with it. Use your time and talents to make something better in the world. Work is vital. Most of you won't have a trust fund, or parents to support you forever. So find something you can do that you enjoy that pays well enough to support the life you want to lead.

(This does take hard work. The right work just won't appear magically in front of you. You have to do your own research and explore the world.)

Yes, you CAN do what you love AND get paid for it. But you have to know what drives you and what you want to do that someone else is willing to pay you to do for them. I'll talk more later about how to discover those.

But in the meantime, start asking yourself: What are your life objectives? What are your life goals and dreams? What do you want your life look from years from now? How about 20? How about at 70?

#3: You need some spark on its way to a bonfire.

You need to care about something, anything. You need a pulse for life.

No, correct that, you need a racing pulse about something.

What are your passions? What lights your soul on fire? What gets you up in the morning and keeps you up late at night?

Initiative and drive are valuable assets for your resume. They are birthed from passion and purpose.

What is your purpose? What are you uniquely meant to do?

You need a cause -- and something to care about (core values) -- and that doesn't only mean social causes. You need to care about something big enough you'd devote a significant part of your time and talent to making it better and a difference in the world.

You can do this as an engineer, a lawyer, a truck driver or a nanny. Your work in some way, shape or form will have some traceable impact in the world.

I've met too many people -- young, old and in between -- who simply don't have anything they care about except themselves.

Live a life of meaning. Find something that you care about enough to do it for FREE.

(Not that you should do it for free, but simply ask yourself: "If all of my physical and financial needs are met, what would I do without worry of compensation?")

Then connect all these things to a job that allows you to get paid for it.

Tip: Write the answers to these questions down. Do a brain dump and leave nothing out. Reflect on them. And then leave them for a week and come back and see what you are most drawn to.

#4: You [might] need an attitude adjustment.

You don't want to hear this, but everybody pays their dues.

In soccer club or the baseball team you didn't arrive on the team and just demand to be the starting pitcher or the coach, did you? You probably also lacked experience and expertise for First Chair in band too.

You can probably get there or close with enough talent, practice and time. But not instantly when you walk in the door at your first job.

But trust me, as a boss, for some of you Chosen Few, we also realize that you know EXACTLY ALL the issues and problems with our organizations and how to fix them instantly. We know that from day one when you arrive, you were sent from heaven to cure us. You are indeed God's gift to us. We realize you know the entire history of our organization, industry, the unique circumstances and culture we've built, all the reasons why we have a sign over the sink to do your own dishes, and the personalities and HR issues of every person in the company.

YES, we know you are the expert on all these things when you arrogantly share them with anyone who will listen.

I hope you sense the dripping sarcasm in all of this. But I will admit, I have been there myself and thought I was the cure. (I wasn't.)

Unfortunately, no one will want to work with you with that kind of attitude.

I hope you learn this BEFORE your first job (which is why I suggest you get a really crappy job before entering your chosen profession, so someone else teaches you this).

Some of you will call me cynical. I am. But I'm also still hopeful, which is why I've written this. Because I've met a lot of humble, supremely gifted young people who had nothing but upside potential in their life ... and I've tried to hire them ALL and help them get where they want to be as fast as they can.

The key though is humility.

Those bright stars came in just wanting to contribute to something bigger than themselves. They wanted to use their passions, time and talent for something of purpose. But those were the ones who worked, often behind the scenes, mastering their job skills (on nights and weekends) and were trusted with more and more because they **EARNED** it each and every day being consistent, flexible and dependable. They were never satisfied with yesterday's best and continue to learn and grow.

I hope you come with that kind of an attitude, because it's costly and hurtful to do it for you.

#5: You need to be uniquely you.

As you contemplate your life's Objectives, remember that they also need to be infused with your unique and unmistakable DNA.

I don't want to hire a clone. You have unique skills, strengths, personality, passions and experiences -- that mixture and then seeing how it can add value to my organization and help us move closer to achieving our vision is why we want you.

Personally, as I've gotten older, I've realized that I just want to be me -- just uniquely me. Not anyone else. Getting comfortable in my own skin has been the one of the most valuable experiences of my life. But it's an every day resetting of my mind to just be comfortable in who I am, what I like, how I walk through the world.

Now, being uniquely you doesn't mean you decide to purposefully lack social skills and etiquette. It isn't an excuse to be an idiot and a jerk to others because "that's just who I am." You need to **BE** you while functioning like a human being who needs and wants to be with others.

I look for someone who is the "real deal," who can work with others, contribute value, and who is one-of-a-kind in so many positive and special ways that you add something unique to our culture.

