



From the Classroom to the Office: How to Write a Resume with no Work Experience

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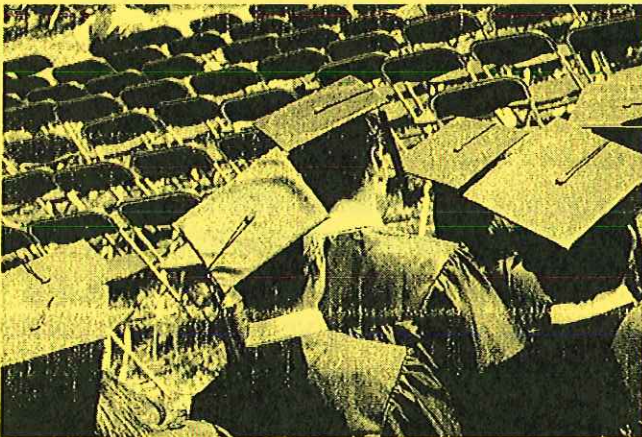


Photo by Ryan Maxwell

It's every freshly minted graduate's lament. "They say I need experience, but how can I get experience when no one will hire me?" We've all been there, when the euphoria of being a real live adult wears off and the search for your first real adult job gets particularly frustrating. But here's the good news: **you have more experience than you think**. No one manages to graduate from college without developing some useful skills. The trick is figuring out how to create a resume that shows how those useful skills transition from the classroom to the office. Here are a few things to think about.

Transferable skills.

Take some time to contemplate the skills you've developed that could be useful in your future job. Consider your college career. If you've written a **thesis** or completed a **big project**, you've honed skills like **time management**, **organization** and **working with a group**. Maybe you were **involved in a club** or other

organization that required you to help plan an event while staying within budget constraints, write a proposal or speak publicly. Just because you didn't learn these skills in the workplace doesn't mean that they're not valid on a resume. You might also ask professors, committee members and other people you've worked with for feedback on what you do well. They may come up with skills you didn't even know you had.

Internships.

If you're still in school, do one. Besides the obvious benefit of real industry experience on your resume, an internship also gives you a taste of what's really required in your chosen career, which can help you tailor your cover letter and resume when you start looking for a full-time position. And though you never know how these things will go, we know an awful lot of people whose college internships eventually turned into jobs, so take it seriously.

Volunteer work.

* Besides being a good thing to do for your community, volunteering is an excellent way to beef up your resume. If you know what you'd like to do professionally, focus your volunteer position on that. For instance, if you want an event planning job, serve on the annual gala committee. Not only does this give you some real-life experience, it also tells your employer that you're a well-rounded, civically responsible person. Plus, if you're lucky, you'll make some valuable contacts, which brings us to...

Recommendations.

If you're on the job hunt, it helps to come armed with some recommendations from people you've worked with in the past, especially if you don't have professional experience. These letters can be from professors, committee chairs and people you've worked with in groups or campus organizations, and they should be relevant to the job you're seeking.

Remember, the goal here is not to fib or overstate your knowledge; it's to show potential employers how what you know now can benefit their organization. And if you're frustrated, cheer up. Every successful career starts with a first job. You'll find yours.