



2011 Workshop Marco Island, Fla.

Welcome to the 2011 CoSIDA Job Seekers Program!

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We have prepared a “primer” on job seeking in this field. If you have a question about a particular subject, please ask or feel free to contact the writer.

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Making the Most of Your CoSIDA Convention

by: Steve Conn • Yale University

As a young professional seeking employment, there are some things you can do here in San Francisco this week to boost your marketability to current and future job holders.

BACKGROUND

If you know a school has an opening that you are interested in, speak to supporting players who can help your position. Rather than seek the decision maker on the job, you could talk to an assistant or close rival to get some helpful information before getting an interview or approaching the SID in charge. Sometimes acting like a good reporter can turn up some helpful detail in the job quest.

PROPER ID

Try to identify the decision makers at the convention. However, don't stick your face next to their name tag, point your finger at their face and tell them you are interested in their job. Once you have made the proper ID (you can always ask someone else to point out the person), approach the decision maker or assistant with a thoughtful question about the job. If you don't have a good question, you could always introduce yourself and say that you hope to get an interview to discuss your ideas.

ALL-LOBBY TEAM

Make yourself an active listener rather than an active speaker. It's good to make the all-lobby team, but not because you are doing the most talking. Asking questions (without being overbearing) and showing people you are listening will go a long way. You should also be cognizant of where the person might be headed when you are trying to talk with them. It might not always be a good time to grab someone. When I am sitting outside doing some reading, I like when other conventioners stop by to ask questions or say hello. You can always ask if this is a good time to ask a few questions.

SOCIALIZING

You can easily socialize your way out of a job opportunity. That means don't over do it at the social events. Act responsibly and respectfully with or without libations. You never know who is watching or listening to you.

FUTURE MARKETING

Take advantage of the panels and workshops being offered. It will help you in many ways, including showing prospective employers that you are trying to improve your game. You should also realize that you might be marketing yourself for a job two or three years down the road when you are at a CoSIDA convention. Make contacts at this event that might help you on the next job search.

Today's Skills Needed in the Sports Information Profession

by: Mike Tuberosa • Drexel University

When I first broke into the business back in the early 1990's, sports information was a very different field than it is now. Desktop publishing was in its early stages, while StatCrew and the web were not in existence. As time went on knowledge of these new technologies became key skills to put on a resume when applying for jobs. Now, it is assumed that viable candidates have these skills when applying for jobs.

The last 10 years has seen an explosion in new media outlets and whether you like it or not, it seems they are here to stay. Our offices are also changing as budgets start to shrink in departments everywhere, which makes versatility an essential part of what we do. The following is a list of things that have become key aspects of our industry in the last few years.

- Webcasting
- Video editing
- Photography
- Fundraising (as our Director of Development says "We are all fundraisers")
- Alumni relations (especially on the road, with less people traveling with teams)
- Photoshop skills/web design
- Social networking (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Cross promotion between new media and traditional media outlets

While these new factors are important and, our profession is still based on many of the basic skills. These include the following::

- Communication skills (dealing with administrators, media, coaches, staff and players)
- Writing skills (probably the most difficult to find and develop)
- Time Management
- An ability to prioritize tasks
- Strong computer skills including desktop publishing
- Game management
- Managerial and leadership skills

Skills and Background to be Successful in Sports Information

by: David Johnson • University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse

The sports information office is responsible for the publicity and media relations for the university's athletic program in a desired proactive manner. Here are some skills you need to have in order to be successful in the profession:

*Strong time-management skills

*An ability to prioritize tasks *Strong computer skills (Microsoft Word, Desktop Publishing, Photoshop, Web Maintenance)

*Writing skills (press releases, media guides, programs, game notes, feature articles)

*Desktop publishing skills

*Experience with stat crew/home game management

*Strong communication skills (dealing w/ several audiences in coaches, students, fans, media, alumni)

*May need to be able to manage a budget

*Ability to sale advertising

OTHER TIPS TO HELP YOU IN THE SPORTS INFORMATION PROFESSION:

*You are representing an institution of higher learning, conduct yourself in a professional manner. *Loyalty to the athletic administration, coaching staff and student-athletes is very important.

*Avoid criticism of staff members.

* Respect the people you work with and for (coaches, student-athletes, media, fans, etc.).

*Establish and maintain a high professional level with the media.

*Know the rules and guidelines of your institution as well as at the conference and national level.

TIPS FOR BUILDING A NETWORK DURING COSIDA:

*Get to know people at all levels of the profession (NCAA and NAIA).

*Observe and listen during the convention.

*Be personable, outgoing.

*Use the people you know in the business to meet others.

*Leave a good impression during the workshop.

*Use CoSIDA as a learning experience - you can take something out of every session.

*For job seekers, try to meet the job holder so they know who you are.

*Use job seekers committee members - ask questions.

How To Read A Sports Information Job Announcement

by: Karen Auerbach • Temple University

There are many types of job opportunities to be had in the field of sports information. There are internships and graduate assistantships for those just starting out in the profession, and there are full-time assistant positions and head sports information positions. Depending on the division of the school's athletic program, the responsibilities of these jobs vary greatly.

Those just starting out will likely want to focus on jobs listed as internships or graduate assistantships. Oftentimes, an internship is also listed as an "assistant," which is not to be confused with a full-time assistant position. The way to distinguish this is to look further into the job announcement, and if the job is a 10-month or 12-month position, it can also be considered an internship.

Internships generally offer either a monthly stipend or a one-year salary. The hours are typically full-time but the pay is not. As a graduate assistant, the financial situation will also vary from school to school, but most often your tuition will be paid for and you will also receive a small monthly stipend, much like a student-athlete on scholarship. Graduate assistants will be expected to work at least 20 hours a week, but depending on sport responsibilities the hours are likely to be greater than that.

The most important things to look for in job announcements for these opportunities are the length of time of the position, the expected hours per week and the pay. While benefits are rare for internships and graduate assistantships, there are programs that offer them.

The next step up in the sports information field is the assistant director position. Depending on the size of the program there could be anywhere from one to as many as seven or eight assistant directors. These are typically full-time, salaried positions with specific sport responsibilities, and assistant directors report to the director of the office. Assistant director job announcements may list the sports you would be responsible for, or the office may restructure those assignments depending on who is hired. The salary is typically commensurate with experience and will be something you would not find out until after the interview period.

