

Land the

Interview

**Quick Guides for Busy
Student Job Hunters**

by Student Life Network

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What Will You Get Out of This Book?

I want you to realize that breaking into your dream job is possible. The first step is landing an interview.

In this book you'll learn:

1. What's currently stopping you from getting an interview.
2. How to be championed for a position by industry insiders.
3. How to position yourself as a star candidate for a job in your field.

Ready to get started?



We're Student Life Network

We're a resource hub for all things school. We help you improve your grades, find the right school, reduce your debt, and line up your dream job.

Our team is comprised of people who've successfully made the journey from high school through post-secondary all the way to their dream jobs. How? With the very tips and tricks that we hook you up with every day, including those listed in this ebook.

The editor of this particular ebook is Chris D'Alessandro. After two diplomas (one in marketing, one in writing) it was still a massive struggle for him to land a job he loved. With this book, he's paying it forward to help you (yes, you) land a job that you love.

Hope this helps!

[@StudentLifeNet](https://twitter.com/StudentLifeNet)

contact@studentlifenetwork.com

I'm employed and I suck at job hunting.

And you can, too.

I have two degrees and it took me five years to land my first full-time job.

Post graduation, I had a pretty standard job hunting routine. I would look for opportunities by parking myself at my laptop during my days off from my retail job. I'd blast out a dozen resumes and cover letters, and call it a day.

But replies to my submitted resumes were very few and far between. I had a hell of a hard time landing a job interview. Especially if it was for a job I actually wanted.

Why?

It turned out that I didn't have many connections in my chosen industry (or really any industry for that matter).

My online presence was also... confused to say the least. Inconsistent and unprofessional. It certainly didn't help to inspire confidence in my prospective employers when it came to hiring a non-experienced new grad.

Finally, I had no idea how HR recruiters actually made the decision of who to bring in for an interview.

I was completely in the dark. And I really, really sucked at job hunting.

The good news? I did eventually land a full-time job at a place I love. You can [read about my tips for doing so](#).

Why I put this book together.

After getting hired, part of me wanted to “pay-it-forward” by helping others get full-time positions they loved. The other part of me had a chip-on-my-shoulder and wanted to know why it had taken me so damn long to get a “real” job.

I ended up finding a lot of different reasons, but chief among them, students and new grads just aren't great when it comes to job interviews.

We dug in and did some research at Student Life Network. We surveyed thousands of students nationwide and found that 54% of students are flat out afraid of job interviews, and 53% are worried about being rejected. 49% feel they are unqualified for jobs in their field.

So we decided to help a silent majority of students who feel like they're unable to make the leap from school to gainful employment in the real world.

But we had start at the beginning.

Because if you don't know how to land an interview, knowing how to perform well in an interview doesn't do you any good.

It would be like reading a book on how to be a Formula 1 racer before going through driver's ed.

Who this book is for.

Tired of blasting out dozens of resumes into the void?

Only getting the occasional job interview at places you don't actually want to work for?

Feeling like the underdog when it comes to landing a full-time job?

Then read on, grasshopper. We're going to teach how to land a job interview. And how to not suck at job hunting.

Essential Help

I couldn't have put this book together without the essential help and work of Dana Iskoldski, Chris Ackroyd, Ryan Bolton, Sarah Cavan, Drew Dudley (creator of [Day One Direct](#) a leadership program with insights from Fortune 500 companies), Seana Dwyer, Hamza Khan, Lauren Marinigh, Perry Monaco (as well as all the fine folks at LinkedIn Canada), Bailey Parnell (her company [SkillsCamp](#) is full of great resources for hungry, young job hunters) and Stephen Sills.

And you, too.

Yes, *you*, reading this right now.

DANA ISKOLDSKI

gets an especially big shout out. She did a ton of research and single-handedly wrote entire sections of this book. To say she was instrumental in its completion and attention to detail would be an understatement. She also did way better in her job interview than I did, for the record.

Why You're Not Getting Any Interviews

Let's start with your first hurdle—getting an interview, and understanding why you're not currently getting one.

Most students think if they aren't landing job interviews, it's for one of these reasons:

- Not being qualified enough.
- They didn't apply to enough jobs.
- The competition has more experience.
- There's something wrong with their resume.