#6: You need to do something you love, or at least like.

Please don't take a job if you know you'll ultimately hate it. Or worse it's not what you want to be and it's just a waiting room for the real dream you have so you half-ass it until your name is called elsewhere.

Also, don't take a "money job" **JUST** for the money. You're going to be sloppy miserable and hate your life when you're older and stuck because you've built a lifestyle around that money job. (Just ask your parents or their unhappy friends.)

And you're also going to be empty.

If you just see dollar signs and have no purpose or passion for it: **RUN**.

Sometimes you think you will like or even love a job until you get in the job. But make the best of it. Do what you've agreed you would do. Give your best. Then find something you think you'll like or might love again and test that out.

Ask: Does what you're going to do match what you want to do in life? Will it play to your strengths and skills? Will it allow you to learn and grow so that you can master it each and every day? Will it give you a sense of purpose through doing it?

#7: You need to understand how money works.

You need to figure out the actual value of money and why people give it to you in return for the things you do in your job. Learn why you get paid a paycheck. And then also learn how to use the money you get wisely. Go through [Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University](#) NOW ... it'll save you thousands and thousands of dollars but more importantly free you to live life to the fullest.

Too many people misuse money because they don't understand it. They have their values and priorities messed up. I did. I had to relearn the proper view of money and create new financial habits ... so that I could truly be free to live my hopes and dreams, without the anchor of massive and suffocating debt.

If you get the right understanding of money now, you're going to be so much more happy and successful in life. I can promise you that.

#8: You need to know what good ethics are.

Learn how to do right by your employer, your coworkers, and the people you serve -- your clients or customers. Always put people first.

Do right by and for people. Always.

When you do that, more doors of opportunity will open to you because people will know you value others.

But it also has to do with work ethic. Make sure you give your best and all to what you're doing (without sacrificing principles or people). This means while you're at work, you actually work hard at it. You focus on what tasks have been given to you.

It sometimes means working late to meet a deadline or finish a team project. It might mean getting there early and then preparing over a weekend. It means not being distracted by others not giving their fullest or following in their path.

Either way, just give your best. It's advice my dad gave me early on that has stuck with me.

When I give my best, even if things don't go my way or I fail, I know I did my part. I did all I could to win or satisfy the people I report to and at the end of the day, that's all I can control.

And that's internal satisfaction and contentment no one can give or take away from you.

#9: You need a coach or several different kinds of them.

Coaches and mentors will help guide you, keeping you on course and helping prevent blind spots in your career. (I'll expand on this more References.)

Find alignment with all the above and chart your Career Course.

In this section under Objectives, we've talked about some broad subjects from finding your life's aim and passions, to approaching life and work with the right attitude for it while staying uniquely you, all the way to a quick word on handling money and good ethics.

Get these foundational aspects of your life right as it will significantly determine your success and happiness down the road.

Knowing and living them out well are vital -- and I would say non-negotiable -- to finding the right job that aligns with who you are and what you want out of work and life. When you do so, you become free to use your talents in the world to the fullest extent while supporting your life and pursuing your passions through your vocation.

Figure these things out and your Objective's statement on your actual resume will simply exude from you naturally onto paper, because you're seeking work that fits you best.

And in those interviews with prospective employers who are offering the job you want, you won't be on a blind date. You'll be showing them why you're the perfect match for the job!

Education, Skills and Experiences

This is that beautiful part where you really get to show value to potential employers by explaining that you can actually do things they need accomplished.

In this area of your "resume," I want to know that you have the foundation necessary to do the tasks and activities I need you to do in your work for me. That you can actually **DO** your job ... or **LEARN** fast what we need you to if not. If you can't, I don't need you on my team.

So here are some things you need to think about concerning Education, Skills and Experiences:

#10: You need to start acquiring real-life skills yesterday, today and tomorrow.

You need actual skills and expertise to do the work we need accomplished. This is where a lot of young people have huge gaps. (And yes, I understand that you're young and haven't had a lot of time to glean a ton of skills.)

Although you might have spent four-plus years getting a certificate or degree, that's just a piece of paper that says you completed coursework for someone else. We want to know what you have to offer that translates to the bottomline, and that you can connect with our existing teams and offer value to them and the overall organization.

Many of you lack the actual skills we crave to just do the work we need done.

We realize we'll have to train you, but you need to also have a foundation to work from. We need **SOME** baseline to work with, like just being familiar with the terms or jargon in our field of work.

It means not relying on someone else to hand you your skills ... but getting a jumpstart on acquiring those skills now.