Head of office positions may be listed in a few different ways, but most commonly are announced as sports information director or assistant athletic director for sports information/communications. These jobs typically prefer applicants to have anywhere from 3-5 years of experience, and again the salary will often be listed as commensurate with experience. Non-Division I schools may only have one full-time person in the sports information office, and will often hire those with maybe less experience. Division III and NAIA programs often combine the sports information position with another position in the department.

Those seeking assistant director or head of office positions will likely already have an idea what sports they'd like to work with, and checking the job announcement for those responsibilities is key. Most announcements also list preferred page design software knowledge and StatCrew knowledge. The listing may also say that ability to travel is necessary, and you should know beforehand whether or not traveling with one or more teams is something you're willing and able to do or something you'd like to do.

Pay close attention to the application instructions for a position opening. Many schools require you to submit materials through their Human Resource office, and those applications are usually available online. Other schools request that you send materials directly to the head of the search committee or to the sports information office. Always read this part carefully, and follow up once you have applied to make sure your materials were received.

Networking to Get the Job You Want

by: Erin Smith • formerly at Iowa State University

Kyle McRae is a 17-year veteran of the sports information field, spending time at the college, conference and professional levels. He has been on both sides of the hiring process, and most recently has been on the side of job seeker. After building a career at the West Coast Conference, San Francisco State, the University of San Francisco and Stanford, Kyle was hired by the San Francisco 49ers. After being laid off in mid-January, he found himself in the position of looking for a new job and spent time making over 100 phone calls as he searched for his next place of employment. He was hired in April as the associate media relations director at the University of California. Kyle says that networking helped him get the job he WANTED, not just ANY job. He has contributed advice below on the value and the process of building your own network.

THE DEFINITION OF NETWORKING

Networking is the process of building relationships with people both inside and outside of the business of sports information. It is about the art of conversation and the ability to get to know people who can help you find job openings and eventually help you land your next job. Networking is a process that takes time and should happen long before you ever look for a job.

NETWORKING...WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

While there are several steps involved in landing a new job, the most important is networking. You have to know the basics of the field to be hired, but you also need to know somebody. The people doing the hiring are looking for something that stands out about you that is not on your resume, whether that is a good recommendation or talking to someone not on your list of references who might know you. When those hiring read through a stack of resumes, they all essentially look the same. It's vital to have relationships with people who can help you build a bridge between yourself and the people doing the hiring.

KEYS TO NETWORKING

Keys to networking can be hard for a young person, but it's really not that complicated. It's all the little things that add up.

1. Always treat people well. It is important to respect others all the time.
2. Build good relationships in every job and do not burn bridges, even when looking for another job.
3. Go out of your way to help visiting SIDs and administrators when they compete at your institution.
4. Don't take school rivalries too seriously or personally. They might be the people who want to hire you down the road.
5. Be visible. People need to know who you are. Introduce yourself to visiting SIDs and others who visit your campus.
6. Be available and work tournaments in your area. Be willing to do anything, whether it is making copies or running statistics.
7. Stay away from gossip and water cooler talk. Those things can and will come back to bite you.
8. Technology is a key part of our profession, but always take the time to pick up the phone and talk to someone.
9. It's all about attitude. Have a smile on your face and show enthusiasm for what you are doing. Be courteous and call people back.
10. Be genuine.

Networking to Get the Job You Want

by: Erin Smith • formerly at Iowa State University

PERSEVERE

Looking for a job can be difficult and frustrating, but it is important to remain positive. Keep making calls and talking to people, because the bottom line is that you never know which conversation will lead to a job. It is also imperative that you keep a broader perspective of your situation and to keep a sense of humor. Kyle found during his job search that he was able to get to know his daughter better during that time, which is a gift he will never regret.

INTERVIEWING

In an interview, it is important to take the focus off yourself and to put it on the people who are interviewing you. Think about the interviewer and what they need in the person they are hiring. This is another way your networking can be used to your benefit. Talk to people who know their situation and find out if they are looking for someone to do a specific sport or if they are looking for someone with a specific type of personality to fit into their office. During your interview, use that information and try to tell them how you fit what they need.

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Finding Job Opportunities

by: Danny Kambel • Wisconsin-Platteville

BACKGROUND:

1999-2000 – Sports Information Intern, US Naval Academy

- How did I find out about the job? Conversation with Army Sports Information staff at the CoSIDA convention

2000-2001 – Staff Assistant, Indiana University

- How did I find out about the job? Supervisors at Navy were former Indiana interns and radio commentator had contact with Indiana sports information office

2001-2003 – Assistant Media Relations Director, Indiana State University

- How did I find out about the job? Indiana played Indiana State in basketball and met SID when the two teams played one another and kept in communication with the SID

2003-2006 – Media Relations Coordinator, Florida International University

- How did I find out about the job? Met an assistant SID at FIU at the annual CoSIDA convention, who I kept in contact with after the convention

2006-2010 – Director of Media & Public Relations, Texas A&M University-Commerce

- How did I find out about the job? Former supervisor at Indiana State is a graduate of a school within the conference and supervisor at Florida International University is a childhood friend of the head men's basketball coach. As you can see, traditional job seeking methods of classified ad advertisements and job searching boards are not the only ways to find out about your next employment opportunity. Knowing the people you encounter and understanding them and their backgrounds can make a job search a lot less stressful and open doors of opportunities.