Can you, in fact, snag a job without a shred of relevant experience, or with a blatantly bad resume? No. But simply fixing a bad resume or skilling yourself up may not always fix the problem.

To understand how you can get yourself out of the no-interview rut, you have to first understand how jobs are really filled.

Once you understand, you'll know why Perry Monaco, LinkedIn Canada's resident recruitment expert, says the last thing you want to do is *apply* for a job.

Positions are filled the same way students buy coffee makers.

Think of a recruiter like a student with a broken coffee maker.



PERRY MONACO 
@ElvisRun

ARE WE COMPARING YOU TO A COFFEE MAKER?

Kind of. Filling a role, for a recruiter, really isn't personal. It's just their job to fill a company position, like an empty space on a kitchen counter, and once you understand that, you'll be able to see more opportunities where you can help them do their job while helping yourself at the same time.

The student desperately needs a new one. They're too stressed with school to deal with customer service if the new one turns out to be a dud, but they only have so much time to buy one before caffeine withdrawal symptoms kick in (or they spend too much money on takeout coffee). The clock is ticking.

Monaco says many recruiters are in the same situation. Except, they're picking out dozens of ~~coffee makers~~ candidates—all at once—for dozens of managers at their company who have open positions that need filling.

Oh, and they have *hundreds of resumes* to look at for each of those positions.

Every day a position isn't filled, it costs their company serious money (same as caffeine withdrawal, but more expensive). And every day a position is filled with someone who isn't right for the job (more on that later), that also costs their company money.

Choosing who to interview is like reading product reviews.

If you had to buy a new coffee maker, how would you pick from the hundreds that exist? Remember, you're short on time, very busy, and

you want to spend as little time buying takeout coffee as possible.

You'll probably Google "coffee makers," and pay extra attention to what your friends use. Maybe you'll even look to the influencers you follow, and see what they have on their kitchen counter (in that Instagram photo they just posted). Then you'll look all of those up online separately, compare their features, and make your decision.

Choosing who to interview, especially when a job needs to be filled ASAP, works the same way.

Only, a recruiter doesn't use Google for recommendations. They use the people around them, their own memory, and maybe a few online tools.

It's as simple as a coworker, who knows what the recruiter is looking for, saying, "I know this one model of coffee maker, and I think it'll mesh perfectly with our company's kitchen counter."

Is that a shortcut?

Of course it is. It means a recruiter doesn't have to spend time sifting through the hundreds of job applications on their desk.

And it's not unethical; it's actually extremely common. We'll come back to this in a couple of pages.

The only time recruiters do research from scratch.

The same way a great candidate can only fill one position at a time, a recruiter can only buy a particular coffee maker once. So, logically, those "10 Best Coffee Maker" shortlists they consult will get exhausted at some point.

Forward-looking recruiters are always on the lookout for the next great candidate for the next job they have to fill.

Enter: The Diamond Mine

AKA the repository of every single resume a company has received for similar past positions, whether that be through a job portal or direct application on their website.

Some stuff in there ends up rising to the top, to be drawn from for future roles, and the crap (pardon our French) just stays at the bottom.

The silver lining in The Diamond Mine is that when a company says "we'll keep your resume

on file for future opportunities,” some (the smart ones) actually mean it.

The bad news is you’re likely not considered for current positions unless those “Top 10 Best” lists happen to have been exhausted already.

The Diamond Mine, explained.

If you’re in The Diamond Mine, you’re not doomed per se. But it’s brutal down there because you’re essentially starting at the same jumping-off point as everybody else who wants a job.

The Diamond Mine is where there are hundreds of resumes.

Many are bad, from people who clearly aren’t qualified or who didn’t even read the job description. Many are good. And many are unbelievably good.

How do companies sift through all of it?

Some, with access to fancy resume-scanning software, can filter out resumes that are missing certain keywords. That’s a risk to you, because if you have the right experience, but expressed it in words different from what an employer is

searching for, your resume doesn't get read by a human.

Recruiters who don't have that kind of software may simply only read the top few resumes, and stop once they've found a certain number of ones they like for interviewing. Others only spend a few seconds scanning your resume in favour of seeing more resumes, meaning there's a good chance your resume won't get a chance to do its job (sell a recruiter on how awesome you are).

No company wants to be venturing into The Diamond Mine...