For example, with software developers, this means tinkering with code and open source projects at the earliest age possible and building your own projects. Our best developers started when they were 12 or 13 years old messing around with code. They built and broke things, experimenting, seeing what things do, then learned how to fix it, or better even, reverse engineered it.

As a budding journalist in college (back in the early '90s) I took several jobs throughout college that gave me a leg up on the competition -- like being an intern at our university's Public Relations office, gophering for the state newspaper during a tragedy, and yes, **WRITING** at our campus newspaper. (I even sold ads one semester!)

Find the skillsets most desired, required and needed in the profession you're aspiring to (or general field) and **GO GET THEM**.

Everybody starts somewhere. So start at step 1. Start learning that vital skill needed to get your foot in the door.

The more skills in your resume arsenal, the better. More actual skills that can be used and applied in a job function for an organization equals more opportunities and, yes, money for you.

If you don't know what all those skills are, ask someone in that profession or job you're interested in what you need. A good excuse to get a conversation with them is to interview them for your blog ... that you happen to be writing about the job they do every day.

(I'll talk about some specific skills to look to acquire down the line a bit. But you can also see my recent post on [Getting Paid Well to Do What You Love.](#))

#11: You need actual life experiences.

I'm not talking about just backpacking through Europe for a summer. I'm talking about life experiences that help shape you and teach you about the world and how to thrive in it.

Thus, you need a set of DIVERSE life experiences. Experiences that teach you something about work in general, your profession, the field you're in, how to work with people and yeah, life.

First and most basically, **get a job.** You need to actually have worked SOMEWHERE before you hit our door. I meet more and more young people who've never held A job, let alone several jobs. You need to get an internship or part-time job in your field or as close as you can to it while you're in school.

And dare I say if all else fails ... you might need to work manual labor. GASP!

I did the grimy, crappy work in my family's two businesses as a teenager. I worked alongside my father, grandfather and uncles -- who all taught me what real, honest hard work is and never let me coast through a day. (It was also great motivation to go to school and get some skills to work in an office!)

If all else fails, go work fast food for a summer. You'll get a great appreciation for all this.

#12: You need to take a keyboarding class.

If your career involves working on a computer (highly, highly likely), then learn how to type fast WITHOUT looking at the keyboard. It was the most practical class I took in high school. It's saved me hundreds of hours of time and immense amounts of energy over the years.

It's a practical skill that anyone in this increasingly tech world can use and leverage. I wish more people had this skill.

#13: You need to learn software, coding and/or another language.

Many jobs have software apps that are the "standard" and used prolifically throughout the industry. If you know those programs backwards and forwards, you're a mile ahead of everybody else.

For coding, just know there aren't enough good programmers to build and maintain all the software needed NOW. The demand will only exponentially increase for this.

But I think learning basic HTML and CSS are essential for most career professionals and very easy to learn. (If I can do it, you can too.) Knowing these basic web skills or being familiar will only set you apart in a crowded or competitive work environment.

For languages, we know you have traveled the world, but did you also learn German or French too? Who knows what next acquisition the company is looking to make. Or, maybe you want to work overseas. Or, you might even bump into someone you admire and surprise them by understanding a language.

All of these just set you FAR apart from others. They make you diverse and valuable.

Tip: There are opportunities everywhere to glean these types of skills. College, universities and career techs offer these classes in many of these areas. If you lack the money but have the time available, you can find how to do almost anything online by Googling for it, reading the blog or book, or watching the YouTube video series. It simply comes down to dedication and drive. Most people aren't willing to put in the time, but the ones who reap the rewards spend years on nights and weekends gathering these types of skills. The only excuse you'll have is that you lacked that type of dedication and commitment. That's pretty lame and employers will quickly see that.

#14: You need to always be learning and growing.

If you aren't growing, you're dying. Period.

Commit to being a lifelong learner.

Your degree isn't a stop sign for learning. It's a green light for the rest of your life.

The best of the best are only the best because they continue to hone their skills and realize they will never magically "arrive." If they stop, they get passed by. They become irrelevant fast because there is always someone wanting to supplant them, who has the drive and commitment to keep pushing themselves to be and do better.

Let's face it: learners are just more interesting to be around too!

There is always something new to learn, to explore. A new tool to add to your arsenal and offer your company and the world. So don't start coasting along just because you've gotten to some position of prestige and power.

#15: You need to be eating trees.

I realize you've been force-fed books all your life by your teachers. And that you have the attention span of a gnat. Those are lame excuses for not wanting to spend the time and energy to read.

Don't let that stop you from being a voracious reader.