OUTLINE

I. Networking

A. Stay in contact with previous co-workers

B. Maintain a working relationship with people within your conference

1. Keep in communication, both in-season and out-of-season

C. Maintain a working relationship with people within your area

1. Break down the barriers between Division I, Division II and Division III

D. Stay active in the profession

1. Come to CoSIDA and meet new people
2. Be a part of a CoSIDA committee
3. Volunteer for conference and NCAA championships

II. Researching the market

The transition from one job in college sports to another is another way of doing a job search. Identifying when a person leaves a job, in most cases there will be a vacancy for the position previously held by that person

III. Researching the employer

- A. A search of the website of a particular employer will identify if there are employment opportunities

IV. Traditional job seeking websites:

- A. Teamworkonline.com (professional sports positions), NCAA.org and CoSIDA.com – recommended for SIDs
- B. www.higheredjobs.com and www.chronicle.com – education-based websites for SIDs
- C. www.simplyhired.com - a Google™ type search engine for jobs
- D. www.prsa.org - public relations jobs

Job Search Preparation

by: Marlene Navor • College of Charleston

WHAT TO DO TO PREPARE

1. Build or update your resume.
2. Assess your skills and experience and highlight them on your resume.
3. Narrow down what kind of position you are looking for or best fits your skills.
4. Assess the job market and available positions via word-of-mouth and online postings at www.CoSIDA.com or www.ncaa.org
5. Research available job postings such as using a cost of living calculator to compare your current region to a prospective region.
6. Prepare yourself for success or failure in the process.
7. Don't be discouraged if you do not land the job on the first try.
8. Keep a positive attitude during the job search ... Don't Give Up!

RELATED JOBS THAT PROVIDE GOOD BACKGROUND

1. Writing Experience (ie. newspaper writer, editor, columnist, publicist, magazine writer)
2. Publication Experience (ie. graphic designer, yearbook editor, photographer)
3. Broadcast Experience (ie. television anchor, television reporter, radio deejay, play-by-play announcer)
4. Internet Experience (ie. website content editor, website designer)

KEEPING A FOOT IN THE DOOR

1. Network, network, network.
2. Attend conventions and seminars to continue your professional development.
3. Be involved in committees or forums. Get your name out there and meet new people.
4. Stay in contact with people you have met through networking.
5. Continue to build relationships with these people.
6. Stay in the know of what positions are out there or may open up.

SHARPENING YOUR SKILLS

1. Take summer courses to enhance your writing, communication or graphic design skills.
2. Continue to build good working relationships with coaches, administrators and the media.
3. Staying abreast to new trends in the field.
4. Challenge yourself to learning new ideas or methods.
5. Evaluate what is or isn't working in your current situation and needs to be changed.

HOW TO ASK A PERSON TO BE A REFERENCE

1. Select your references carefully. Know what your selected references will say about you.
2. Ask someone you have built a good relationship or rapport with such as a recent boss, recent co-worker, recent administrator, coach or media member.
3. Ask someone who has a true knowledge of your work skills and attributes.
4. Ask someone who will praise and backup your quality of work.
5. Once your reference list is selected, contact them well in advance of your job search.
6. Ask permission to use them as a reference via phone or e-mail correspondence.
7. If they say yes, give them a brief background of the position you are applying for.
8. Unless you keep in touch with them on a regular basis, make sure to refresh their memory of the previous working relationship you had with them and projects you successfully completed.
9. If a letter of recommendation is needed, ask your reference if they would be able to write a personal letter on your behalf to your prospective employer.
10. Depending on the timeliness of the job search and job closing date, ask your reference if they would be able to call your prospective employer on your behalf.
11. Make sure to thank your references and hopefully reciprocate the favor back to them someday.
12. Follow-up with your references after you successfully get the job!

Using the Internet & Social Media in the Application Process

by: Bill Dyer • Virginia Tech

In this age of social media and increased uses of the internet, one trend that is quickly becoming more prevalent is the use of these media to post resumes, work samples and other material for use in applying for employment. It is the opinion of this athletics communications professional that the applicant must be very careful in making use of these media.

More and more, the prospective employer is already using these media in the hiring process. While this may make the ability for the applicant to put their information out there to the job holder much easier, it may also open some doors that are better left closed. As easy as it is for a job holder to find media guides, video clips, resumes and writing samples using these means, please remember that it is just as easy to find regrettable Twitter and Facebook postings and the all-to-frequent embarrassing photos.

As someone who tries to stay up on new technologies, the internet and social media are becoming more and more a part of everyday life, both personally and professionally. Every year, I hire three post-graduate interns for our office. Two years ago, I did not search the internet at all during the hiring process. Each year since then, I have used this as a tool more frequently.

Being old-fashioned, I still prefer hard copies of information, but, as each year passes, I receive more information electronically. At this time, these means of supplying work samples are simply not as effective as printed materials. When I am cutting the list of 100-or-more applicants to a more workable number, it is difficult to take time out of the process to find a web site or load a DVD. I do it to be thorough, but I cannot tell you if this delay in the process has colored my view on an applicant.

In the coming years, I realize that these new media will be used more often in the application process. My guess is, in the near future, we will be hiring people that have to possess skills to produce information both on-line and in video form, so it makes sense that applicants will utilize these technologies in the application process. It is important to remember that these new forms of media are just a part of the process, not the entire process.

In conclusion, it will serve the applicant well to make sure that everything under their name, not just specific materials requested, be as pristine and professional as possible. A person never knows when the wrong information will damage their reputation.

Please be diligent.

Using Social Media to Your Advantage

by: Dave Johnson • University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse

The job market is competitive as we all know, and many people are now using social media forms to get a job. After reviewing websites to see how using social media forms can help a job seeker, try these steps.

Job seekers are using Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. I wasn't familiar with LinkedIn, but looking at their website, it's a professional network of trusted contacts to give you an advantage in your career. Their website also says it exists to help you make better use of your professional network and help the people you trust in return. Check out their site at <http://www.linkedin.com/>.

Just like looking for a job the old-fashioned way, using social media can work the same way.

- * Companies use social networks to advertise and search for new employees.
- * Job seekers should get to know how the social networks work.
- * Let employers know what you are looking for in a position.
- * Make sure your profile is what you want it to be, be careful on what to include. As they say, google never forgets.
- * Learn from fellow job seekers in CoSIDA - it's a great way to get to know each other and learn some tips.
- * Be interesting in your profile; let people know you are and what you do.
- * Get to know the company/institution you are looking at for a position.
- * Demonstrate your skills/talents.
- * Build relationships with fellow job seekers.
- * Keep your status updated.
- * Join fan pages.
- * Connect with an employer directly.
- * Subscribe to job listings.
- * Use key words when looking for a job.

References:

The Christian Science Monitor
<http://www.2vouch.com/>
<http://mashable.com/>

What I Did to Get My First Job

by: Karen Auerbach • Temple University

After serving as a student assistant in sport media relations for two years at James Madison University where I completed my undergrad degree in 2002, I was confident I wanted to pursue the profession full-time.