... unless they absolutely need to. In the meantime, every resume just sits there collecting dust, and you don't get an answer until the shortlists are exhausted. Sure, some companies (especially large ones or government agencies) have a duty to look through the diamond mine on a regular basis, but your resume still doesn't get treated very well down there.

How to avoid The Diamond Mine.

Remember we said before that recruiters have a shortlist? If you want to be interviewed, you want to be on *that list*!

How to get on that shortlist.

You need someone at the company (either the recruiter themselves, or their coworkers) to put you there. At bigger companies, this is done through formal employee referral programs, but it can also be as simple as having someone come up to the recruiter and say, “Hey, I know this person who I think would fit in really well.”

People actually want to be referring candidates to their company. Here’s why:

- If you would fit well with their company, having you on the team helps everybody.
- If you end up getting hired (or staying at the company a certain amount of time), they might get a bonus.
- It looks good on an employee if they’re a source of awesome new teammates for their company.

Be a great fit.

All of the above depends on someone knowing you’ll fit in well at their company.

I once had a job interview at a publishing house as a Story Editor—helping young writers with lots of potential develop their long-form novels.

The job description couldn't have sounded more perfect. It was like it was written *for me*. I was convinced I would excel in the position and would love doing the work every day.

But when I met with the department head, we got along about as well as a bubble bath and a bonfire.

He was mild mannered, cool-headed and moved at a measured “don't rock the boat” kind of pace. I'm pretty sure Jack Johnson just played in his head all day long.

And there's nothing wrong with that.

But I'm loud, rambunctious, dramatic and expressive. And I often make decisions that buck what's mandated by my superiors if I think it's what's best for the audience and the project. My inner soundtrack is closer to Death from Above or Eagles of Death Metal or some other band which that hiring manager would never listen to because they're too loud.

So it's not just about being qualified for the job—because lots of people are qualified for the job. Your inner songs have to belong to the same soundtrack. They have to sync.

That sync is described as “fit” inside companies, and it comes down to:

- Does this person mesh well with others on the team?
- Does them being here benefit the team and company as a whole?

Companies will want to know things like:

- If you *align with their values*.
- If you're *knowledgeable* about their field, and curious about learning more about their industry.
- If you have a *skillset* that solves a specific problem for the company.
- If you'll acclimate well to the *internal culture*.
- And if you're just someone they can *sit beside every day* (seriously).

We'll show you how to demonstrate this later.

But first, for someone to know you're a fit, they have to know you. So that's what we're going to talk about next.

Highlights

1. You're most likely not getting interviews because you don't stand out from the crowd.
2. Companies look for candidates the way you would for a new coffee maker.
 - With urgency.
 - With recommendations first.
3. When you apply through a job portal, you end up in The Diamond Mine.
 - Your resume sits in a digital pile with hundreds of other similar candidates.
 - Many companies use keywords to search through The Diamond Mine; meaning an actual human may never see your resume.
4. Avoid The Diamond Mine by creating internal champions within a company and making yourself a great fit for a position.

It's All About Who You Know

(So Meet Some People)

Here's how I used to "job hunt." I'd sit down at my computer with a fresh cup of coffee, hop on LinkedIn or another online job board and find a few positions I thought roughly matched my qualifications.

Then I would spend a few hours tailoring versions of my resume and cover letter for those positions, and then apply through the online portal.

I'd maybe apply for five or six jobs in a day, and feel like my time was well spent.

Except it wasn't. Here's why:

- My resume was usually going through a [resume scanner](#), which probably disqualified most of my applications instantly.
- If my resume did get by the scanner, it sat in a pile of virtually identical resumes (AKA The Diamond Mine).
- Any contacts I might have had at those companies lost the incentive to refer me, because it technically wasn't them that brought me in.

What I should have been doing is building more relationships with people inside companies, instead of relying on job portals and The Diamond Mine to land me a job.

What you can get out of building relationships with people inside companies

- You can get put on a shortlist for an open position.
- You can learn about your industry and what might be holding you back from being a more appealing candidate.
- They may recommend you for a position within their network where you would be a good fit.
- They'll keep you in mind when a position opens up down the line.

"It's not what you know, it's who you know."

We've all heard those words preached and we can debate whether or not they're true all day.

The issue isn't whether they're true.