You need to start a reading addiction now. And I don't mean fiction. Read things you can apply to your work or add to your skill toolbox. Learn more about your field and where you want to go. Books are the cheapest way to glean wisdom and now they are [portable on all your devices](#). I carry my library of over 150 books (and counting) with me everywhere I go on my iPhone.

For most people I've met, the urge to read doesn't come naturally. That's why I push our team to read, and read constantly. I share what I'm reading with them and others. I ask what they are reading. I encourage them to get something on their reading table.

I read to stay up-to-date ... but also to stay ahead.

I read to stay sharp. To stay competitive. To improve and innovate. To round out my perspective and opinions. To fill in the gaps of my knowledge and expertise. And for a whole bunch of other reasons other than I am just naturally curious about what I don't know and how others think and react.

Reading gives you that competitive edge that's even more important in the job market today. Your resume and reputation will eventually lag behind those who find the time for reading.

Reading saves me mistakes. If I didn't have my insatiable appetite for reading, I wouldn't be where I am today. I wouldn't have been as successful, and I would have failed much more than I already have. I get to learn about others and find a new and better path.

Reading saves me time. I can't always sit through a day-long workshop or travel to a conference. But a book is there whenever I am available (even at the waiting room at my doctor's office).

Reading gives me the most value for the buck. From books, I get other's wisdom, expertise and experiences in a neatly organized, 24/7 on-demand presentation that I can pause, highlight, makes notes, write about, and share with others, including my team. And if that books sucks, I just put it away and move onto something else that does.

All for less than \$25 (or under \$14 now). What a bargain!

#16: You need to learn to write well.

Start reading [On Writing Well](#) by William Zissner once a year for the rest of your life. It's a desk reference on writing.

Writing is a skill that every employer wants and desperately needs (even if they don't realize it). And you'll use it every single day.

If you can write well, you can probably communicate well.

Through my writing, I can clarify and crystallize my thoughts and ideas.

My writing has helped me talk to others better. It's prepared me for those spontaneous conversations where I have to defend my point of view, or close a deal. It's helped me in speeches and presentations.

And overall, being a writer has made me more confident in life and valuable to others I work with.

#17: You need a blog.

This is an extension of the last point on writing. A blog is just a tool for writing, but also sharing that writing with the world.

A blog is one of the easiest (and most affordable) ways to start honing your writing while sharing your experiences and expertise with others. And it's a great way to market yourself for prospective employers, especially if you are blogging about your chosen career field.

I thought of one of my first professional blogs as "my 600-post resume." Prospective employers could see my thoughts, ideas, expertise all in one searchable, bookmarkable place. Whenever I sent a resume for a job, I would include a link to my blog (if it synced with that job).

A lot of blog readers will lurk from afar. So you never know who could come across your blog, sense your unique personality, and contact you when an opening comes up.

Make sure you've linked your social media profiles -- from Twitter to LinkedIn -- on your site so people can follow you or learn more about you. And start building an email list from the beginning.

Tip: The best way to start a blog is to use WordPress. Yes, I'm heavily biased as I've been using WP since 2005 or so and have built an entire company on it ... but if my mom can use WordPress and maintain her site with it, so can you. Two great starter options are WordPress.com (free) and BuildaWebsite.com (easy but paid). We've also got a number of tutorials and tools to get you started. [Contact us today to help!](#)

#18: You may want a simple website too.

A personal website is your online 24/7 business card. CoryMiller.com has been mine since 1998. And by the way, your blog can double as your website.

Tip: Ditto for the previous tip on Blogging. Use WordPress. It's easy. Simple. All you need is a [domain name and hosting](#).

#19: You need to be on social media but be smart about it.

The point of social media is about connecting with human beings and making networking easier, faster. But it never replaces face to face contact.

As you've grown up WITH social media like Facebook and Twitter, you probably realize more than ever that your life is increasingly transparent. However, just because you're comfortable with more transparency (how many of you have grandmothers who stalk you on Facebook?) doesn't mean you shouldn't smart about it.

Potential employers are looking at your social media profiles. If all you post is drunken photos, or constant ranting over stupid things, you could really damage your opportunities. I have seen examples of all of this and each time I cross people off my list of those I'd do business with or hire.

Thus, you need to be careful what you choose to share on those channels. This sounds obvious, but I need to say it.

For the most part, what's said or done online sticks, forever. It'll be cached and stored. Even my lame website from the late '90s can be found online! Don't let something stupid you did haunt you online.

Tip: Don't think it is important to include your social media profiles on your resume? You should! Employers are going to Google you anyway. Just be sure to represent yourself well knowing they are watching. But they can help prospective employers get a feel for who you are and if you are a fit for their organization. Just make it a positive one!