I applied for a number of internships before I graduated. One of the first to respond was Rollins College, a small Division II school outside Orlando. It seemed like a great opportunity to work with a number of different sports and move somewhere completely different from Virginia. The money was tight and I would not have been able to make ends meet without support from my parents, so I was very lucky in that respect.

Being at Rollins was a truly great experience for me. Working with Division II athletes and coaches gave me a real love for what I was doing because they really seemed to love what they were doing. I was able to travel with the volleyball, men's basketball and softball teams which helped me get to know the athletes personally and to develop a vested interest in the sports I was working with. That has served me really well down the road. That first internship also taught me about competing with much bigger fish for media attention.

Although ideally I wanted a full-time job when the next summer rolled around, while I was looking for one I saw a fairly high-paying internship available at the University of Connecticut and I decided to jump on it. They showed immediate interest which I felt very fortunate about, and I accepted before ever hearing back from any full-time jobs I had applied for.

The change in departments and weather was a shock but it was a thrill to work for such a well-known and well-respected athletics department. I worked non-stop, handling duties for volleyball, men's ice hockey, softball, men's and women's tennis, men's and women's cross country and men's and women's indoor and outdoor track and field. I also worked every home basketball game and had an opportunity to make extra money that way because so many of the games were televised. The year I was there, 2003-04, both basketball teams earned the national title and even though I was back on campus covering all the other sports, it was extremely exciting to be a part of it all.

Looking for a third job in two years as the internship drew to a close was stressful. I knew I needed something full-time, and I wanted to go somewhere I thought I could be happy for a few years. I received one offer in North Carolina but it was a school that was unwilling to bring me there first, and I decided I wasn't ok with that. I think it's very important to be able to check out a job before you say yes.

I must have had an itch to get away from the East because I flew out West for three different interviews. Utah, Weber State and Northern Arizona all took me in as a finalist, and that process was draining but exciting. Utah ultimately decided I wasn't quite as experienced as its other applicants, and I really loved Northern Arizona when I visited. When my current boss, Steve Shaff, offered me the job, I took it right away. I think you know when a place will be the right fit for you and I could tell it would be.

That isn't to say it was easy right away. I jumped right into volleyball season and trying to make a place feel like home that is 2,500 miles away from home was hard at first. But like anything you just have to give it a little time, and it wasn't long at all before I formed solid relationships and started to feel settled. I have now been an assistant here for four years and I'm happy to have found such a great situation for me.

Cover Letters, Do's and Don't's

by: Adam Pitterman • Eastern New Mexico University

Remember that a cover letter, much like a resume will be one of your best opportunities to make a first impression. Make sure that your experience and enthusiasm stand out. Strong verbs can be effective, but don't turn the cover letter into a flashy display of your vocabulary.

A great tip from jobsearch.about.com was to search through the job advertisement, and tailor your cover letter around the criteria they are looking for.

Do not come across as arrogant. Confidence is good, but make sure not to step over the line. When you do not know the person you are sending the letter to, do not guess on whether to put Mr. or Mrs., if you can't find that information out use their title instead of name or use to whom it may concern.

Make sure to target your audience- summarize your skills, but remember it is a summary, not a history lesson. Remember, you need to write so they can tell you are qualified at first glance. An employer should not have to search your cover letter.

Proof your letter and have others proof it if possible. Again, this is the first impression and you do not want a potential employer to consider you sloppy. Make sure that you address it to the correct potential employer- particularly if you are using the same letter for multiple applications, this is a mistake I have made more than once.

Information taken from careerlab.com and jobsearch.about.com

Resumes, Do's and Don't's

by: Adam Pitterman • Eastern New Mexico University

Whether you are just graduating college and looking to break into the sports information/athletic media relations profession, there are certain things you need to include- and avoid when putting together your resume. Your resume and cover letter are more important than you may think - they create the first impression of who you are to the potential employer, and as the tired cliché goes- You never get a second chance to make a first impression. If you have a bad resume, it will be hard to overcome it in the case that you do get an interview.

First and foremost on the list of things to do, is list the most important information first. Many sports information student workers coming out of school will think they should list their education first. If you are a journalism or communications major, that may be of some benefit, but if you worked in the sports information/athletic media relations office - particularly if you worked on the in-game statistical crews, did desktop publishing or media releases, then you really need to include your work related experience first. Having any type of experience in the field you want to enter is of utmost importance.

On the list of things not to do, don't be too wordy. Use clear and concise statements about what you have done, and avoid large, complicated words. If someone reading your resume has to stop and look at a word, it is overpowering the statement. Remember, it is a resume, not a novel. Avoid using technical jargon as well, you don't know who will have to read your resume.

Ask for help when writing your resume. Your co-workers probably have a more objective view of your strengths than you do. Coaches and administrators can give great ideas that you may not think of.

I can't stress this enough, never say anything bad in your resume about a place or a person you worked with. This is a definite turn off and shows lack of loyalty. Most people in the business already realize that these bad places exist and may know of the reputation.

Proofreading. Have as many people proof your resume as possible. I don't just mean people in the sports information/athletic media relations office either. Administrators, friends, everyone. Sometimes the best people to proof your resume will be people who know nothing about athletics- because they don't know what to expect and won't be looking for something specific. Not all of the advice will be usable, but you might get something out of it that will improve your ability to generate a good first impression.

Don't turn your resume into a writing sample, or try to do a fancy layout. Remember, your resume is an outline of your qualifications, not a media guide. Avoid using too many fonts, arial and times new roman are fairly basic- don't distract from what you want the potential employer to notice.

Applying for the Job Via Email

A 2011 Collaboration by The Job Seekers Committee

A prospective Division I employer listed an open intern position with www.cosida.com and, later, inquired about the proper etiquette to apply for a job using an email process.

The employer received a wide range of application packets for a job announcement that specifically requested a letter of application, resume and references. A second request stated a maximum size for attachments. There was no definition what documents beyond the letter of application, resume and references could be attached.

The CoSIDA Job Seekers Committee tackled the question of applying for a job specifically using email and offers its opinion to employers and job seekers.

Some of these principles also can apply to online applications that are screened by a university's human resources department; the 20th century method of applying by mail or overnight delivery; and/or the use of an executive search firm as CoSIDA partner, Eclaro Sports.