The issue is that the phrase creates a new problem which can stand in the way of working somewhere you love.

"MAKING FRIENDS"

This is totally Chris Ackroyd's thing. But he said we can use it.

Because when you think about “who you know,” you think about:

- If your network is too small.
- If it’s the right size (as if there is such a thing).
- If your connections are plentiful.

That reflection translates to an evaluation of your networking fortunes:

- You’re screwed.
- You’ll have a few opportunities.
- You’re lucky and you’ll have jobs land in your lap.

These are all toxic mindsets that can harm you in the long run because you believe that you have no control over the situation—that your network is fixed.

This default line of thinking doesn’t account for proactive networkers.

The most important part of understanding your network is realizing that you are in control of who you know and how well you know them.

Build your community.

Your network isn't fixed.

You're in charge of reaching out to people, of asking for introductions, and connecting with people that you believe you can build mutually beneficial bonds with.

Realizing that this is within your control is the first step to shaking off the connotation associated with that dirty, annoying word, "networking" and transitioning to a stage where you look at *making new friends* as an opportunity not just to enrich your career, but also your life.

Let's get something straight. Networking does not mean:

- Just showing up to events.
- Having, forced awkward conversations with strangers.
- Talking yourself up to impress someone.
- Simply exchanging information.

You should view networking as a series of daily interactions that build your own unique community.

Your community should consist of people whom you:

- Seek advice, and provide advice to, openly.
- Perform and ask for favours from.
- Take turns buying a round with—both metaphorically and literally.

Remember, every interaction is an opportunity. And true networking is making friends and figuring out how you can help them.

How do you meet these people?

I really hope you read that in a Seinfeld voice.

Can we establish one super important thing right away? You really shouldn't ever cold call anybody on the phone or walk into an office without setting up a meeting first. We can't tell you how many recruiters have told us that they absolutely hate when candidates do this. So please, don't do it. Ever.

Got it? Good.

The best (free) tool to use for finding people to connect with on a professional level is [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com).



LINKEDIN.COM 

The world's largest professional network with more than 546 million users in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide.

- Everybody literally announces what their job titles and companies are.
- Their profile gives you a hint at what you could potentially learn from them.
- You can type in a company, or industry, or keyword into the search bar, and filter by the location you live in or want to work in.

Start doing some research, and create a list of people you want to meet.

Find the people who have the job you want.

Use [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) or [Ten Thousand Coffees](#) to connect with people who you:

- Admire.
- Think you gain great insights from.
- With whom relationships down the road may end up being useful to *both of you*.

Will each one of those people get you an interview? Probably not, and that shouldn't be the only goal you have.

You should meet with people to find out more about your industry. And we're going to tell you exactly how to do that.



TENTHOUSAND

COFFEES.COM [↗](#)

Start making your team more
successful by providing them
with thoughtful, connection
building introductions.

Does this work?

You'd be surprised how many people have the time to help out someone who is truly passionate about breaking into their industry—because they know, at some point, they're going to need to buy a new coffee maker.

It's even worth reaching out to inquire about an exact job posting.

When we interviewed CIBC's HR guru, Stephanie Cera Amenta, she said:

I get so many invitations on LinkedIn, and I actually admire people who reach out and say, "This is who I am, these are the skills I bring to the table, is there an opportunity for me at CIBC?"

She also said she absolutely gives interviews to people who reach out over LinkedIn, "Because that takes courage. Look, the worst that can happen is they don't acknowledge the email and you're no worse off."

How do you find people's emails?

This is where you have to put your detective hat on. Cue the slow jazz and Venetian drapes.

The first thing you might try is using common email conventions that exist at some companies (ex. *firstname.lastname@company.com*).

But that's not always a surefire trick.

So next you might try to see if they have a "contact" page on their personal website.

You can also try finding them on Twitter, and sending them a direct message asking if it would be okay if you reached out via email. If they aren't following you on Twitter, you won't be able to DM them, so try tweeting at them first to ask for their email, or ask them to follow you back so you can DM them.

If you're really at a loss, you can try using plugins like [LinkedIn Sales Navigator](#), and tools like [RocketReach](#). But keep in mind, these are "free-mium" services which will start to charge you for more connections and searches.

Your best bet is to stick to LinkedIn.