#20: You are a digital native; teach others the language.

We're hoping you can actually show us how to use technology because you're on the cutting edge of it, and we hope you'll be our guide for navigating it.

For young people, this means NO MATTER what job you get you might end up managing the organization's website or become the default "social media expert." Or at the water cooler, simply telling your boss what cool apps to put on his iPhone.

Use this to your advantage. Be in the know regarding tech. What things save time, energy and make you more productive or help the organization out. Know all the shortcuts, hot new programs or platforms and be willing to share it liberally with those in your future workplaces.

#21: You need to know how to Google stuff.

Google is not really a search engine ... it's a problem solver. Learn how to Google for answers to your questions or the roadblocks you hit. There's bound to be a blog, video, or forum talking about how to do what you need to do.

Before you decide to ask someone else a potentially question you could have found yourself in 5 minutes, learn to Google it first.

This shows others you won't waste someone else's valuable time for something you can take initiative to figure out yourself.

Tip: We implemented the 30-minute rule for solving your own problem a while back. Check out my blog post on our [30-Minute Rule](#).

#22: You need some basic web design skills.

I might be biased in this regard, but many of you should have some set of basic web design and coding skills as I mentioned earlier.

More and more the Internet is the hub for all business interactions. Being familiar with HTML and CSS as well as content management systems, social networks and other web software will only help set you apart from others.

#23: You need to rehearse for interviews.

I used to go to job interviews whenever I had the opportunity, almost no matter what the position in my field it was for just to see what the market paid for my skills and to get practice talking about my

"unique value proposition." (Use the previous advice and Google that phrase to learn more what that really means.)

Repetition helps you get more comfortable talking in those scenarios so that when I was in an interview I desperately wanted, I felt more comfortable and confident in speaking about myself and the unique contributions I could make as well as my value in the market.

#24: You need to learn quick what being a professional is.

Get started by reading my [12 Tips for How to Be A Professional](#). You also learn how to be a pro by watching the real Pros in your field. Watch and observe. Emulate their best practices. Ditch their bad habits.

One of the reasons I suggest you get a job before your "real" career starts is so you get an understanding of what it's like to work in a professional environment. I worked in several offices during college and so I wasn't shocked when I had to wear slacks and a Polo shirt to work. OR that you have to get to work on time.

#25: You need to be a ProjectPreneur.

Tom Peters, in his book *The Brand You*, talks about having a collection of "projects" you've been involved with, contributed significantly too, and/or led.

You need a portfolio of projects. And to approach them like an entrepreneur.

Start somewhere, even if it's recruiting coordinator for your sorority. But keep building a portfolio of projects you're involved with and impacting with your time and talents.

At any job, always be on the lookout for projects that will stretch and teach you ... and that you can add to your resume.

If needed, volunteer to help teams with these type of projects, on your own time and dime if you can't on the clock.

Keep track of the measurable results and impact they had so you can share with others.

#26: You need a [simple to-do list](#).

Whether it's a printed moleskin or a digital notepad (like Evernote), you need to have a To Do list of the things you need to get done (with dates and milestones). This shows us you're able to keep track of all the things you need to get done. It also makes sure you don't forget ... and if your boss sees you writing down things you're assigned, it brings a measure of confidence that you were indeed listening.

I've carried around small steno pads in meetings for years (from my days as a journalist) as well as use a simple text document on my computer that stays open all day. Between these two tools, they help me remember conversations, ideas and of course action items so that as I delete or mark off things I've done I get a feeling of accomplishment.

#27: You need to guarantee delivery.

It's not enough to have a list though. You also have to complete those assignments. Finish. Deliver.

This means you can actually get the shit done you say you will. Period.

I want to be around people who can ship, who can deliver on their promises, who take their assignments seriously and follow through.

So does the rest of the world.

If you can guarantee delivery like FedEx ... only in your job ... you're going to command money, influence and better [insert whatever good benefits you want]. Your reputation will be quickly known by those who can move you into that job you want.

Make sure you deliver. Which often means doing the work.

Employers love the 'Education, Skills and Experiences' section.

Which is why I've spent a lot of time suggesting things and unpacking them.

We look to this section on your resume because we need to see what you can do for us.

This is why the college degree has been so elevated to its esteemed and sometimes overinflated status. Someone else (a Ph.D. maybe or a board of them) has certified that you've completed a minimum number of required courses in an area of study. Somehow magically that should tell us that you can do a certain amount of work, gotten a primer on the field or frankly, be taught how to do it.

