

**Toughen up.**  
Because you want to be global ready.

# the american mindset

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job search guidelines for international  
graduate business students



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And let me not forget my dear friends and colleagues in Italy ... where it all began.

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# foreword

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When I first arrived at the Simon Business School, University of Rochester in Rochester, New York, I immediately noticed the dedication to international students demonstrated by the faculty, staff, students, and alumni. As we all know, the face of graduate management education is changing across the globe. More and more, students are pursuing graduate business degrees outside of their home country, and many hope to gain experience in the country in which they attended graduate school. Simon has been in the forefront of this change and has a wealth of resources for our international students.

This guide is intended to give Simon international graduate business students an introduction to conducting business on a personal level in the United States, with specific examples that make communicating with Americans so much easier. Although useful for everyone, it is especially helpful for those for whom English is not their primary language.

The book's focus is on conducting a successful internship or job search while in the US. While it isn't intended to be overly comprehensive—we have popular workshops at Simon that dive deep into acculturation, career exploration and job search communications—it is full of examples, tips, and stories that will help readers as they build their global careers.

At Simon, the Career Management Center has a slogan: Be Ready. Be Prepared. Start Now. We hope this guide shows you that we are committed to helping all of our students to prepare for the global job search.

Karen Dowd, PhD, Assistant Dean  
Career Management & Corporate Engagement

Louis Mistretta, MBA Candidate, Class of 2015 says...

"A successful job search involves a lot of hard work on your part, and understanding the American job market is the foundation for all future successes. Please take the material in this guide to heart. As the expert in her field of understanding cross-cultural communication, Sara has worked with hundreds of international future business leaders here at Simon preparing them for successful careers in the US. The information she shares here is critical to giving you the understanding you need to blend seamlessly into the complex cultural matrix of the American business world. Feeling comfortable in a foreign place does not happen overnight, but an openness to learning and the tips in this guide will greatly speed the process for you. Pay special attention to the 10 Essentials, as the hardest things to learn about a foreign culture are the interpersonal behaviors taken for granted in that culture. Don't downplay the importance of "culture fit" in employment decisions, as it is just as important (if not more) as technical qualifications. So don't be shy, dive in with a positive attitude, and enjoy landing your dream job in the US! Good Luck!"

#### NOTE:

This guide is a brief introduction. It is intended to supplement the thorough resources and information you will receive from other offices at Simon and the University of Rochester including the Career Management Center, Admissions, Student Services, the MBA and MS programs, the ELUSC program for those students who enroll in that program, the Management Communications course taught for all students at Simon, the University of Rochester International Services Office (ISO), and others. As you get to know us you will find a wealth of people and resources are available for international students at Simon.

# lost in rome

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I want to share a story with you, a story of my own experience in another country, another culture, with a foreign currency and language. I want you to know that even though finding your way in a new country is scary, especially at first, it can be exciting, too.

I want you to know you are not alone.

A number of years ago, when I stepped out of the airport in Rome, Italy, I was about to start a new life. I didn't know anyone in Rome. I didn't know my way around, I didn't know how to use the currency, and even though I had studied Italian, apparently I didn't even know the language.

"Do vai?" asked the cab driver at the curb. I had no clue what he was asking me, as I stood there with my luggage and all of my belongings in hand.

He was speaking in Roman dialect, unfamiliar to me, asking, "Where are you going?"

I handed over a piece of paper with my address, Via Fontiana 68, and in a minute we were off to my new beginning.

As we drove along, I decided to practice my Italian. "Roma è una bella città," I said—or at least I thought I did. But even though I repeated it four or five times, the cab driver didn't seem to understand a word.

Finally, he shook his head as if finally understanding and bellowed, "Ohh, si, Roma è una bella città!" I was dumbfounded. Wasn't I speaking Italian?

We arrived at my address and I reached into my pocket to pay the fare. I wondered if it was the right amount—the currency was new to me—and I didn't know how much to tip. I took a guess and handed him the money, and he shook his head and drove away.

I looked around. Everything was unfamiliar. I was completely out of my element. I wondered why Rome looked so different from the pictures I had seen. After an afternoon nap, I decided to be a little adventurous and take a walk down the block to find a place to eat. Around the corner there was a little restaurant with the menu posted outside. I couldn't read a word. I looked inside and listened to the babble of conversation—and I didn't hear a word of my native language or even a word of any of the Italian I had studied. I turned around, intimidated and tired, and went back to my new home.

The next morning when I got up I gave myself a pep talk. Before my trip I had been excited to see the Roman Coliseum, a famous landmark. I told myself, "I'm going to the Coliseum; I can do this." I had read that bus tickets were purchased at shops called "tobaccaio," so I found one, bought a ticket, and waited at the bus stop.

“I’m off to see the Coliseum,” I thought.  
“Yes!”

We turned a corner and I started seeing monuments I recognized from pictures I had seen. I was so excited, proud of myself for making my way around a foreign city alone. I looked to my left and started to see what looked like the Coliseum. It had the same shape, same curve, but it was smaller than I’d imagined it would be. I was overwhelmed with disappointment. I started to question why I was in Rome at all. Nothing felt right. Did I make a mistake?

Confused, I sat there until the bus came to its final stop in Piazza di Venezia. I was so disheartened I almost didn’t want to bother getting off the bus. Finally I stood up. I already knew where the bus stop was, I reasoned. I can always get back on, so why not take a look around?

As I stepped off the bus, I looked to my right. It was the statue of Vittorio Emanuele. Even though it wasn’t the Coliseum, it was absolutely striking. I walked up to it and walked around it, checking out the details. Just that one discovery made me more confident that indeed this was the adventure I was looking for.

Behind me was Via del Corso, a street where later I would spend long, relaxing days doing business as Italians do—with a coffee or a glass of wine in hand (so different from the pace I was used to in the US). To the left was another street in whose restaurants I would order confidently in the same Roman dialect the cab driver had used.

I kept walking, once again excited for the future and the possibilities that it held. I admired the architecture, so different from what I was used to back home, thinking about my life and watching the people around me. And as I turned the corner, still in awe, I looked over my shoulder.

And there it was: the Coliseum, bigger than life.

In the years since that day, I have had hundreds of conversations with professionals from many different countries and cultures—people who, like you, stepped out of their comfort zone and left home to study and work in cultures far different from their own. Today I am a professional executive cross-cultural coach and teach English to speakers of other languages. In this guide, I share with you the 10 most important questions frequently asked by all

kinds of international professionals, from successful Swiss CEOs to Japanese team leaders, from Saudi princes to curious French poets.

These questions are what I call the 10 Essentials, the key characteristics of communication with US Americans as you embark on a job search.

I also include the stories of your peers—Simon students and alumni who, like you, have come a long way to study and start a new life. They have shared their insights to help you become what you’ve set out to be: a successful international professional.

This guide will help you understand American culture so you can be confident in conducting a job search and interacting with US Americans and other individuals from all over the world.

Get ready for your adventure! Ask questions, step out of your security circle, and expect the unexpected.

Here’s to you finding your “Coliseum.”  
Here’s to your success!

# introduction to acculturation

Yang Yu '14S (MS) says...

"For a student like me, I am here not only to learn about academics, but to learn American culture, and the workshop The American Mindset does just that! It is actually one of the best workshops I have ever had at Simon. How can you be successful in your job search, or in a society in general, if you don't understand

the culture and the people you look to work with? It allows us to integrate with Americans and feel confident that we are not just visiting a culture, but becoming a part of it."

## What is acculturation and why is it important to you?

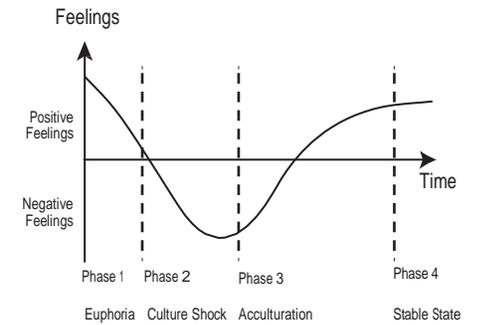
It's pretty simple, actually. Acculturation is understanding, adapting, and successfully functioning in a culture different than your own.