LINKEDIN SALES

NAVIGATOR [↗](#)

View rich LinkedIn profile data for your contacts directly in Gmail, and use that knowledge when you reach out next.



ROCKETREACH.CO [↗](#)

Find anyone's personal and work email, phone numbers, and full profile information from 50+ sites in a single search.

Establishing a relationship in 2 steps.

Step 1: Reach out via email.

You can search for people in your industry via LinkedIn. Do your research on them—see if they’ve written a blog for example, see if you can find out what projects they’ve worked on.

Start by sending one email to someone you think you could learn from. Ask them if they would be willing to do you a small favour by sharing some of their time or insights.

Taking this first step really serves as a reminder that the world isn’t so scary, and people generally are happy to help—when asked.

Over time, one conversation leads to another, and, as though you’re picking up momentum on monkey bars, you’ll find that even if you only tackle a single challenge or conversation at a time, you can travel distances you once thought impossible.

Include links to your LinkedIn profile and personal website to make it easy for someone to research you.

TIP

If you’re worried that you’re not offering enough value to your perspective connection, you can reassure them by offering to buy a coffee, and manage expectations around their time. Saying something like, “I just need 30 minutes of your time” could go a long way.

[✉] Steal this template

Hey [person I'm interested in connecting with],

I thoroughly enjoyed [something they've done recently—perhaps a talk, project or published article]. The part about [find something about their work that you're sincerely interested in] really resonated with me because [again, be sincere].

I was wondering if I could take you out for coffee in the coming week and pick your brain for 30 minutes about [a genuine inquiry you have about your chosen industry], among other career-related topics.

Are you free on any of the following dates?

- [Option 1]
- [Option 2]
- [Option 3]

If none of those work, kindly suggest an alternative and I'd be happy to move my schedule around to accommodate yours.

Cheers,

[your name]

[your contact info]

[your website]

[✉] For example

Hey Bruce,

I thoroughly enjoyed your talk on crime-fighting in Gotham last night. The part about Arkham being under-resourced really resonated with me because I'm completing my internship there and have experienced it first-hand.

I was wondering if I could buy you a coffee in the coming week and pick your brain for 30 minutes about a problematic patient I'm dealing with, among other career-related topics.

Are you free on any of the following dates?

- Nov 1
- Nov 9
- Nov 23

If none of those work, kindly suggest an alternative and I'd be happy to move my schedule around to accommodate yours.

Cheers,

Harley Q.

harleyQ@arkham.com

drquinzels.wordpress.com

Step 2: Meet up.

So you've made a new friend.

What's next? The crucial in-person meeting is next.

This is the interaction that transforms an encounter into a relationship.

Reaching out to meet up for coffee (or tea, not everyone is a coffee drinker) shows that you're serious about your desire to learn from someone else, and the second, deeper and more specific meeting is what truly establishes what will hopefully become an ongoing relationship.

What do you talk about?

Ask your new connection:

- What books they're reading or podcasts they're listening to.
- Who are they inspired by, who their mentors are.
- Why they got into their industry.
- How they got into their current role.
- What challenges they face day-to-day.

- How is their industry changing?
- What they think you should be working on if you want to break into the industry.

Be prepared to talk about:

- Why you reached out to that person specifically.
- Be honest and straightforward with your ask.
- But don't ever, ever ask for a job flat out. Ever. Showcase your honest passion for something beyond just a job.
- Why you're passionate about their industry.
- What you're currently working on.

As a good practice, ask your contact who else you think could provide you some valuable insight—figure out who you should reach out to next.

If you really hit it off, ask about meeting up again in a few months, and if they might be willing to be a mentor.

PRO TIP

Ask if they would be willing to critique your work or portfolio. An honest review from a trusted mentor can go a long way. Incorporating feedback from someone working in the industry will help you appear to be more experienced and familiar in your chosen field.

“But I’m an introvert!”

A preconceived notion of networking is that it always favours the extroverts; that it's easier to connect if you're loud and assertive.

Are some people wired to be more comfortable around strangers? Is the ability to jump into a new group and carry conversation beneficial? Yes. Are you screwed if this is difficult for you as a shy or introverted individual? No.

While it may be easier to talk to new people if you're extroverted, introverts have the benefit of focusing on connecting with new people.