- Employers - Be sure the job announcement is precise and specific particularly with the application materials requested, the ground rules, any deadlines and who is receiving the applicant's email. Length and detail are not the issue. The job seeker must understand exactly what you want so you can conduct an efficient search.
- o Job seekers must understand and follow the employer's procedures.
- o In this case of an email application, email yourself before submitting it to a prospective employer. Read, critique and edit it, if necessary.

Would you hire yourself based on the email's presentation and contents? If you're answer is "NO," revise your application materials for a "YES!"

- o Employers have their reasons for the way they want to fill a position. It is not for you to question. If a position asks for references, find a way to list your best references. Do not state in your resume, "References provided upon request." That is the simple sign the job seeker is not following directions.
- o Email exactly what the prospective employer wants. The committee is unanimous on this point.
- o A cover letter or letter of application should be included as an attachment. The email message to the prospective employer should be succinct and direct and lead the employer to the attachments and what is contained in the required documents.

There is no consensus on whether you should or should not include links to your work samples in the body of your introductory email applying for the position. If you include a link, be sure it takes the employer to the correct destination.

- o Again, follow the instructions listed in the job announcement. If work samples are requested in a pdf format, comply. You are demonstrating your ability to fit into the corporate culture. Once you get the job, you can exhibit your creative skills and enhance office productivity.
- o If you want to follow through on receipt of your electronic materials, check the job announcement and determine if the employer is willing to take a short phone call. If the employer states, "No calls, please," do not call. Follow the instructions listed in the job announcement.

There is no consensus on following through on an email application by mailing a hard copy of one's cover letter, resume and/or work samples. Employers who use the email application procedure should be able to print your pdf documents and navigate the links, if requested, that your email contains.

- o The Committee believes it is very appropriate to send a Thank You note within 48 hours if you earn an opportunity for an interview whether it is in person, over the phone, or via an internet connection.

Express your gratitude for the employer's time, the opportunity to communicate your professional history and learn about a potential place of employment, and conclude by reiterating your interest in the position.

How to Stand Out in the Online Application Process

by: Justin Maskus • Missouri Southern State University

INTRODUCTION

I have been in the sports information field for a little more than nine years now and have worked at both the Division I and II levels. I have went on my share of interviews and applied probably for more than my fair share of jobs and it's never an easy process. But I hope that by reading this, you might be able to get a few tips or tricks to make the process less nerve wracking and a bit more beneficial.

PAY ATTENTION!

Pay attention to what your potential employer has asked for in the application process. If they have asked for something specific, ie...a resume, cover letter, references etc..., please include that. If they have not asked for something in particular, do not send it. Not only will you be making them print out unnecessary materials, you will most likely turn off the employer for not following directions.

SPELL CHECK, SPELL CHECK, SPELL CHECK!

One of the biggest parts of any sports information job is accuracy. If you can not be accurate or use correct spelling in your application and/or cover letter, how can a potential employer expect you to do that for them once employed? If the online application form does not have a spell check option, copy and paste the text into a word processor and use its spell check.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Don't clutter up the application with unnecessary use of bold text, symbols, excessive capital letters...etc. Keep it simple and straight forward. Remember the easier you make it on someone reading the application, the better. Most of these online applications are generated for a hiring officer and sometimes any style changes you've made to it, might not even end up on the final version that appears on someone's desk. Keep it simple and just give them what they want.

RESUMES/COVER LETTERS

Most universities and colleges that have an online application process will have the ability for you to upload a resume and your cover letter specific for the job. They will most likely only accept either a Word formatted document or a PDF. Make sure each of your documents (resume and cover letter) are in either of those formats and it will save you time in having to convert another format into one they can receive.

TREAT IT WITH RESPECT

Take your time and try not to hurry through the application process. Treat it as if you were filling out your actual resume and make sure everything you place within the fields are accurate and concise. One thing...the more references, the better. Give your potential employer some choices as to whom they contact on your behalf.

How to Utilize Your References During the Job Seeking Process

by: Scott Strasemeier • Navy

Positive references can get you the job you want. Most schools will receive close to 100 resumes for a job opening and positive references can put you over the top. Here are a few rules regarding references to keep in mind.

1. Call your references and ask them if they are willing to be a reference for you. Never put somebody down as a reference without asking first.
2. Don't bother with generic letters of recommendations. Employers don't want to read letters written to "whom it may concern." Employers want to be able to contact someone who can speak about your strengths and weaknesses to see if the job they have open is a fit for you.
3. Think strategically about who you use as a reference. What kind of reference do you want? You want the people who will make the strongest recommendations for you. The key is to find people who know your strengths and abilities -- and who will say positive things about you.
4. How many references should you use? Ideally you want three to five references - people who can speak highly of your accomplishments, work ethic, skills, education and performance.
5. Make sure to get complete information from each reference: full name, current title, company name, business address, and contact information (daytime phone, email, cell phone, etc.) to include on your reference sheet. You do not want an employer to have to track all that information down. Most likely they won't. They will just eliminate you.
6. Keep your references informed. Make sure each reference always has a copy of your most current resume, knows your key accomplishments and skills, and is aware of the jobs you are seeking.
7. Be sure to thank your references for their help. Some companies may not check with all your references, but these people were willing to help you and thanking them is simply a common courtesy.

Any Experience is a Good Experience

by: Dave Geringer • University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth

You attended the CoSIDA Workshop intending to get a job and break into the sports information profession. Now, it's time to decide where you want to work. How can you get the most and best experience that will help you in the profession? Would you like to work at a large university? Here's what you can expect:

The staff is usually broken by down sport assignment. Most full-time staffers will work with one or two sports per season (fall, winter, spring). As part of a large staff, you will either be assigned an Olympic sport, or you will assist with a sport. In either case, you may be expected to make contributions to the sport's annual media guide, write news releases about upcoming events and event re-caps, write a few feature stories on your assigned sport, help with game and weekly notes, and perhaps travel with a team to a championship event. You will also handle a lot of office work, including clipping stories from publications, putting together mailing lists, sizing photos to be used in publications and on the web, and assisting with home events, including serving on statistical crews using StatCrew, when you have time.

The advantages are that you will work with people who have experience in sports information, will receive guidance and mentoring as far as your work, and will be schooled on Associated Press style and office procedure.