Here is why it's so important: well over 30 percent of university students in the US are

international, with a multitude of countries represented. Being a candidate who can conduct business in a variety of countries will give you a competitive advantage when you are job hunting, working with clients, and building your business. It also will help you in your personal life, making it easier to meet people and build a network of friends and colleagues.

Adjusting to a new culture is a lot like riding a roller coaster. In Phase One, we are at the top of the hill, excited, anticipating change with a joyful attitude. In Phase Two we feel out of control as the roller coaster descends rapidly. This is culture shock—a sense of confusion, uncertainty, or anxiety: "What is going on here? I don't understand."

In Phase Three, we're on the upswing again, gentler this time. We're starting to adapt and understand the new culture: "OK, I think I'm starting to get it." In Phase Four, the ride levels out. By this point we feel stable, confident, and secure: "Wow, I think I've got it!"



Just knowing the stages you will likely go through will help you understand yourself and prepare for the ride. Ask yourself:

1. What have I done to prepare myself to adapt to this new culture?
2. What is my action plan when I arrive to start the process?
3. Who will be there for me when I need help?

Preparation is crucial. It will help you define what success means to you. But remember: the ladder to success isn't always straight. In fact, it rarely is, it may feel more like a roller coaster.



# the american mindset: the 10 essentials

US Americans come from all walks of life, from every country and every culture, making the United States the melting pot of the world. That said, Americans share generally accepted views on life and ways of communicating. To help you understand this generally accepted way of thinking, I have prepared The 10 Essentials, the key characteristics of communication common among US Americans.

These may differ from your culture of origin. Although some of them may seem strange to you at first, keep in mind they are simply different—no better or worse than what you are used to. When you begin to understand and try them out on your own, you'll find getting along in the US is a lot easier.

## 1. "Hello, how are you?"

"Hi, how are you doing?" is simply a greeting in the US. In a business setting, it is rarely a question about your health, well-being, or family. Do not be surprised if an American walking past you in the hallway greets you with "Hello, how are you?" and doesn't stop to chat. When this happens, you can just keep walking as well and respond, "I'm doing well. And you?" This is not considered rude in the US; in fact, it has its roots in another, more subtle, concept in American business: Time is money.



### Note:

Many Americans when asked will respond, "Excellent!" or "Great!" with enthusiasm and a smile. Whether they are or they are not, it is a common response that conveys positivity. So ask yourself, "What am I conveying?"

## "Hello, how are you?"

Like many Americans in another country, I would greet the people I passed—whether I knew them or not—with "Hi, how are you?" in Italian, and keep on walking. Looking back, I know they must have thought I was crazy. In Italy, you stop and talk to people you know, and you don't ask strangers how they are and keep on walking.

I learned that when Italians ask how you are, they are opening a conversation that could last several minutes or more. I wasn't used to this, and it made me anxious. I just wanted to be polite and perhaps chat for a brief moment. So as the conversation would go on and on, I'd smile and respond, all the time thinking, "I've got to go! I've got to go!"

You may come from a culture that, like Italy, values these moments of connection. Don't be offended if the US Americans you greet in passing simply say hi and move on. It's not personal; this is just the customary greeting in the US.

## 2. Time is money.



It seems Americans are always so busy. Not everyone is this way, of course, but being busy is equated with being industrious in this country. Whether busyness is a virtue or not, it is a deeply embedded value in American culture. The English language is direct and to the point. This is part of the reason it has become the universal business language: It recognizes that time is a precious resource.

Try this: Imagine you are proposing to work with someone on a project. Think of how you would ask the question in your own language. How would you phrase it? Would you make the request in a series of conversations? Now imagine how you would ask the same question in English. Is the English translation more direct? How do you feel about that? Does it make you uncomfortable not to spend more time developing a relationship before asking such a direct question? Most Americans in business want to know soon if there is a possibility of doing business together.

## 3. “What do you do?”

Almost immediately after an American businessperson introduces herself for the first time, she will ask you, “What do you do?” This means she wants to know your occupation and if there is a possibility for you to do business together. This a good opportunity to offer her your business card. Your card introduces who you are, your occupation, and the company you work for or school you attend. It also demonstrates that you are a professional, you are familiar with American customs, and you are ready to do business. The person you are speaking with is likely to do the same. You might call or send an e-mail after the conversation to talk further about doing business together.



Exchanging business cards is one of the most popular ways professionals build a network in the US. There is no specific custom for it; just carry a few with you to share if the opportunity arises. Even though you are now a student you can still have business cards that indicate your program and expected degree year.

## Professional growth exercise

**Perfect pitch:** This a great place to start practicing your pitch. A pitch is a short (sixty seconds or less) description of who you are, what you have done professionally and what you want to do in the future. It is an essential part of networking, allowing people to see quickly and clearly if there is a possible business relationship that could develop.

Begin creating your own pitch by answering the question: “What do you do?”

Take into consideration the following examples:

“Currently, I am a student at the Simon Business School, an economics-based program widely known for its finance, quantitative, and analytics orientation. I am an engineer interested in product development in the Silicon Valley.”

“I am a student at the Simon Business School at the University of Rochester in New York State. Simon is named after William Simon, the former head of the US Treasury. It offers strong academic preparation in the fundamentals of business such as marketing, management, and finance. I am from India where I graduated from a top school and I am now pursuing a career in Marketing.”

“As a graduate business student at the Simon Business School, at the University of Rochester, which is a top private business school in the Northeast, I learned of Simon through my cousin and came here from China to study and pursue a career in Finance.”

## “What do you do?”

The question inevitably will come up, so be ready with an answer. And who knows? Maybe it will lead to some interesting new work. Since you are a student, you will need to adapt your answer so that it

opens the door for additional conversation. For example, you can explain how you came to know about Simon, reasons why you applied, and what you like about the school. You can describe your studies, the type of internship or job you are seeking. Don't say too much initially, share just enough that the person with whom you are speaking will be prompted to ask you another question. If you are speaking with an accent, slow down, speak so they can understand what you are saying.

Note:

Be self-aware of your English language speaking skills. If you need to improve your conversational, writing, or presentation skills, seek out immersion training at the University or in the Rochester area or online. The more you practice, the more confident and effective you will be in conversing and making small talk with people in informal and formal job search situations.

## 4. A firm handshake.

Across the globe, different cultures have their own forms of greeting. In some places, people kiss both cheeks; in others, they bow. In the US, we shake hands. And how you shake another person's hand says a lot about you. A firm handshake is required of—and appropriate for—both men and women. It means you are serious and have confidence. When you are introduced to someone or are introducing yourself, extend your right hand and firmly grip the other person's hand in a solid shake. You don't want to grip too tightly, but you don't want to offer a limp hand either. Practice shaking hands with your classmates and other people you know. If your hands are sweaty, wipe them before you shake hands.

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### 5. Direct eye contact.

Direct eye contact is a signal of trust in the US. It says, I mean what I say and I am honest. In other cultures direct eye contact can be considered aggressive—even an insult. In the US, the opposite is true. While you should not stare at a person, you do want to look directly into their eyes while you are communicating. Sometimes it helps to look at the space between the eyes, right above the nose. Remember to blink, and try to relax!

Bonnie Liu '13S (MBA) says...

“Coming to the US for the first time from China, I was very uncomfortable looking people directly in the eyes and shaking their hand firmly. As a woman, that can be perceived as rude or aggressive in China. However, after understanding this is how business is done in the US, and with some practice from my American friends, I found my confidence and feel comfortable professionally interacting with Americans.”

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### 6. A strong voice.

All the languages and cultures of the world have different intonations and accepted levels of speaking volume. US speech is louder and deeper than most. Speaking to be heard can be very challenging and uncomfortable for people who speak English as a second language. But, it's a part of being an international professional, and developing this skill is essential to your career.

I advise many of my students to listen to the Americans around them. What makes them sound different? Does your own voice sound different when you speak in your native tongue versus when you speak in English? Are you translating the words while still using the same intonations and volume of your native language? Try incorporating the same volume, strength and intonations you hear from native English speakers.

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#### Personal Growth Exercise

Record your voice with a recorder or phone and practice speaking in English. Focus on the volume and strength of your voice. What do you hear and how do you think you are coming across? Are you easily heard? Are your words clear? Are you delivering the intended message? Continue practicing until you find your own American business voice—firm and clear. Be proud of what you have to say.