If you're someone who doesn't have the time or patience for intense small-talk, you can focus more energy on the one or two people you truly want to learn from.

While not ideal, you can still ask for advice, insights and critiques via email.

And if wish you were more assertive, you can be. But it takes practice.

Plenty of reclusive individuals have turned into social stars, so if that's something you aspire to then blaming factors you can't control is a waste of time—work instead on the growth you can influence.

Highlights

1. Building relationships are much more valuable use of your time than submitting through application portals.
2. It's all about who you know. And you can always meet more people.
3. Use LinkedIn to research and create a list of people you admire.
 - You can use LinkedIn or email to reach out.
 - But don't call anyone on the phone or pester them at their office.
4. Building your network is as simple as:
 - Reaching out; sending an initial message.
 - Arranging a meetup for coffee to gain insights and build a meaningful relationship.
5. You don't need to be a social butterfly to network efficiently. Work within your comfort level.

Who the Hell Are You?

A Crash Course in Personal Branding

Have you ever decided you want to have a relationship with somebody based on just their Tinder profile alone?

There might be absolutely nothing wrong with their Tinder profile, heck maybe it's even pretty good (points for no fish, horses or group pictures).

But still, it's nice to get to know someone a little bit before you date them.

Having a quick coffee is certainly a good technique (see the last section).

But what do you do if you're really trying to figure out what makes someone tick? Would you do a quick Facebook creep to make sure there was nothing too off about them? Would you read their blog or personal website if they linked to it in their profile?

Worse, what if there was no information out there about them? What would you assume?

That's where cultivating your personal brand comes into play. Because if the first thing that comes up when a ~~Tinder match~~ HR recruiter Googles you is an unflattering picture of you doing a keg stand, you're not going to get that ~~date~~ job interview.

You need to come off as somebody who is serious about getting into this ~~relationship~~ industry.

“WTF is a personal brand?”

A personal brand is what people say about you when you leave the room. It's the image you project. It's what people will *think* of when they *think of you*. It's what they'll remember you for.

“Do I need one?”

You have one whether you know it or not. People—especially recruiters—will always associate you with an image or an idea.

Your goal is not to simply create a personal brand. It's to control and curate your personal brand so that somebody else doesn't do it for you.

Because if you don't decide and declare what you are and what you're about, somebody else will decide for you.

So, what do you want recruiters to think of when they look you up?

What they do or don't find when they inevitably search you should be because you decided they will find it.

Don't turn off a potential employer.

Depending on the size of the company, employers may Google search you *immediately* after you send your application.

Consider that in 2013, 96 per cent of recruiters used LinkedIn to find candidates ([Jobvite](#)) and 91 per cent of employers use social media to screen prospective candidates ([Reppler](#)).

[SkillsCamp](#)'s Bailey Parnell has some pro tips for avoiding immediate rejections.

Your Online Checklist

- Google yourself in [incognito mode](#) and check the second page to be sure
- Check your last 100 posts on all public social media
- Update your profiles (photos, privacy setting, bios, skills, experience, etc.)
- Avoid the epic fails below.

Epic Fails

69 per cent of employers have rejected a candidate based on what they found online ([Reppler](#)), so remember to play it safe. You may think something is not a big deal, but it would really suck if that particular recruiter thought it was a big deal. Don't let these be the reasons you don't get the job:

- Inappropriate or illegal activity
- Online harassment or cyber bullying
- Non-inclusive language or actions



SKILLSCAMP.CO 

SkillsCamp is a school
for soft skills.



BAILEY PARNELL 
[@BaileyParnell](#)

- Lies or misrepresentation
- Rants about colleagues or workplaces
- Poor grammar and spelling

Developing your brand's image on social media.

Social media is often used to connect with your friends, your favourite celebs or brands, but it's often forgotten as a tool to be used professionally.

Step 1: Brush up your appearance.

Beginning to shape your personal brand starts with your Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and, of course, LinkedIn channels.

For any accounts that you aim to be public and professional, you're going to want to change the following to be in line with the image you want to cultivate:

- Profile photos.
- Header or cover images.
- Photo and profile description.

You'll want to make sure you're only posting content into your feed that relates to your personal brand as well.

Always direct people to somewhere they can gain more information, like your personal website or LinkedIn profile.

The looks.