WHAT ABOUT A SMALLER DIVISION I UNIVERSITY? YOU CAN EXPECT THE FOLLOWING:

The staff will probably be broken down by sport assignment, with the director handling most, if not all, of the high-profile sports and one or two staffers, including you, handling the rest. You will handle more of the material for the media guide, perhaps even putting it together. You will also handle more of the news releases, including event previews and re-caps, on your own. You may put together game and/or weekly notes as needed, along with helping in the office. The advantages here are that you will have more freedom and more responsibility, while still working with a professional who has the experience to guide you in the right direction. You will be in charge of statistical crews in some sports, and be responsible for inputting and/or calling in a StatCrew system.

HOW ABOUT BEING AN ASSISTANT OR AN INTERN IN A ONE-PERSON SHOP?

The director will be used to doing as many things as he or she can, and as soon as you demonstrate that you can be an asset, you will have the chance to assist. Depending on your initiative, you may be putting together news releases, game notes and media guides if you show that you can handle them. You will learn all of StatCrew's statistical systems, and may be involved in the statistical crew for every home event. In addition, you will learn how to handle multiple home events, decide which ones to cover, which ones can be handled by a work-study student, and at which ones you can trust the coach to bring you a scorebook with all the details that you need to put together a StatCrew file and a game story. Once again, you can get some great experience at this level. You will learn how to handle multiple tasks on deadline, get a lot of writing and statistical experience, and get the chance to decide where you would like to end up in the profession.

Any time you get a job, think about what you can learn from that position and what you can take with you to the next job. At each level, you will have the chance to learn something new, and you can always take it with you.⁵

Preparing for Different Types of Interviews

by: Brett Marhanka • Wheaton College

Typically when interviewing for a job in sports information a job seeker can experience any of three interview types: the in-person one-on-one interview; the in-person group interview and the phone interview. During a job search the job seeker may experience all three types.

IN PERSON ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW

Be yourself – It is easy in a one-on-one situation to get nervous and say too much, say too little or talk in circles. Don't forget that they brought you to campus because they think you might be the fit they're looking for. Find a way to show them as clearly as possible that you are the right person for their job.

Go into the interview with a plan - A potential employer wants to make a connection with you and at the same time be confident that you can do the job you're seeking. Don't be afraid to share a few tricks of the trade, it shows you've been there before and that you know what you're doing. It is best not just to say that you will get things done; explain how you will get things done. Use specific examples of something you have done in the past or of how you would use your specific skills.

Ask relevant questions - In most cases one-on-one interviews are with the person who will supervise the position you are interviewing for. The one-on-one interview is a great time to find out what the expectations of the boss will be. If you don't ask the questions at your interview, everyone will assume that you're comfortable with all the responsibilities that are expected, whether you've talked about them or not. Also, asking the right questions can impress the interviewer and allow you another opportunity to show knowledge about the position or the profession.

IN PERSON GROUP INTERVIEW

Know your audience – Try to find out ahead of time who may be in the interview. Try to address people directly if possible. If you are aware of a specific coach, talk about their success or their recent season.

Expect the unexpected – When you are asked to answer questions from several different people they may each have different agendas or ideas in mind for what they expect from the position you are interviewing for. If a question is asked that doesn't make sense to you or is confusing, ask for an example or for greater detail to clarify the question.

Use examples – This is a great opportunity to impress several people. When a question is asked, give them an answer and then back it up with an example of something you have done, or with something you have experienced that worked well.

Ask knowledgeable questions – This is a great time to ask questions about the culture of the department from the people who make it up. The group interview will usually include the people you may be working with in the future. Often the potential supervisor in a one-on-one interview won't be able to give you the same feel as a group of people from the department will when you ask questions about the department or institution as a whole.

Pay attention – A group interview can often be the best time to gather information about a potential work place. You can find out a lot from the people in these meetings about how they feel about their co-workers, their supervisors, their student-athletes and the institution itself. Be sure to take notes.

PHONE INTERVIEW

Block everything else out – Make sure that while you are doing the interview you have no distractions. That no one else can interrupt or no other phones or devices can bother you. You need to be focused on this one conversation and only this one conversation the entire time.

Be direct and succinct – In a phone interview you do not want to lose an interviewer's attention. Get right to the point and make it clearly, but quickly.

Pay attention to what you are saying – Make sure that you are communicating the point you want to make and don't get sidetracked. In a phone interview it can be easy to lose your point, repeat something, or talk in circles.

Take notes – You can learn a lot about the position when the interviewer is talking. Take notes, but be sure to pay attention.

10 Questions to Expect During an Interview for an Intern or Graduate Assistant Position

by: Bill Dyer • Virginia Tech

This primer has been produced to help job seekers prepare for an interview situation when applying for an internship or graduate assistant position. This list has been compiled by the Virginia Tech Office of Athletics Communication, which hires three interns every year.

1.) What are your favorite aspects of the sports information profession?

We ask this to see what type of passion and motivation that applicants have for this business. If we get answers involving money or prestige, that's a BIG red flag.

2.) Why are you interested in this position and what do you know about our institution?

A lot of times, the only knowledge of our school is our football team. We are gauging the applicants knowledge of us and their understanding of what interns do at our school.

3.) What do you think you would bring to this position?

This gives the applicants a chance to sell themselves to us. Once again, a knowledge of the position helps.

4.) What sports do you have experience working with on the collegiate level?

We often choose applicants due to specific skills and specific sports.

5.) What is your experience with computers and specific software?

At Virginia Tech, a knowledge of StatCrew is essential. Also, InDesign or Quark experience is valuable. We include follow-up questions specific to platforms and publication processes.

6.) Do you consider yourself a good writer?

Applicants must be able to write! This is still a basic of our profession. If you can discuss strengths and weaknesses of your own skills, that shows you have an understanding of what makes a good writer.

7.) How do you think you handle pressure, especially deadlines?

If you want to succeed in this profession, you better know how to answer this question properly.

8.) Do you have any reservations to working long and late hours?

Once again, this is a hallmark of our profession. If this bothers you, look for something else.

9.) When would you be able to start and what other options are you pursuing?

This one sounds a little strange, but every school has been burned by the person who is doing this interview on a lark.