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A word of caution: You might be tempted to speak more quickly, believing it makes your speech better. This is false. In fact, it makes your words harder to understand, so slow down. Make sure you are delivering your message in a clear and concise manner. If you feel you are not, it's OK to stop and ask, “Was that clear?” Don't ever feel ashamed if you mispronounce a word or use incorrect grammar. It happens to everyone. And give yourself credit: after all, you speak more than one language.

Rumit Agarwal '14S (MBA) says...

“I had never realized how easily I could make my professional communication skills have so much more impact. But thanks to Sara, now I speak with more confidence and energy, and I feel that audiences like to hear me speak. Moreover, I realized that learning popular American idioms is also very important if you want to integrate within American society, which can have a positive effect on my career development. Most importantly, not only can I communicate with my fellow classmates and potential employers more fluently now, I can also use my new language skills, which makes me feel that I belong in America.”

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### 7. Dress for success.

If you want to be taken seriously, you need to dress seriously. Period. In US businesses, there are two types of professional dress attire: business casual and business formal. It is never OK to show up for an interview or business meeting wearing a short skirt or jeans. You will not be perceived as a professional. Think about it: What you wear in work settings is a reflection of how much you value yourself and the work



you do. This is also part of what, in recent years, has come to be known as your “personal brand”: How do you want other professionals to perceive you?

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#### Personal Growth Exercise

It's time to get serious about being taken seriously—from the first moment someone sets eyes on you. Go through the clothes in your closet and do an assessment. What do you find to be appropriate for professional business settings? Choose several outfits you think might be suitable for different professional situations. The outfits should make you feel comfortable, confident, and sharp, and they should represent you as your best professional self.

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Story from the Author:

Very quickly after moving to Italy, I noticed that how I was dressing was just not going to cut it there. Italy is the land of Prada, Gucci, Versace, Fendi, Giorgio Armani, and Salvatore Ferragamo. See what I mean?

Italy is high fashion, whether you are going to class, work, or the grocery store. To be taken seriously as a professional in Italy, I learned to dress with an eye to fashion.

## 8. Personal space.

As a general rule, Americans prefer two to three feet of space around them when communicating with another person. Anything less and they will almost always feel crowded and uncomfortable and take a step back. They are saying to you, “You are too close for my comfort.” Do not take a step toward them. This is not a dance. Simply continue the conversation and respect the fact that they have backed up. Understanding a person’s personal space is important for successfully communicating your message. Otherwise the other person will become distracted and have difficulty concentrating on what you are saying.

### Personal Growth Exercise

In the Mediterranean, people speak five inches apart whether they have just met or are long-time friends. This kind of closeness is what people in the US would call “in your face.” Americans prefer “elbowroom.” Stick your elbows out and turn around in a circle. That is about how much space most Americans prefer when talking with each other professionally (except in situations where closeness can’t be avoided, like on the subway).



## 9. Be on time.

When you are late to an appointment, a class, or a meeting, it is as if you are saying to those who are waiting, “Your time is not as important as mine. You are not as important as I am.”



Of course, circumstances can and do come up that occasionally prevent us from being on time. But be considerate by sending a text message or making a quick phone call to show others that you respect their time and are sorry for the inconvenience. If you’re not used to being on time—due to different cultural norms or simply habit—start practicing change now. Challenge yourself, and make it fun: Wear a watch, keep a calendar, set alarms. Do what you have to do to be on time, or even arrive early.

### Professional Growth Exercise

Start tracking your time. Note what time you wake up, and allow yourself to eat breakfast and prepare for your day.

Note:

Many Americans eat lunch on the go (though this varies from company to company). That is, they rarely sit down for a full hour to eat during the work week. If they do, they often work while eating.

Anupama Mukund '14S (MS) says... “I’m not a morning person and I like to take my time getting ready. My family knows I’m usually flying out the door with 10 minutes to spare for a 20-minute drive. My friends always tease me for being about 15 minutes late to everything. So for interviews, professional meetings, and the like, I make sure to set aside about 30 minutes more than what I usually take to get ready. If an interview is scheduled for 3 p.m., I count back the time I normally take, add the extra 30 minutes, and make sure to be at the interview 15 minutes beforehand. It never hurts to be early, but being late can cost you. As the American saying goes, ‘Time is money.’ Something like tardiness, which is so easy to avoid, shouldn’t be what stops you from getting your dream job.”

## 10. Smile.

Americans smile—often for no reason. They just smile. Did you know that up to ninety percent of communication is nonverbal? What do you think you are conveying when you smile? In the US, a smile tells others you are happy, successful, and open to others. Conveying the message that you are open to communicating helps you integrate into the culture. And because it puts others at ease, it makes people more willing and able to engage you in conversation. So go ahead—smile for no reason.

### Personal Growth Exercise

Try smiling in front of the mirror and see how you feel. Do you like your smile? What message do you think you are conveying? What do you like and what would you change? Develop a natural smile and it will be easier for people to connect with you.

Note:

In some countries a smile is interpreted as a social invitation: “I’m available.” In others, people hardly look at each other at all. In the US, smiling at a stranger is a common courtesy, but not everyone does it. It certainly is not a rule. Bring awareness to your physical expressions and do what comes naturally.

# professional personal branding

The 10 Essentials have one thing in common: They all work together to represent you to the world. This is professional personal branding. In a sense, you are marketing the brand of you: your skills and talents, your signature way of doing things, and your career.

From the moment you say hello, you are creating an image through a handshake, your eye contact, the clothes you wear, and the way you speak.

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## Think about it.

- How are you saying “Hello” or acknowledging another person? Do you have enthusiasm in your voice or do you sound tired or nervous?
- When you are talking to someone are you thankful, courteous, and respectful of her time? When you are asked, “What do you do?” are you delivering the message you want in a concise way that captures attention? Are you looking him in the eyes and giving a strong firm handshake that says, “I’m serious and paying attention to you”?
- Are you speaking in a confident and clear voice?
- How are you dressed? What message is that delivering to your audience?
- Are you giving the other person sufficient personal space?
- Did you show up on time? If not, did you contact the other person to tell him/her you were running late?
- Are you smiling? What is your nonverbal communication? For example, are you giving out a presence of enthusiasm and positive energy that is memorable?

Are you delivering a pitch that includes a “value proposition?”

A value proposition is the collection of reasons why a person or a company buys something or does business with you, or your brand. It is similar to a pitch, but is more specific and customized. Well-crafted value propositions include what is known as “NABC.” Developed at the Stanford Research Institute, NABC stands for Needs, Approach, Benefits, and Competition.

A simple example is:

I understand you are hungry (the need).  
Let’s go to the company café (the approach).  
It is close, the food is good, and it is quiet there so we can continue working (the benefits).  
The alternative is across the street, which is noisy at lunchtime (the competition or alternative).

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## Personal Growth Exercise

Think about a brand or a professional you respect. What do you like and what attracts you to that brand? Are you mirroring what that product or professional demonstrates? Now with your pitch, try creating your own value proposition that represents your brand and delivers your specific and customized message using “NABC.” (For more information on value propositions, please see the appendix).

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Ian M. Harrington '14S (MBA) says...

"Looking for the best possible job today, it's not enough to have a high GPA, a stellar résumé, and awesome work experience; everyone has those things!

If you aren't getting word about who you are and what you do and care about out into the world, you will remain a name in a stack of equally qualified candidates. Hiring managers hear about me or read my thoughts before they even realize that they've received my résumé. By being bold, and leveraging social media intentionally, I've been able to enter into conversations with C-suite professionals from companies that I admire. How was I able to do that? 'Managing my own brand' means having opportunities come to me."

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### Being unique and memorable.

Are you making yourself memorable (in a good way of course)? What stands out about you as a professional?

How do you make the brand of you unique?

After you have practiced the 10 Essentials and feel comfortable and confident, consider what you can do differently from other professionals to stand out.

Two key areas:

- Your business card
- Your online presence—especially your LinkedIn profile

These are part of the first impression you give as a professional. And first impressions last. It is very difficult in the US to change a person's first impression of you. As a result, it's best to start off strong and

show the people you meet that you are prepared, that you mean business, and that you have qualities that no one else does.