For some people, a brand image means getting a logo designed, but it can be as simple as choosing particular colours, fonts, and photos that will be carried over on all your channels.

You can use websites like [DaFont.com](https://dafont.com) to download custom fonts for free.

If you aren't sure what you want this to look like, [start looking at other peoples'](#) to give you an idea of what you like and don't like.

Here are some examples from Student Life Network staff and friends:



Ryan Bolton

Communications Director at Student Life Network

ryan-bolton.com



Hamza Khan

Managing Director of Student Life Network

hamzakhan.ca



Lauren Marinigh

Social Media and Content Marketer

laurenmarinigh.com

Step 2: Cultivate your affinity.

Follow people and companies you admire in your industry. Interact with them, share articles that you read that you find interesting surrounding your industry, and start developing yourself as a thought leader within your sector.

Your social profiles, and for that matter personal brand, don't have to be without personality. In fact they should feel authentic.

But as a *golden rule*: Don't post anything you wouldn't be comfortable with a future employer

seeing. Or your grandmother. That wouldn't be cool either.

These people in your network are sharing ideas, perspectives and opportunities and these networks will quickly mature from the level playing field of undergrad students to tomorrow's decision-makers, artists, creators and disruptors, etc.

Explains Hamza Khan, Managing Director of Student Life Network.

Building a website.

"But I don't know how to code! I don't know HTML! I can't build a website!"

Stop. Breathe. You can build a website. You don't need to know how to code.

No, building a website isn't a *necessary* component to building your personal brand, but you definitely want one.

Our research shows that only 7 per cent of Canadian students have a personal website.

That means simply having a website makes you stand out from 93 per cent of other candidates with your level of qualifications.

So if you want a massive competitive advantage over your competition, you want a personal website.

Use template services to easily set up a website.

Services like [Format](#), [WordPress](#), [Squarespace](#) and [about.me](#) give users the opportunity to create simple and slick, plug-and-play websites.

These sites feature many *free* templates (as well as paid, premium ones).

The services are both dead simple to navigate and upload content. They have a multitude of tutorials available to help you along the way.

Seriously, if you can set up and navigate a Facebook page, WordPress is a snap.

“What do I put on my website?”

The content you put on your website should be tailored to your personal brand.

[Twirl the Globe](#)’s Lauren Marinigh uses [her personal website](#) as a place to showcase her experience; her online portfolio is packed with samples of her work. Lauren says that she uses the website as “a complement to my resume when I apply for jobs,” and that the site alone



FORMAT.COM [↗](#)

The website platform designed to help you showcase your work and uncover new opportunities.

FUN FACT

The Student Life Network website is built on WordPress and if a digital-dummy like me can manage it, you definitely can.



LAUREN MARINIGH [↗](#)
[@MarinighPR](#)



TWIRLTHEGLOBE.COM [↗](#)

Travel blog written by a dreamer of far away places and a full passport. Showing people that even with limited vacation days, you can still see the world!

has attracted her a lot of freelance job opportunities and projects.

You can also check out [Hamza's website](#) and Student Life Network Communication Director, [Ryan Bolton's website](#) for more inspiration.

“What about a blog?”

Just like a website, a blog isn't mandatory. However, it can be a great tool to help build your reputation. Having a blog that you consistently write on can not only showcase that you are knowledgeable about your industry, but also your passion for your industry. Again, here's [Hamza's blog](#), as an example.

If you're still a little unsure on setting up a full website, check out [Medium](#)—it's a free platform that lets you publish your own stories.

Your offline brand.

Although there is a constant push to get everything online, it's important to also focus on your offline presence and image. [Redesign and update your resume](#), cover letter and business cards to match the rest of your brand.

It's also important to remember that your brand isn't only about the design of all your physical



HAMZA KHAN 
@HamzaK



RYAN BOLTON 
@iamryanbolton

TIP

If you aim to have your blog be a component of your brand, then you need to ensure you can be consistent with posting regularly.



MEDIUM.COM 

Medium taps into the brains of the world's most insightful writers, thinkers, and storytellers to bring you the smartest takes on topics that matter.

materials like your resume, it's also about the story you want to tell across all your channels. Who are you? What are your aspirations? What are you passionate about?

“What should I keep in mind when branding myself?”

Hamza and Lauren both agree—their biggest piece of advice (and mine too) is simple: *start*.