10.) What questions do you have for us?

This allows us to find out what our applicants are thinking about the profession and how the Virginia Tech internship is best suited for them. We expect questions about salary, job responsibilities and the Blacksburg area. We love to hear creative questions, but hate it when we hear nothing.

5 Questions Not to Ask During an Interview for an Intern or Graduate Assistant Position

by: Bill Dyer • Virginia Tech

This primer has been produced to help job seekers prepare for an interview situation when applying for an internship or graduate assistant position. This list has been compiled by the Virginia Tech Office of Athletics Communication, which hires three interns every year.

1.) Nothing at all

Never have nothing to ask when this part of the conversation comes up. It proves that you have not done your homework on the position.

2.) How much time do I get off during...?

Expect to work every weekend and every holiday. Only time it is acceptable to ask off during the interview is for pre-committed wedding and family "MUST" go-to's.

3.) Can I choose what sports I work?

NO!!! We choose. A good office will work with you and try and fit the right person to the right sport, but often there is only one of you and it is pre-determined what you will work.

4.) Can you help my girlfriend/boyfriend find a job?

Never ask this during the interview. Even if you have a significant other coming with you, take that on yourself. At least wait until after you have the job. If finding a job for the other person is a deal-breaker, let the interviewer know PRIOR to the interview. But don't expect to get the interview. This only applies for an internship or graduate assistantship.

It is perfectly acceptable during an interview for a full-time job.

5.) Is any full-time staff in your office looking to leave and are you likely to hire from within?

It's okay to think this, it's okay to ask around about this, but never ask it out front.

What Questions Should You Ask on Your Interview

by: Lauren Williams • Formerly of the University of Texas

The purpose of asking questions during the job interview is to get to know more about your responsibilities, goals, and the culture of your potential employer. It is important that the job candidate is a good fit for the department, but it is equally as important for the job and the organization match the candidate.

In assessing the open position, prospective employees should ask a number of questions during the interview process. The topics can range from office culture to goals and achievements of the department.

Sample list of questions

- 1.) What is the mission statement of the organization?
- 2.) Who would I report to and how often do we have evaluations?
- 3.) What are the office hours?
- 4.) What is the organization's view on diversity?
- 5.) How much is the department involved in industry associations and volunteer efforts?
- 6.) What are important qualities in the person that you are looking to hire?
- 7.) What are the goals of the office and have they been met? Who is responsible for setting and tracking the efforts of the department and how does this effect the organization's overall bottom line?
- 8.) How often does the department meet and what information is exchanged at these meetings?
- 9.) Do you enter national publication contests and have you won in recent years?

This list is just a sample to help you get prepared for your job interview. It will only add value to your interview if you assess what is important to you and for your career, and add questions to reflect your results.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO TO BUILD YOUR PORTFOLIO FOR YOUR NEXT JOB?

Once you have been hired, you should review your job description and apply it to your resume. While you may not be ready to think about your next step, it is never too early to get started. Most people wait until they need to update their resume to add information, and that is a breeding ground for error.

The first step is to write down all of your job responsibilities.

Once you have listed your obligations, brainstorm ways to diversify and add duties to your plate. The more well rounded you are, the easier it may be for you to get a job. Additionally, the skills you hone in one area may contribute to the responsibilities you already have in your job description.

The final step is to get a binder and fill it with clear sheet covers so that you can save samples of your work. As you complete a project – a feature story, game release, game-day article – include a copy in your binder for your next interview. It will help you keep track of your accomplishments and give your employer an example of your efforts.

How to Close a Deal & Get the Job

by: Jon Jackson • Duke University

It is that time and you are closing in on the job. There are a few important things to remember about your potential employer. First, he or she is likely very busy finalizing this process so be patient and professional. Never -- repeat never -- take a job situation personally. Perhaps something doesn't work out this time, but who knows when and what positions will open in the future. If you're already a finalist, there's something that has caught the employer's eye.

Secondly, it might be time to utilize your resources (references). Let's be honest, this is still a relationship business. A telephone call from a well-placed reference who might have a relationship with the potential employer might be warranted at this point. You don't want to overdo it since you've already provided references to the employer, but it might make sense to have someone who's not on your reference list to call on your behalf, perhaps someone from the media or another SID you've dealt with through the years.

Next, don't be afraid to ask the questions you probably wanted to ask in the interview but didn't. You should have a good feel for what your day-to-day duties would be at this point. However, how those duties are accomplished is just as important. Do you have direct supervision of student help? Do they provide a cell phone? What is the laptop situation? What is the benefit package? Will they pay moving costs? Essentially, what you're showing is that you're trying to get organized, which would play well with me if I were doing the hiring. Finally, continue to be yourself. Throughout the process, you should have gained a feel whether or not this move will be a good "fit" for all involved. The only way this gets achieved is if you're true to your personality and your principles.

In bullet form, here's a recap:

- Be patient and professional
- Utilize your resources
- Don't be afraid to ask tough questions
- Be yourself

CHOOSING BETWEEN MULTIPLE JOB OFFERS IF SITUATION COMES UP.

This is the absolute best case scenario for anyone, despite what one might think. Yes, it might be stressful making a decision. You should be proud that you're in this position.

I would approach it the "old fashioned way" and make a list of pros and cons for each situation. Salary, while important, should not be the final determining factor. You may be in a situation where you make more money but extremely unhappy with your day-to-day professional life. It is simply not worth it to work this way, even with a larger paycheck. Think about where you'll fit in the best and what your networking opportunities will be in relation to your long-term goals.

This would also be a great time to call on your references and professional contacts for advice. Hearing a neutral point of view could be helpful. In the end, follow your instincts. There's a reason for any inkling you might have. Once the decision is made, go with it and don't look back. That is as big a part of being professional as any.

WRITING THANK YOU LETTERS TO THOSE WHO INTERVIEWED YOU & TO YOUR REFERENCES WHO MAY HAVE HELPED YOU LAND THE JOB

You now have the job, but you're not quite done. This is a critical part of the process. It is entirely appropriate to send thank you notes to everyone involved in the process -- your search committee, your previous employer, any references who worked on your behalf, etc.

Even in the age of technology, the best way to thank someone formally is through a handwritten note or a direct phone call. Avoid the temptation to send an email as it is too impersonal. This is a good practice to get into as you will utilize it hundreds of times during your career.