As a Simon student, you are encouraged to obtain business cards that contain current contact information, including your LinkedIn profile address, US cell phone number, degree program, and your expected year of graduation. Business cards can be obtained here at Simon by getting in contact with Student Services.

Let's look beyond the 10 Essentials for a moment. Whatever image you present, it will be genuine if it represents your authentic self. Let your own personality shine through. What are your best qualities? You can use this knowledge—plus confidence with the 10 Essentials—to create your own unique brand. This is what makes you and what you offer different from everyone else.

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### Your online presence: make it positive.

The story you tell of yourself online is just as important, if not more, than the brand you represent in person. Make sure your online brand represents you accurately. Keep your LinkedIn account up to date, and make sure the face you present on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other outlets shows you at your best. Potential employers check social media accounts to see what applicants are doing. You want to show the best, most effective you.

Once you have developed your personal brand and have the confidence to embody it, you are ready to start networking.

Hiring professionals are increasingly using social networks to source and vet potential candidates, making your online presence and brand almost more important than your résumé. As you begin thinking about your online brand, the overarching questions to consider are: What do you know, and what do you want to be known for?

These tips can help you build a more powerful and clear online brand:

- Know what you offer: What makes you different from the hundreds of people who probably do the exact same kind of work that you do?
- Define and communicate your unique value proposition.
- Google your name and monitor the first page of search results.
- Clean up all your social networking activity and make sure all your social network profiles include your value proposition and key words.
- Find, follow, and engage with target companies through their career pages on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, or Google+.
- Expand your online brand across the web with some of these suggestions:
- Incorporate images, photos, and documents into your LinkedIn profile
- Add your work history and profession to your Facebook profile
- Create a dynamic Google+ profile
- Start a blog
- Try a Twitter chat
- Start pinning images that represent your professional interests on Pinterest

- Create a page on About.me
- Leave intelligent/work-related comments on industry blogs
- Create an infographic résumé representing your work history
- Create short videos demonstrating your expertise and post on YouTube
- Share photos from industry events
- Write an Amazon book review
- Create a SlideShare presentation about you, your professional accomplishments and/or testimonials
- Participate in discussions on LinkedIn

Source: Hannah Morgan, career strategist and co-author of *Social Networking for Business Success* (Learning Express 2013). For more on LinkedIn, see the Simon CMC website: [simon.rochester.edu/cmc](http://simon.rochester.edu/cmc)

# networking: cultivating professional relationships in the us

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What is networking and why is it important to you? For students seeking internships and jobs, networking means developing relationships that can provide you with career suggestions and resources. As you make connections with others, over time you will become expert enough in a profession to surface an internship and job leads. It's not just about what help others can offer you, but ways you can help others. Networking is a way to develop and expand your base of professional contacts, not just now, but throughout your career.

The role that networking plays in surfacing job opportunities is critical. Simon CMC director of corporate engagement in New York City Peter Handley points out, "Statistically speaking, students who have the greatest networking success plan their trips to NYC around their school schedule in advance. Planning in advance demands focus and adds a bit of pressure to securing appointments with alumni. Students tell me that once the first appointment is scheduled, they have the momentum needed for scheduling the second."

Culturally speaking, networking can be challenging to understand at first. Many international students do not know many people when they arrive and how to cultivate relationships with their classmates, faculty and staff, as well as connect with alumni. For example, my fellow Chinese colleague and friend Heidi Ames explains, "Networking frequently means self-branding or self-promotion. In most Asian cultures, that is considered to be bragging and a display of arrogance. Chinese, for example, are constantly reminded to be humble since childhood. One of the most repeated sayings throughout the history in China is: 'Humbleness leads to success, while pride causes downfalls.'

The thought of 'bragging' about yourself to strangers of your great qualities and strengths could sound crazy, totally out of the comfort zone and scary for most people from Asia. To top it all, due to lack of proficient language ability and the lack of understanding of American business etiquette, the fear of saying the wrong thing at the wrong time under the wrong circumstances adds to the challenge.

In addition, while in school many students often focus their time on academics, putting aside and postponing their networking efforts. This creates difficulty for success in their job search."

People who network share tips, contacts, and experience to help each other professionally and socially. It works most effectively if you reach out rather than wait for people to come to you. These people can be work colleagues, classmates, professors, and people in the same industry. While not common everywhere, networking is very prevalent in the US and an important component of professional development.

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### How do US Americans build a professional network?

There are many different ways to go about networking: e-mail, LinkedIn, and in-person conversations are examples. But before reaching out to someone you would like to add to your professional network or introducing yourself to her, think about how the two of you can help each other. Why is it a fit for both of you professionally?

There's a saying in the United States: "It's not what you know; it's who you know." This is not meant to imply that your background and interests are not important in your job search. It means that the people you know (professors, other students, family, friends, alumni) are potentially able to help you.

Networking can be a lot of fun. And it is a huge source of helpful information to build your career. You might talk to people about your career aspirations. Ask if they can offer advice regarding your job search, or identify others who might. Consideration, referrals, or advice can come from faculty members, a friend who saw a job posting on the Internet, or a family member who knows someone who works for a company of interest to you.

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### Talking to others about your job search.

1. Know what you want, and tell others about it. Professors, career advisors, and other students know that you may be thinking a lot about your career goals. Talking to them about it may give you additional ideas.
2. If you are staying in the United States, friends and alumni can be great resources. Be sure to be clear about what you are looking for, and give them a copy of your résumé if they ask. They may then forward it to people in their own network.
3. If you are returning to your home country, let your family and friends know how you are doing and what you want to do when you return. They may have people to suggest contacting.
4. Be polite and courteous. Friends, family, and acquaintances are not obligated to help you. Politely ask them to watch for interesting opportunities, and thank them for their help. If someone takes the time to speak with you on the phone about your search or forwards your application to someone else, send a thank you letter.
5. Return the favor: If you meet someone who may be able to help one of your contacts, refer and connect them.

The goal of networking is to share career and academic goals and seek the advice, support, and consideration of others. You

will continue to uncover new potential employers, contact names, and career options. Networking can yield jobs, internships, and conversations about your career path, all of which are valuable.

Michael Lightman '14S (MBA) says...

"I have found that a great way to network is to volunteer for projects. This gives you a reason to approach the people with whom you want to network, and by contacting them on a project you are also showing your work ethic. Once you have worked together for a while, I find that those individuals are quite open to helping you find opportunities."

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### Individual responsibility in finding employment.

Although personal and professional networks are very important in finding jobs in the US, in general, you must build those networks rather than identify already established family, government, or educational connections that lead to jobs. Finding the job you want is a lot of work. You may put great effort into generating a wide variety of resources in order to identify multiple job possibilities. If it's any consolation, this comes as a surprise to most Americans, too. In other countries it's common to use agencies or to obtain jobs through family connections. Here it is expected for you to develop your focus, generate leads, and surface your own opportunities. Remember, if you are job searching in the US, it is important to use American job search principles.

# top tips for your internship or job search

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## 1. Be focused and do the research.

Understand the types of jobs that fit your skills, qualifications, and interests, plus the settings and industries in which you can find those jobs, and stay focused on them—even if you are pursuing multiple options. If you are seeking any job, with any type of employer, doing anything, you will not be successful. Potential employers want focused applicants—and if you are not, they'll sense it right away. The Career Leader resource available through the Simon CMC will assist you in exploring career options that fit you.

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## 2. Conduct a three-pronged search.

Seek positions in your home country, in the US, and with a multinational corporation (MNC). Early in your search, identify companies in your home country that do business with the US, companies in the US that do business in your home country, and MNC's that employ individuals to pursue careers globally. Much of this information can be found in resources available to you when you're at Simon, such as Going Global and MBA Focus.

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## 3. Find ways to gain US work experience while you're at Simon.

Start with project work from a professor or a local employer. Next, seek an unpaid internship. Once you have been in the US for nine months, you can then seek a paid internship (Note: must obtain CPT. See the University of Rochester ISO for details).

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## 4. Think beyond your academic concentration.