“Stop researching, stop tinkering and just get online and do it,” says Hamza.

Although starting is the biggest step in building your brand, there are some things you should keep in mind.

1. Consistency

Marketing needs consistency in order to be successful. When someone looks at your LinkedIn account, your resume, or your business card, all things should be in line and connect with one another. This will leave a stronger, more professional impression.

2. Professionalism

Professionalism is key to building a successful personal brand. If portraying a professional

TIP

Volunteering, taking a course or certification, starting a side project, etc. can all add to your overall brand image, too!

image means going back on all the tweets you've ever sent and deleting the inappropriate ones, then so be it, it'll be worth it in the long run.

It's important to remember that you don't need to completely delete all evidence of you having a life outside of your industry and career path, but you should clean stuff up that you may not want an employer to see (think: puking in a toilet after a night of drinking, or tweets using profanity).

3. Commitment

It's a common misconception that you only really need to focus on branding yourself when you are job hunting and trying to make a good impression. This is far from the truth. Your personal brand should be carried with you throughout your entire career, job hunting or not.

Highlights

1. Your personal brand is what the world (and job recruiters) think about you.
2. Start building your personal brand by revamping your social media with:
 - Professional images.
 - Personal branding statement.
 - Curated content.
3. Having a personal website or blog puts you in the top 7 per cent of student and new grad job hunters.
 - It's easy to create a website with tools like WordPress and Squarespace.
4. Your offline brand is also important. Champion what you are truly passionate about.
5. The pillars of effective personal branding are:
 - Consistency
 - Professionalism
 - Commitment

How to Get a Job Interview at Student Life Network

I have a lot of students ask me [how to get hired at Student Life Network](#).

Yeah, I can't tell you exactly how to do that. But I can tell you how I landed my job interview here.

The quick version? I had written for Student Life Network in the past. Ryan Bolton, the Communications Director, knew me well. And I had come highly recommended by friends I worked with at the Sheridan Student Union (SSU), who were recruited by Student Life Network.

Ryan Bolton gave me my first ever writing opportunity. He was the editor of the SSU's magazine, *TRAVIS*.

I became really involved with *TRAVIS* during my two remaining years at Sheridan, so much so that I took over as Editor-in-Chief of its replacement publication for two years after I graduated.

This was how I began building my network. At the time, it just seemed like making friends and mentors.

It was also how I began building my personal brand. It was clear that I was passionate about writing, coaching student writers and creating digital content. I was living in the space that Student Life Network occupied and their staff knew I loved it.

I left the SSU to learn to [write for film and TV in Vancouver](#).

After graduation, my bank account dictated that I take a full-time job running a blog for a Vancouver neighbourhood famous for its gaslights.

Amazingly, I made it through The Diamond Mine and was hired. Not amazingly, I ended up hating the job. To say the least, I wasn't a good fit for the organization.

I was there about two months before I decided to hand in my resignation. I moved back to Ontario and began my new job search. But it didn't last long.

Sitting in my inbox was a message to the SLN blog writers, talking about a possible editorial board to generate story ideas. I wanted to be on that board.

I actually hesitated sending Ryan Bolton, my first editor and writing mentor, an email.

But I put my self-doubt and social anxiety aside, and asked Ryan if there was anyway I could come in and volunteer my time.

Ryan replied back later that afternoon, asking me if I was interested in coming in to chat about a job.

It was a mentor in my network, who knew me, who worked with me, who knew what I was passionate about, who brought me in for an interview when a position opened up.

It's not always instantaneous. But putting the work in to build your network and your personal brand goes a long way.

Because even if you make it through The Diamond Mine, what's at the other end might not be what you wanted.

It's not just about landing a job interview.
It's about landing the job that you want. The job
you dreamed about.



Did you find this book helpful?

Did it help you get a job? Or do you still have burning questions for us to address? What would make this book a better, more helpful reading experience?

You can let us know. Seriously.

Email us here: contact@studentlifenetwork.com

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https://twitter.com/stephen_sills

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RocketReach

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Ten Thousand Coffees

<https://www.tenthousandcoffees.com/>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/>

Personal Branding

About Me

<https://about.me/>

DaFont

<https://www.dafont.com/>

Format

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Medium

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Squarespace

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SLN Interview Series

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