See how the process works? It's some level of validation that is measured.

But don't simply rely on a piece of paper though. Do the work to build skills in the areas above. Go outside of the syllabus in every area. Learn, learn, learn. Seek to acquire new skills and to forever sharpen them. Be well versed in them to be able to communicate them to others.

Because ... skills pay the bills.

References and Recommendations

The people you know ... and who know you will make ALL the difference for you. It is WHO you know. And if you've done all the above, but you're also connected with those in the industry (meaning they know you), then congrats, you're in for a great career as you're going to be in demand.

Some of the best team members we've hired had prior relationships with me. I had the opportunity to get to know them (versus one or two hour-long meetings that is like speed dating), their personalities, what things they were learning and how they were progressing and growing.

When the opportunity presented itself, it was a no-brainer to hire them.

Cultivating those relationships with me made all the difference for them.

For example, one of our current team members, Cody, took the initiative to introduce himself to me when he was first beginning college. He simply asked for career advice and if he could go to lunch with me. Then afterward he faithfully kept in touch with me, and almost five years after that initial email to me, when we had a position open, he was perfectly positioned to be at the top of the list for that job. (And yes, he got the job and has done amazing in it.)

Tip: When you leave a job, internship, volunteer position, ask your superior for a letter of recommendation. If you think your boss is receptive but lacks time, offer to create a draft for them to make their own. Once you get the letter, scan it in your computer as a PDF and save it for future use. That way you are not trying to track down references and letters the day before an interview.

#28: You need to build a massive Rolodex, uh, I mean, iPhone's Contacts list.

Meet and build relationships with awesome people and with as many people you can who are going to be in your field. Introduce yourself in person and on social media in the least annoying or self-serving way you can. (Flattery typically works well. But asking advice or insight can be equally effective when done properly without wasting their time.)

You need to start building your personal brand. And that means that people know who you are and what you offer the world. You need to be seen and visible. If you never get out and in front of people, you're going to be missed, no matter how talented or capable you are.

Because nobody knows you.

While in college, our designer Brad shared with me how he built his name recognition and contacts list:

"It started with agency tours. I was the VP of Ad Club in college, so we would take agency tours in Oklahoma City (and Houston, San Francisco, New York and other places). I went on every trip they offered and met all the people giving the tours and made sure to follow up with the people who seemed cool. And since the ad world is so close-knit here, you meet 2 or 3 people, every time you see them again around the city, you meet the people with them. Standard networking, I just didn't really do it on purpose. I was just looking for people to learn from."

THAT'S how you take advantage of opportunities and take initiative! Leverage them to meet people, build your contact list and by extension build your personal brand.

Just recently, Brad and I were together at a local coffeeshop when he saw another talented and well-known designer and introduced me to him! He's still doing it!

#29: You need to be scouting people and places.

Start collecting the people you want to work for (or with) and the places you want to work at. Find people who work there. Get on their talent radar by being helpful, asking good questions that demonstrate you value their expertise, and make an impression.

Make a list of all these people and places. Follow them on Twitter. See who they talk to, then follow them too. Read what they push out. Watch all their videos. Make useful, interesting comments back about it all.

And then picture yourself working with them!

#30: You need role models, mentors and advisers.

You need to find people to look up to and to listen to. I love having mentors and advisers because I get to learn from their pain and mistakes ... at a fraction of the cost they paid to go through it.

My mentors are my counsel of elders for living a life of purpose and passion. I want people who have rich and diverse experiences and expertise ... who graciously give it ALL away to me. I want mentors who want to leave a legacy within me.

Great mentors simply want the best for you. But they should also tell you when you're going astray or need some course correction.

Mentors help you see your blind spots as they help you get perspective and are looking ahead for your best interest. They are partners for life

- Sometimes they pick you up.
- Sometimes they pull you back down to reality.
- Sometimes they put their boot in your butt and a fire in your pants.
- Sometimes they walk beside you through the dark and scary times!

These are the close and committed people who become your life's board of advisers. But you also need role models and others who are in the profession or work you're seeking to do.

Ask the people who work for or lead the places you want to be career-wise for their advice on what you need to do to be successful in your ideal job ... and what you can be working on now to get there.

Listen to them, write it down, then act on their advice.

Later, followup letting them know how you're progressing and implementing their wisdom.

#31: You need 5-star recommendations and referrals.

You need glowing recommendations from influential and connected people who will say good things about you even when you haven't asked them to.

Comments like, "You have to hire this guy. He's a rising star." Or "If you don't hire her, I'm going to." I know because I'm usually the one saying it about young up and comers.