Some students have a concentration that corresponds to a job function or title. But if you are one of the majority who do not, research possible occupations, career fields, industries, and titles that relate to your concentration. Again, Career Leader will assist you with this step. Also resources such as Wet Feet and Vault are available to Simon students.

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## 5. Start early.

The earlier you begin your job search, the better! Shortly after you get on campus, graduate career fairs start requiring you to travel, be prepared with your pitch, value proposition, dress for success, get ready to network, and be memorable! Coming to campus prepared, and with a clear goal in



## A: Branding and Value Proposition

### Exhibit 1: Sample Pitch

I believe my success in logistics and working in cross-functional teams will be a value add to your organization.

In this example pitch, you have two claims. The first claim is “success in logistics” and the second is “working in cross-functional teams.” However, you have not given an action or result to support your claim, which can be less persuasive.

### Exhibit 2: Sample Value Proposition

When I worked for Bolthouse Farms, I was responsible for coordinating transportation, managing carriers, and providing sales and EDI support. I teamed with sales, carriers, customers, and operations to maximize trailer fill, review potential lane and backhaul opportunities, and minimize rework that led to \$450,000 in savings for 2013. Due to the heavy focus on logistics within your firm, as well as working in cross-functional teams, I believe I would be a value add to your organization.

## B: Networking Outreach

As you know, meeting informally with others is the primary way people in the US learn about and apply for job opportunities. In US business schools, alumni are often the best—or at least first—sources of personal information and guidance.

### Exhibit 3: Helpful Hints for Contacting Alumni

Be prepared. Before you reach out, have an e-mail template that is grammatically correct and error-free. Customize it to each person. Only reach out to those whom you have researched, and preferably only those to whom you’ve been introduced.

Know why you are reaching out—not for a job, but for information and advice. Never ask for a job or internship in an initial e-mail or meeting. Prepare questions in advance on topics such as their background, the challenges their industry is facing, and suggestions they have for you to prepare for a career in this industry.

Begin with junior alumni and eventually, if you are well-received, move up to contacting more senior alumni after you have been vetted through the junior alumni. If your background is not well-received, listen to the feedback about the fit between you and the industry, meet with your career coach, and change your focus to one that is better suited to your background.

- Don’t invite alumni to connect with you on LinkedIn until you have met that person and know they would be open to a request.
- Make sure your e-mail address, contact information, and outgoing telephone message have a professional tone.
- Respect alumni time and remember they are professionals with busy schedules. Some will respond to you, some won’t. Respect their time and availability. Keep trying until you meet the alumni who can be the most helpful to you.
- Prepare yourself for the networking meeting. Have some questions prepared in advance. Remember to respect alumni time and do not overwhelm them with too many questions. You may have the opportunity to meet with them again. Don’t exhaust your resources.
- Be professional and punctual. Take the lead during the meeting, remember the alumni have volunteered their time to answer your questions. It is okay to be nervous, but do not appear to be unprepared. If your informational interview is face-to-face, you are expected to dress professionally and exhibit professional etiquette at all times.
- To stress the professional nature of face-to-face meetings, always meet in a public place and refrain from alcoholic beverages, remembering to keep the interaction from slipping into a more social situation.
- Follow up with a “thank you” e-mail immediately. The thank you note should be brief and professional.

Exhibit 4: Sample Letter to Alumni

*Dear Mr. Smith,*

*I am currently a first-year student with a concentration in Finance at the Simon Business School. I found your name on the Simon Alumni & Career Network group on LinkedIn.*

*After graduating, my goal is to obtain a position in investment banking.*

*Given your current position as an associate at Goldman, Sachs & Co., I am writing to request an informational meeting with you. I am hoping to speak with you either in person or on the phone. I would like to discuss your educational background and professional career experience at Goldman Sachs.*

*I am available Monday through Friday after 1 p.m. and I am flexible to work around your availability. I can be reached at 585-953-0000, or [sstudent@simon.rochester.edu](mailto:ssstudent@simon.rochester.edu).*

*Thank you in advance for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.*

*Sincerely,*

*J'tt&UVJ'tmbw*

*Simon Business School*

*MBA Candidate, Class of 2016*

Exhibit 5: Letter of Referral

*Dear Ms. Brown,*

*Bob Smith suggested I contact you based on your experience in the publishing field. I am currently at Random House and am looking to make a transition from the editorial side into marketing.*

*I'm seeking the advice of seasoned professionals such as yourself and would very much appreciate an opportunity to meet with you briefly to get your perspective. Would you be available next week for a brief meeting?*

*I am available Monday through Friday, after 1 p.m., and I am flexible to work around your availability. I can be reached at 585-953-0000, or [sstudent@simon.rochester.edu](mailto:ssstudent@simon.rochester.edu).*

*Thank you in advance for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.*

*Sincerely,*

*J'emvJ'tmbw*

*Simon Business School*

*MS Candidate, Class of 2015*



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## C: Resumes: Guides, Templates, and Samples

### Exhibit 7: MBA Resume Templates: 1

**Things to avoid:** photos, personal information about your family, political or religious affiliations, information prior to college education.

**NAME**

(include your American name or nickname in parentheses)

US Phone Number (with area code) - E-mail address-LinkedIn Address

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#### EDUCATION

**Simon Business School, University of Rochester-Rochester, NY, US**

**Master of Business Administration, expected 2016**

**Concentration(s):** Concentration Name

**Leader/Member:** Club, Association Name

Merit Scholarship recipient

**NAME UNIVERSITY-** City, State, Country

Degree, 200X, Scholarships, Special Honors, Relevant Research, Leadership positions in clubs, etc.

**NAME UNIVERSITY-** City, State, Country

Degree, 200X

Scholarships, Special Honors, Relevant Research

Leadership positions in clubs, etc.

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#### EXPERIENCE

**COMPANY NAME-** City, State, Country

200X-200X

Position or Title, Area Group, or Division (dates for this position)

Statement of responsibilities and accountabilities

- Relevant Accomplishment Statement
  - Relevant Accomplishment Statement
  - Relevant Accomplishment Statement
- 

**COMPANY NAME-** City, State, Country

200X-200X

Position or Title, Area Group, or Division (dates for this position)

Statement of responsibilities and accountabilities

- Relevant Accomplishment Statement
- Relevant Accomplishment Statement

Position or Title, Area Group or Division (dates for this position)

- Relevant Accomplishment Statement
  - Relevant Accomplishment Statement
- 

**COMPANY NAME-** City, State, Country

200X-200X

Position or Title, Area Group, or Division (dates for this position)

Statement of responsibilities and accountabilities

- Relevant Accomplishment Statement
  - Relevant Accomplishment Statement
  - Relevant Accomplishment Statement
- 

#### SPECIAL SKILLS AND INTERESTS

•Professional credentials [e.g., CPA, CFA]

•Relevant computer or software skills/knowledge

•Language proficiency (other than English)

•Relevant and recent community leadership and involvement

• Specific interest or hobby that will create a conversation

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## Exhibit 8: Resume Template 2

### JANE SAMPLE

(585) 555-1234 • jane.sample@simon.rochester.edu • LinkedIn Address

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#### EDUCATION **SIMON BUSINESS SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER**

Rochester, NY

Master of Business Administration, June 2015

Concentrations: Finance, Entrepreneurship

#### **UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

Buffalo, NY

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, 2009

GPA 3.75/4.0

#### EXPERIENCE **KLING & MARSH WEALTH MANAGEMENT, LLC**- Rochester, NY

Portfolio Management Intern, Summer 2014

• Conducted economic analysis and monitored financial markets, researched fixed income securities, equity securities and derivatives, tested and improved trading systems.

• Developed financial model used to determine the size of a traded futures contract based on the volatility of the security and investor's risk preferences.

#### **TYCO INTERNATIONAL, LTD.**- Princeton, NJ

Corporate Controls and Compliance Analyst, 6/11-8/13

• Performed internal control testing for corporate areas complying with Sarbanes-Oxley Act, assessed financial statement impact of control weaknesses and worked with process owners to create and implement remediation plans.

• Developed and launched Document Management System for the SOX department that increased the credibility, accuracy, and confidentiality of the effectiveness testing results.