The Transition Away From Your Current Job

by: Craig Lawson • Washington State University

BACKGROUND

In 2009, Matt Hodson of Stanford left the university and relocated to Minneapolis as part of a family decision. It is the second transition for Matt in two years. He left the San Francisco Giants after seven and a half years to take the job at Stanford in 2008.

REASONS FOR MOVING

For Matt, the common theme in the two moves was his family. His wife was offered an exceptional job in Minnesota, which is her home state and an area he and his wife both love that has multiple sports options.

LEAVING THE JOB ON GOOD TERMS

Matt has left on very good terms because of the great relationships he developed while on the job. The critical part for him was being completely up front with both organizations. When he was with the Giants, he told his superiors about the opening at Stanford and his interest in it. He made sure to keep them updated throughout the interview process. When the opportunity for his wife was becoming a real possibility, he told his superiors at Stanford that it was in play and that he and his wife were seriously considering it.

At both jobs, he informed his employers that he thought highly of them, that he was happy in his current position, and that his decision to leave was based on the best fit for his family and himself. Another important aspect was timing his departure so as to minimize disruption in the office for the boss and coworkers he left behind.

LONG TERM ISSUES (RETIREMENT, BENEFITS, VACATION/SICK TIME)

His retirement account, initiated when he worked for the San Francisco Giants, rolled over to his job at Stanford. In turn, Stanford has agreed to roll over his funds into his new employer's retirement plan. Matt is very fortunate to have previous employers do this for him.

PICKING THE FINAL DAY OF WORK

In both cases, Matt gave lengthy notice of his departure so that everyone was aware of either the "exact" final day or the three-to-four day window well in advance.

When he was leaving the Giants, he was expected to begin at Stanford in mid-June and was scheduled for a road trip in early June with the Giants. He elected to go on the road trip and work the first series of the subsequent home-stand. He did not want to leave the Giants in a lurch, yet wanted to be at Stanford as expected. As it turned out, his last day with the Giants was June 15 and he began at Stanford, June 16.

At Stanford, his departure date was somewhat uncertain. He informed Stanford in mid-April of his plans to leave, but promised to stay on through the baseball season. With Stanford still on the NCAA bubble until the final weekend of the regular season, he waited until after the selections were announced, May 25 to make his final decision. He felt three weeks was enough time to wrap up things in the office and still have time to focus on relocating by the end of June.

PREPARING FOR AN EXIT INTERVIEW

Both moves were straightforward for Matt with no hidden motives. He talked openly with his supervisors throughout the decision-making process so they were aware of everything prior to an exit interview. He did an exit interview with the Giants and will have one with Stanford, but Matt said, "They were more of a formality."

Changing Jobs Within the SID Profession

by: Marlene Navor • College of Charleston

"I got the job!" But, what do I do now? "Should I call my parents or spouse? No, maybe I need to give my notice to my landlord or property manager. No, I better tell my boss, first." Changing jobs is never easy and proper research and preparation can save you time and hassles for your new move. It is a life-changing event and making a check list of the items below will be very beneficial in the end.

Depending on your time frame, it is important to take care of the basics first and check on your eligibility for continuation of health and life insurance benefits, accrued vacation pay, unused sick pay and other payments you may be entitled to with your human resources department. Secondly, you should properly inform your supervisor with a letter of resignation and be sure to thank them for the opportunity to work there. Our profession is such a small world that you never know who will be your next reference, so don't burn any bridges. Be prepared to do an exit interview with your current employer and bring home any personal belongings from your office space. If you have a chance, send out thank you e-mails or notes to your former coaches and co-workers as well as those who interviewed you for your new job. A short note may leave a lasting impression.

Make sure you have the human resources department at your new school send you over your contract to sign which will include the salary offered and any moving expenses offered. Get things in writing. If you are single, married or have children, make sure you pick up medical and dental records to take with you to your new destination as well as any report cards and transcripts. Make sure to close out bank accounts, service utilities and leave a forwarding address for any deposits or remaining vacation pay to be sent to you. Don't leave anything behind. Make sure to clean-up your computer and delete personal files and e-mail. A nice gesture would be to update computer files as much as you can for the next person coming in. Leaving a note detailing some of the quirks of your coaches and basic day-to-day operations would be a nice touch as well.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Use non-work contact information for all your new job communications. That way, if your access is cut-off at work, you will still be reachable. Some schools may be able to give you a new university e-mail address account or overnight mail you a university cell phone. If not, a pre-paid cell phone or pre-paid telephone card can be purchased to insure you will have a form of communication while traveling to your new destination or in case of emergency. Make sure to take your Rolodex of media contacts and colleagues from your old job to your new job. Some Microsoft Outlook programs allow you to save your contact lists to a CD or USB thumb drive which can be carried over to your new computer. Cell phone contact lists can also be transferred from one phone to another for a minimal cost or no cost by your service provider.

COST OF LIVING

Use a cost of living calculator to examine the cost of living at your new destination from your old location. There are a couple of good websites online that can help you see the cost differences between different cities and states. If you are looking for a new place to live, don't hesitate in asking your new employer if they can send out a mass e-mail within the athletic department and see if anyone is looking for a roommate or owns a place to rent. If not, the Internet is such a good resource to check out apartment listings and homes for rent. If you find something you like online, but you are not sure if the place is as nice as it looks on the Internet, have a new co-worker check out the place for you. When you are on your on-campus job interview, always ask to see the surrounding neighborhoods and have them drive you past residential areas to get a feel of the town. You might even look up crime rates and city profiles, etc.

RELOCATION

Some schools offer moving expenses and some do not. Either way, find a moving truck company online (ie. U-Haul or Penske) and see if you can find any good deals. Of course, it will depend on the mileage between your old destination and new destination. With gas prices at an all-time high, selling larger furniture items may be the best option and packing the necessities into your car for an easier move. Some companies such as UPS and commercial airlines also offer a freight or cargo service where you can transport items from one destination to another. If you must pay out of pocket for your move, remember to keep all your receipts and claim them on the following year's IRS tax form. You should be able to get a nice return. Also, make sure to use the online site for the United States Postal Service to forward all of your mail to your new address or temporary post office box address which can be rented for a small fee.