It's also good to get actual Letters of Recommendations from people that you can copy and use in interviews as I mentioned previously. These are testimonials and social proof to others ... and save time for the person you list on all your job applications.

You can get these types of recommendations primarily by interning for them -- going above and beyond for them. And then also over coffee or lunch, demonstrating how much you know and what potential you offer them. (See also the tips on Blogging)

Parting Words for Your Career Journey

So that's it. So far at least. Those are the key areas and tips for creating a resume that doesn't suck.

I've tried to distill lessons I've learned after being in the workforce -- both as an employee and an employer -- so you will be in-demand and ultimately get hired by the people and places you desire to work for while earning a living doing what you enjoy.

So here are the 30,000 foot questions to ask yourself along the way:

Do you know who you are? What you like, don't like? Your strengths, passions, personality?

What are your life goals, hopes and dreams? And how can you best accomplish them with the time, talent and treasure you have?

Have you started building a set of skills, training and experiences that will allow you to earn a living doing what you love?

Are you building a list of people who know who you are and can help you on your journey?

If you attempt to do most of these tips and rants previously mentioned, I think you'll be successful. Mileage will vary of course. But you'll know who you are, what you like, where to point your life, you'll begin building valuable skills and experiences to make a living, and collect a network of people who will guide and help you along the way.

And most importantly, you can create an authentic, energizing and valuable resume that only touches the surface of what you can offer an employer (or prospective clients and customers)!

If you enjoyed and profited from this book, check out my career advice blog [PurposefulPaychecks](#) where I'm continuing the conversation and [be sure to join the community.](#)

But Wait ... What If I Really, Really Can't Find What I'm Looking for?

What if you've exhausted ALL your options, done the right things, made the right moves and connections and simply can't find work that fits you?

It might be that sometimes you just can't play well with others. Sometimes you need to call the shots.

Sometimes you have a revolutionary idea that others either can't grasp or won't take the chance on.

Sometimes all the other options are just blah. They don't get you up in the morning, or keep you up late at night.

Then, you might need to create your own job.

That's called [entrepreneurship](#).

I mention this here because I'm extremely excited about more young people looking to start businesses that will innovate and revolutionize entire industries and change the world for the better (or just your corner of it).

Now, I will caution you: Entrepreneurship is not for everyone. It takes a special breed of person to be an entrepreneur (although we come in all shapes and sizes).

But as I have talked to and counseled young people, I explain how this stage of your life can be the most opportune time to start a business and how that is extremely exciting to see.

Think about it ... it's likely that:

You have a low burn rate. Meaning you have little to no debt, like credit cards, car payments or mortgages. (Or at least I hope you don't have much financial baggage.)

You are not married or have children. Meaning you have less relationship commitments that would cause you to be more sensitive to risk, or financial dependency.

You can always move back with your parents, or get a job if things don't work out. A misfire or failure in business has a much easier cushion for you.

I was 31 years old when I started my company. I had no children but I was married with a mortgage (but with little debt). I worked for and with a lot of different people in many diverse organizations before the opportunity came to fulfill my lifelong dream of being a full-time entrepreneur.

I promise you it will never be the perfect time to launch a business. But now, at your age and stage in life, is one of the most opportune times to do so.

And trust me, there was plenty of fear and uncertainty despite a great mix of financial help, great partners and a ripe opportunity with a budding market. But it didn't happen overnight or without a ton of hard but awesome work (that hasn't stopped since).

So if you seem to be hitting dead ends in working for other people, or simply can't find what you want to do ... maybe it is time to create the work and workplace you want.

Being an entrepreneur has been one of the most fulfilling "jobs" I've ever had. It has changed every day since I began it in 2008. For someone who gets bored after he's maxed out the learning and potential in a job, it's an amazing job to have. I have had the opportunity to build something that I can be proud of, work with some of the most amazing people on earth, and have an impact in my area of the world ... all while making a good living at it!

I also stress ... it is also the hardest job I've ever had (or will ever have). It is not for the faint of heart or done without great consideration, thought and preparation. You must combine a singular focus on your "startup baby," almost to the point of obsession, with a passion for what you're doing ... all while seeking to find customers who will pay you enough to support it all.

But for those who simply aren't destined for a "normal" job ... it's an [amazing adventure](#).

Recommend Reading

Here are the 30+ books I suggest you start eating (and to build your library) for maximum work-life happiness!