• Participated in the Six Sigma project to reduce the number of

defective control objectives, resulting in reduced costs associated with SOX and better allocation of resources to perform controls and compliance processes.

#### **CITIBANK**- Buffalo, NY

Operations Representative, 6/09-5/11

• Directed CLS Bank settlements from European and Asian banks in daily amounts of \$5-15B, processed fund transfer transactions, investigated various fund transactions complying with Office of Foreign Assets Control Regulations.

• Developed financial model in Microsoft Excel which streamlined daily CLS settlements by increasing efficiency, report information accuracy and overall ease of process.

• Decreased departmental operating expenses by 20 percent by alleviating bottlenecks in proof processing and improving Excel programs to evaluate and organize employees.

• Received management's "Five Stars Award in Teambuilding" for leadership in cross-training employees.

#### COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Excel, Access, PowerPoint, System Applications

#### LANGUAGES

Fluent in Russian, Ukrainian

#### ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

Volunteer with American Cancer Society 2007-2009, Buffalo, NY

Adventure sports: sky diving, rafting, scuba diving

## Exhibit 9: Action Verbs by Synonym

In the US, it is important to use "action verbs" to describe your experiences and results—these are words that demonstrate specific ways you contributed to the success of your organization.

<b>ACCELERATED</b>	expedited, hastened, stepped up
<b>ACCOMPLISHED</b>	achieved, attained, reached, realized
<b>ACHIEVED</b>	accomplished, attained, reached, realized
<b>ACQUIRED</b>	gained, secured, procured, obtained
<b>ADAPTED</b>	acclimated, accommodated, adjusted, reconciled, suited, tailored
<b>ADDRESSED</b>	appealed, applied, approached, directed, focused, petitioned
<b>ADMINISTERED</b>	administrated, dealt, directed, dispensed, executed, governed, headed, managed
<b>ADVISED</b>	acquainted, apprised, confabulated, conferred, counseled, educated, enlightened, informed, notified, recommended
<b>ANALYZED</b>	dissected, examined, inspected, investigated, resolved
<b>APPLIED</b>	addressed, appealed, approached, devoted, employed, exercised, exploited, implemented, petitioned, utilized
<b>APPOINTED</b>	accoutered, designated, equipped, geared, named, nominated
<b>APPROVED</b>	adopted, accepted, affirmed, confirmed, ratified
<b>ARRANGED</b>	classified, concluded, coordinated, disposed, integrated, marshaled, negotiated, ordered, prepared, scheduled, systematized
<b>ASSESSED</b>	evaluated, exacted, gauged, imposed, judged, levied

<b>ASSIGNED</b>	allocated, allotted, apportioned, meted, posted, stationed
<b>ASSISTED</b>	abetted, aided
<b>ATTAINED</b>	accomplished, achieved, gained, reached, realized
<b>AUGMENTED</b>	amplified, expanded, extended, magnified, multiplied, waxed
<b>AUTHORED</b>	penned, published
<b>BOUGHT</b>	purchased
<b>BROADENED</b>	expanded, extended, widened
<b>BUILT</b>	assembled, burgeoned, constructed, established, fabricated
<b>CALCULATED</b>	appraised, assessed, computed, evaluated, enumerated, gauged, tallied
<b>CLARIFIED</b>	cleared, elucidated, illuminated
<b>COLLABORATED</b>	cooperated
<b>COMPLETED</b>	consummated, complimented, supplemented
<b>COMPOSED</b>	collected, constituted, contained, controlled, produced
<b>CONCEIVED</b>	accepted, comprehended, envisaged, envisioned
<b>CONDENSED</b>	thickened
<b>CONDUCTED</b>	conveyed, directed, guided, managed, operated, steered, supervised
<b>CONSULTED</b>	advised, confabulated, conferred, parleyed
<b>CONTRACTED</b>	bargained, covenanted, engaged, pledged, undertook
<b>CONTRIBUTED</b>	bestowed, donated, partook, subscribed
<b>CONTROLLED</b>	directed, dominated, governed, ruled, regulated
<b>CONVERTED</b>	commuted, persuaded, translated, transposed

<b>COORDINATED</b>	accommodated, arranged, attuned, integrated, unified
<b>CORRECTED</b>	amended, disciplined, rectified, remedied
<b>CREATED</b>	composed, constituted, engendered, established, founded, generated, instituted, organized, started
<b>CULTIVATED</b>	encouraged, fostered, produced, promoted
<b>CUT</b>	curtailed, diluted, lowered, rebuffed, reduced, slashed, skewed
<b>DECREASED</b>	abated, diminished, lessened, reduced
<b>DELIVERED</b>	administrated, bore, furnished, provided, transferred
<b>DEMONSTRATED</b>	authenticated, confirmed, corroborated, displayed
<b>DESIGNATED</b>	allocated, appointed, appropriated, characterized, earmarked, named, nominated, indicated, specified
<b>DESIGNED</b>	contrived, devised, mapped, planned, projected
<b>DETERMINED</b>	adjudged, arbitrated, ascertained, concluded, discovered, resolved
<b>DEVELOPED</b>	evolved, formed, generated, produced
<b>DEvised</b>	charted, contrived, designed, formulated, invented
<b>DIRECTED</b>	administered, commanded, conducted, controlled, devoted, focused, guided, instructed, managed, operated, supervised
<b>DISCOVERED</b>	ascertained, determined
<b>DISTRIBUTED</b>	arranged, classified, dispersed, organized
<b>EARNED</b>	gained, merited, realized, yielded
<b>EFFECTED</b>	caused, effectuated, engendered, executed, implemented, induced, invoked, produced
<b>ELIMINATED</b>	eradicated, omitted, removed
<b>ENFORCED</b>	applied, exercised, implemented, retained, utilized

<b>EMPLOYED</b>	effected, executed, implemented, invoked
<b>ESTABLISHED</b>	authenticated, confirmed, created, founded, installed, instituted, organized, predicated
<b>EVALUATED</b>	appraised, assessed, calculated, gauged
<b>EXAMINED</b>	analyzed, inspected, investigated, scrutinized
<b>EXECUTED</b>	administered, fulfilled, implemented, performed, practiced, utilized
<b>EXERCISED</b>	exerted, executed, fulfilled, implemented, performed, practiced, utilized
<b>EXPANDED</b>	amplified, augmented, broadened, developed, extended, magnified
<b>EXPEDITED</b>	accelerated, facilitated, hastened
<b>EXTRACTED</b>	culled, garnered, gathered
<b>FINANCED</b>	backed, capitalized, funded, subsidized
<b>FORMED</b>	composed, developed, modeled, shaped
<b>FORMULATED</b>	devised, drafted, expressed, fabricated, invented
<b>FOUND</b>	constitute, created, establish, institute, located, originate, pinpointed
<b>FOUNDED</b>	constituted, created, established, instituted, organized
<b>FULFILLED</b>	executed, exercised, implemented, performed
<b>GENERATED</b>	created, developed, engendered, produced, spawned
<b>GUIDED</b>	conducted, directed, escorted, piloted
<b>HANDLED</b>	manipulated, marketed, merchandised, operated, retailed, vended
<b>HIRED</b>	chartered, employed, engaged, leased, retained

<b>IDENTIFIED</b>	associated, linked, recognized
<b>IMPLEMENTED</b>	applied, actuated, employed, enforced, executed, exercised, fulfilled, invoked, utilized
<b>IMPROVED</b>	amended, bettered, meliorated
<b>IMPROVISED</b>	extemporized
<b>INCREASED</b>	accrued, aggrandized, amplified, augmented, burgeoned, developed, expanded, extended, heightened, magnified
<b>INFLUENCED</b>	impacted, impressed, swayed
<b>INITIATED</b>	commenced, embarked, instituted, introduced, launched, originated, undertook
<b>INSPIRED</b>	galvanized, inspirited, motivated, prompted, provoked, stimulated
<b>INSTIGATED</b>	excited, galvanized, inspired, motivated, provoked, stimulated
<b>INSTITUTED</b>	constituted, created, established, initiated, originated
<b>INSTRUCTED</b>	commanded, directed, educated, trained
<b>INTEGRATED</b>	accommodated, coordinated, embodied, incorporated, orchestrated
<b>INTERPRETED</b>	expounded, executed, illustrated
<b>INTRODUCED</b>	initiated, instituted, launched
<b>INVENTED</b>	devised, formulated
<b>INVESTIGATED</b>	analyzed, examined, inspected, researched
<b>LAUNCHED</b>	commended, embarked, inaugurated, initiated, instituted, introduced, undertook
<b>LED</b>	commanded, conducted, guided