These are books I highly recommend for those interested in work-life alignment and although not all of them have Kindle versions (Boo, publishers!) they are worthy of your reading list:

- [Start with Why](#) by Simon Sinek — a great book to start your pursuit of purpose and passion in your work
- [On Writing Well](#) by William Zissner — foundational book on writing, if not THE best desk reference, and yes, even web designers need to write well
- [Rework](#) by Jason Fried — the new way and philosophies of work on the web
- [Content Rules](#) by Ann Handley — foundational desk reference on content that sells — order a print copy to put on your shelf and give to clients
- [Do the Work](#) by Steven Pressfield — just do it, a true motivational book we circulated throughout our entire team
- [Total Money Makeover](#) by Dave Ramsey — get your finances straight and a healthy perspective on money so you can do what you love
- [The Leadership Challenge](#) – James Kouzes — if you're going to have employees, start reading this now
- [Never Get a 'Real' Job](#) by Scott Gerber — motivation on launching your business for a younger generation
- [Standout](#) by Marcus Buckingham — learn more about yourself
- [StrengthsFinder](#) by Tom Rath — learn more about your strengths and how to use them (also great for teams)
- [Success for Dummies](#) by Zig Ziglar — just good, down home advice
- [The Brand You](#) by Tom Peters
- [12: Elements of Managing](#) by Rodd Wager — even if you don't manage anybody, see 12 great principles of how you and I work best
- [Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No](#) by Cloud and Townsend – establish good boundaries in your relationships and free yourself to be happy
- [Crush It!](#) by Gary V — great book to pump you up if you're considering starting your own business
- [Free Agent Nation](#) by Dan Pink — the rise of the indepent worker
- [Drive](#) by Dan Pink — learn how instrinc motivation works ... and what really motivates you in your work

- [The Great Workplace: How to Build It, How to Keep It, and Why It Matters](#)
- [The Guerrilla Marketing Job Escape Plan](#)
- [Guerrilla Marketing for a Bulletproof Career](#)
- [Ignore Everybody](#) by Hugh MacLeod – straight up great advice
- [Just Start: Take Action, Embrace Uncertainty, Create the Future](#)
- [Life Entrepreneurs: Ordinary People Creating Extraordinary Lives](#)
- [The Start-up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career](#) by Reid Hoffman – the founder of LinkedIn talks about approaching your career as a startup
- [Tribes](#) by Seth Godin — tribes are everywhere – learn how to start, build and lead them
- [Writing That Works: Learn How to Communicate in Business](#) — a desk reference for your career
- [The Dip](#) by Seth Godin — when to quit or keep going
- [The Janitor](#) by Todd Hopkins — a great story about putting work and life in perspective
- [Resonate: Present Visual Stories that Transform](#) by Nancy Duarte
- [slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations](#) by Nancy Duarte
- [Presentation Zen](#) by Gary Reynolds
- [ProBlogger: Secrets for Blogging Your Way to a Six-Figure Income](#) by Darren Rowse and Chris Garrett — ignore the title, these guys are the best at blogging
- [Brazen Careerist: The New Rules for Success](#) by Penelope Trunk — great, sharp, awesome career advice
- [Career Renegade](#) by Jonathan Fields

Get more books as I read them by [joining the PurposefulPaychecks community here.](#)

About The Author

Cory J. Miller has had a lifelong passion for writing and entrepreneurship. Before becoming a full-time entrepreneur, he spent more than a decade in the newspaper, magazine and communications industries, working as a newspaper reporter and editor, freelance writer as well as a director of communications for several organizations.

Having maintained his own website since 1998, in 2006 he began writing a professional blog on nights and weekends in his career niche at the time. Through the process he started to learn more web design and began a part-time freelance business.

In January 2008, he took that momentum, experience and exposure in blogging and web design and started [iThemes](#) to offer professional website templates for WordPress, a free online software to manage your own website or blog. Starting in his home office, as the business grew, he started recruiting and hiring a team of designers and developers to build easy-to-use templates, selling to customers all over the world.

Through his up and down journey of entrepreneurship, he now leads a team of over 20 professionals around the globe, with headquarters in Oklahoma City, more than 4 major brands and thousands of customers. In March 2011, he co-authored [WordPress All-in-One for Dummies](#) (Wiley).

On the side, he helps other aspiring entrepreneurs on their own journey of entrepreneurship, primarily through [StartupSofa](#), where he regularly blogs and offers online training, and on helping others achieve career happiness and work-life alignment at [PurposefulPaychecks](#).

In addition to being a passionate entrepreneur, he is “hubs” to Lindsey Anne Miller and when not riding their Honda and Yamaha scooters all over Oklahoma City, they are humbly serving at the requests of their two spoiled dogs, Franchesca and Scooter.

Find Cory elsewhere:

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