<b>LOCATED</b>	installed, positioned, situated
<b>MAINTAINED</b>	asserted, supported
<b>MANAGED</b>	administered, conducted, directed, headed, operated, supervised
<b>MARKETED</b>	handled, retailed, vended
<b>MOBILIZED</b>	impelled, organized, propelled
<b>MODIFIED</b>	altered, changed, varied
<b>MOTIVATED</b>	encouraged, incited, inspired, stimulated
<b>NEGOTIATED</b>	arranged, settled
<b>OBTAINED</b>	acquired, gained, procured, secured
<b>OPERATED</b>	conducted, handled, managed, supervised
<b>ORDERED</b>	arranged, commanded, instructed, organized
<b>ORGANIZED</b>	constituted, created, established, founded, instituted, ordered, originated, started
<b>ORIGINATED</b>	commenced, constituted, created, established, founded, initiated, introduced, instituted, launched, organized, started
<b>PARTICIPATED</b>	engaged, indulged, partook
<b>PERFORMED</b>	enacted, executed, implemented, presented
<b>PINPOINTED</b>	identified, located, recognized
<b>PLANNED</b>	charted, designed, devised, projected
<b>PREPARED</b>	arranged, readied, scheduled
<b>PRESENTED</b>	awarded, bestowed, enacted, extended, granted, offered, performed, tendered, volunteered
<b>PROCURED</b>	acquired, gained, obtained, secured

<b>PRODUCED</b>	constructed, created, cultivated, developed, earned, engendered, forged, generated, induced, manufactured, realized, yielded
<b>PROGRAMMED</b>	slated, scheduled
<b>PROJECTED</b>	charted, designed, devised, planned
<b>PROPOSED</b>	designed, intended, offered, submitted, suggested
<b>PROVED</b>	confirmed, demonstrated, established
<b>PROVIDED</b>	afforded, delivered, furnished, offered, supplied
<b>PUBLISHED</b>	authored, announced, issued
<b>PURCHASED</b>	bought
<b>RECOMMENDED</b>	advised, commended, complimented, counseled
<b>RECONCILED</b>	accommodated, coordinated, integrated, resolved
<b>REDUCED</b>	curtailed, decreased, demoted, depreciated, diminished, lessened, lowered
<b>REGULATED</b>	adjusted, controlled, governed
<b>REPRESENTED</b>	depicted, embodied, epitomized, exemplified, illustrated, personified, portrayed, symbolized, typified
<b>RESEARCHED</b>	delved, explored, inquired, investigated, studied
<b>RESOLVED</b>	analyzed, concluded, deciphered, determined, dissected, explained, reconciled, rectified, settled, solved
<b>RESTORED</b>	reinstated, revived, reconstructed, rejuvenated, renovated, returned
<b>REVIEWED</b>	critiqued, epitomized, reconsidered, summarized
<b>REVISED</b>	amended, emended, revamped
<b>REVITALIZED</b>	rekindled, resurrected, revived, reactivated
<b>SCHEDULED</b>	arranged, prepared, programmed, slated

<b>SECURED</b>	acquired, captured, gained, guaranteed, obtained, pledged, procured, warranted
<b>SERVED</b>	attended, availed, benefited, ministered, profited, suited
<b>SET UP</b>	constituted, created, erected, establish, founded, instituted, organized, started
<b>SOLD</b>	convinced, handled, induced, marketed, merchandised, persuaded, retailed, vended
<b>SOLVED</b>	deciphered, explained, resolved, unraveled
<b>SPECIFIED</b>	cited, designated, detailed, indicated, stipulated
<b>SPONSORED</b>	patronized, supported
<b>STIMULATED</b>	activated, aroused, encouraged, energized, excited, galvanized, inspired, motivated, provoked, stirred
<b>STRENGTHENED</b>	confirmed, fortified, reinforced, toughened
<b>STUDIED</b>	cogitated, considered, entertained, examined, researched, scrutinized
<b>SUGGESTED</b>	indicated, offered, proposed, submitted
<b>SUMMARIZED</b>	abstracted, epitomized, recapped, reviewed
<b>SUPERVISED</b>	conducted, directed, managed, operated, oversaw
<b>SURVEYED</b>	observed, overlooked
<b>TAILORED</b>	acclimated, adapted, adjusted, conformed
<b>TAUGHT</b>	disciplined, educated, instructed, trained, tutored
<b>TERMINATED</b>	ceased, completed, concluded, consummated, discontinued, ended, finished, suspended
<b>TESTED</b>	experimented, examined, proved
<b>TRAINED</b>	disciplined, educated, instructed, taught

<b>TRANSLATED</b>	commuted, construed, converted, paraphrased, restated, reworded, transferred, transformed
<b>UNDERTOOK</b>	assumed, commenced, contracted, engaged, incurred, inaugurated, initiated, launched, offered, shouldered
<b>UNIFIED</b>	coordinated, integrated, orchestrated
<b>UTILIZED</b>	applied, exercised, implemented, practiced
<b>VERIFIED</b>	attested, confirmed, justified, proved, substantiated, validated
<b>WON</b>	acquired, captured, deserved, earned, gained, merited, obtained, procured, secured
<b>WROTE</b>	authored, composed, created, penned, produced, published, scribed

## Exhibit 10: Resume Accomplishment Questions

- ❶ What important or difficult problem did you identify and solve? Did you identify a problem others did not see? What were the results?
- ❷ Did you save the company money or time? How much? What positive impact did the savings have on the company?
- ❸ What did you develop, create, initiate, or invent? How did it contribute to profitability, efficiency, or productivity?
- ❹ Did you increase productivity or reduce downtime? By how much? How did the savings affect the bottom line?
- ❺ Did you effectively manage systems or people? What were the results of your efforts?
- ❻ How many people did you manage, supervise, or train? What difference did you make?
- ❼ Did you initiate a sales or incentive program that worked? What were the monetary results? What was the impact on the company image? On morale?
- ❽ Did you participate in decision making or planning? What contribution did you make to the team? What were the results of your efforts?
- ❾ Did you author any major or original reports, programs, publications, promotions, or newsletters? What was the impact?
- ❿ Did you improve the efficiency of people or operations? What were the savings?
- ⓫ Were you responsible for reducing staff or trimming an operation? How were you able to do this efficiently? What was the outcome?
- ⓬ Were you in a start-up or shutdown? What were the challenges you faced? What success did you have?
- ⓭ Did you create systems or procedures that positively impacted the business?
- ⓮ Were you a liaison between departments? How were you able to make things run more efficiently?
- ⓯ Did you produce reports or data that enabled management to make more informed decisions? What did you do? Why was it important?
- ⓰ What awards, bonuses, or promotions have you received? Why were you selected?
- ⓱ What compliments (verbal or written) have you received from senior management, key accounts, satisfied customers, or vendors? What did they notice? Why was it meaningful?

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## D: Cover Letters, Guides, and Examples

### Exhibit 11: Cover Letter Writing Guide

In the US, the cover letter is used, even with online applications, to provide some personal context as to why you are interested in a specific company and job opening, and what you have to offer to the organization. It is a way to provide personal context and also a sample of your writing and communication abilities.

While the perfect cover letter does not guarantee you an interview, an imperfect cover letter can quite easily remove you from the interviewing process. Even if the letter is only briefly scanned by an interviewer, imperfections can cost you opportunities. Cover letters are an enhancement to your resume which allow you to state your objective, goals, and personal fit for a position.

#### What is the cover letter supposed to do for me?

Cover letters and resumes get you interviews and interviews get you jobs. The ideal scenario is for the cover letter to spark enough interest from an employer to get you an interview. In reality, the cover letter does as its name implies—it "covers" your resume. It tells the potential employer what job you are applying for (large corporations have numerous vacancies simultaneously). This specialized letter should be written in a tone of confidence and focus upon the employer's needs for the job. It should convince the employer that your background, education, experience, and personality are worth follow-up in terms of an interview. For this reason, cover letters should be your own personal overview of your skills and qualifications for the position, and not a copy or duplication of a sample form letter.

#### How long should a cover letter be?

Aim to write a cover letter that is one page long, with three to four paragraphs and ample top and bottom margins. Although there are exceptions (e.g., an experience needs to be described in more detail), in general, a one-page letter with an introduction, a one or two paragraph body, and a conclusion is usually sufficient. Do not expand to two pages.

## Key Principles of Writing Cover Letters

### 1. Be reader-centered.

This means that you work to keep the focus of your paragraph on what you can do for the employer rather than on what the job will do for you. Certainly a good position will provide you with experience, exposure to solving real world problems, and valuable contacts.

There is nothing wrong with mentioning what benefits you'll be receiving, but remember the point of your cover letter is to sell your skills and get them interested in you. You'll be much more successful if you write from your reader's point of view.

### 2. Support your claims.

The main weakness in most cover letters is unsupported claims. Writers frequently describe their strongest attributes in glowing terms, but fail to give examples or illustrations which lend credibility to the statement. One way to make certain you've supported your statements is to use the "claim, data, warrant" method devised by Stephen Toulmin, which provides a way of identifying parts of a written argument. The claim is your statement—your conclusion about yourself. Data is what you use to support that statement, and the warrant is the bridge which connects the two or relates them to each other. For example, in the sentence, "I believe my success in logistics and working in cross-functional teams will be a value add to your organization," you have two claims. The first claim is "success in logistics" and the second is "working in cross-functional teams." However, you have given no data or warrant. This is weak because anyone can say these things about themselves, so the writing is not very persuasive. Here is an example of how the same idea could be better expressed using data and the warrant: "When I worked for Bolthouse Farms, I was responsible for coordinating transportation, managing carriers, and providing sales and EDI support. I teamed with sales, carriers, customers, and operations to maximize trailer fill, review potential lane and backhaul opportunities, and minimize rework that led to \$450k in savings for 2013. Due to the heavy focus on logistics within your firm, as well as working in cross-functional teams, I believe I would be a value add to your organization." Supporting your claims with data and connecting your ideas with warrants makes your cover letter easier to read and more persuasive.

## Preparing to Write a Cover Letter

### Exercises:

1. List what you know about the organization that you are contacting regarding a job: products, services, locations (headquarters), growth areas, earnings, values/mission, reputation, community involvement, history, and employees (including Simon School graduates and personal contacts).
2. Write a paragraph that describes one of your functional skills that matches one of the skills listed in the job description (an ability-such as knowing how to write a business plan-that is applicable to a wide variety of tasks). Select a functional skill that is importantfor the job you are seeking. Include information on how you learned and have successfully used this functional skill in the past.
3. Write a paragraph that describes one of your transferable skills (an ability that could be transferred to the job you are seeking). Include information on how you learned and have successfully used this ability.
4. What is your value proposition? Know what you have to offer the employer. What is your greatest accomplishment that can be related directly to the needs of the position for which you are applying? Put the idea into a sentence you are sure would impress the employer.
5. Use the notes you have created as the basis for writing the one or two paragraphs that will comprise the body of your cover letter.

### Tips To Remember

1. Personalize your cover letters by naming the organization and the specific job you are seeking, by mentioning how you found out about the job and by naming employees with whom you may have contact. This information can be included in your introductory

paragraph.

2. Focus the one or two paragraphs in the body of your letter around the one or two abilities or claims about yourself that you think most equip you for the job opening. Fill these paragraphs with personal/professional examples and experiences that prove you possess these abilities or that show your conclusions about yourself are true.
3. Use a traditional letter format. Include your address, phone number, and e-mail address on your resume and cover letter. Also, make sure that the message on your voicemail is professional, short, and includes your name.
4. Proofread and spell check all your written application materials. Research shows that recruiters for businesses notice mistakes in grammar and syntax.
5. Match the font style of your resume to your cover letter.
6. Follow up as promised.

## Exhibit 12: Cover Letter Template

[Your Name]

[Street Address]

[City, State, Zip]

[Date]

[Title]

[Company Name]

[Street Address]

[City, State, Zip]

Dear Mr. or Ms. [Recipient's Last Name]:

Your opening paragraph (why you're interested) should introduce yourself and your interest in the company. If you are aware of a specific position or opening, refer to it now. This paragraph should also be used to mention the names of individuals you have met from the company or the individual who directed you to this person. Cite other research that prompted you to write, such as a recent article on the company or a positive networking interaction.

Your middle paragraph (why you're qualified) consists of specific examples from your background that would be of greatest interest to the company and consequently create the "notion of fit." Focus on the skills listed in the job description and cite your accomplishments and how they can contribute to the company, but do not simply restate what is on your resume. If you are a career switcher, clearly state your transferable skills from previous experience that directly relates to the skills in the position you are interested in. The last line in this paragraph should give a summary statement of who you are and why you are a strong fit for the position.

Your closing paragraph (what's next) represents your summation and should outline the key next steps. For example, state that you would like to discuss employment opportunities or other information with the person and that you plan on following up on a specific date. If the company has a specific position available, ask for the opportunity to interview. Thank the addressee for his/her time and consideration. Include your telephone number and e-mail address in case the cover letter is separated from your resume.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your e-mail address and telephone number

Enclosure(s)-if you send resumes or other materials

## Exhibit 13: Cover Letter Checklist

After drafting your letter, use the checklist below to determine whether your letter sells you as a candidate. Remember, your purpose is to convince the employer to interview you.

### Content Checklist:

- ❶ Letter addressed to a particular person (Not to "To Whom It May Concern" or "Dear Sir or Madam").
- ❶ No spelling, grammatical, typographical, or punctuation errors.
- ❶ First paragraph clearly states purpose for writing and is specific as to why this company is of particular interest to you.
- ❶ References to any previous communication/interaction between you and the reader are stated (phone calls, e-mails, prior meetings).
- ❶ Body of letter stresses your qualifications in relationship to the company's interests and needs as expressed in the job description.
- ❶ Letter uses simple, straightforward language, and it communicates your intended message directly.

❶ Letter ends with next steps and an ask for consideration.

❶ Letter is one page.

### Format Checklist

❶ Font should match resume and should be professional looking and easy to read.

❶ Boldfaced keywords, numbered statements, underlined phrases, and different type styles are used appropriately and discreetly.

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## E: American Business English Idioms

An idiom is an expression that combines recognizable words in a way that conveys an unexpected meaning. Every language on Earth has its own idioms that serve almost as code talk for the culture.

For example, there is a Chinese saying that translates to: "The bird that sticks out is the one that is shot" (in other words, don't make a fuss). American English speakers say, "The squeaky wheel gets the grease" (or speak up).

Idioms are a part of every language of the world. They are powerful carriers of culture. Their use is a sign that the speaker has a command of the language and the culture it represents.

Becoming familiar with idioms will help you understand and communicate in native-sounding English. It is one of the keys to successful and authentic communication.

When I moved back to the US after time overseas, I heard sayings I hadn't heard before: "I'll circle back to you" and "Let's piggyback on that" come to mind. I honestly didn't know what they meant.

New expressions in American Business English come up all the time. Sometimes new phrases become popular very quickly. It will take time to understand them, but if you become familiar with them now, you'll be able to speak and understand English as it is spoken in many workplaces.

Consider the following examples. What do you think they mean?

1. 24/7
2. Back to square one
3. In the red
4. Cut corners
5. From the ground up
6. ASAP
7. Read between the lines
8. By the book
9. In a nutshell

### See below for answers.

1. 24/7-24 hours a day, 7 days a week
2. Back to square one-start over again
3. In the red-operating at a loss, not profitable
4. Cut corners-take shortcuts, find an easier or cheaper way
5. From the ground up-from the beginning
6. ASAP-as soon as possible, urgent
7. Read between the lines-understanding what is implied or suggested, but not stated directly
8. By the book-according to company policy or law
9. In a nutshell-in summary, in a few words

<http://www.businessenglishresources.com/student-section/business-vocabulary/most-common-business-idioms/>







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