

Advice for Recent Grads from a Headhunter Who Cares

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1. Know that you will be judged harshly and swiftly by hiring managers who will use all information they can glean about you. This includes:
 - Your emails
 - Your resume
 - Your outward-bound cell phone greeting which currently says “Yo. This is Josh. You know what to do.”
 - Photos of your drunk, weird friends on MySpace and Facebook
 - Photos of you with really bad hair and wrinkled t-shirts
 - And last, but not least, your cover letter
2. Companies want to hire future CEOs: people who can represent them well, people with whom they would enjoy working – first appearances make or break careers.
3. Find a job, go live in the city where the job is, and get a girlfriend. This is the correct order.
4. Get real about compensation. Unless you are a Harvard grad going to Wall Street, you will not make more than your parents for years to come. That’s how it works.
5. Make sure that you write really, really well. I would much rather hire a Russian Poetry major who writes well than a semi-literate Business major.
6. Never give “pat” answers or statements like: “I know I could contribute at your company.” How do you know? You haven’t even met me.
7. Ask someone over 40 to explain the concept of “Paying Your Dues.”
8. Live cheap. Having nice apartments with fancy workout rooms, gas fireplaces, and new imported cars is not sexy. Driving a junker, paying off your student loans, and saving to buy a beach house in Costa Rica is.
9. Never become a credit card junkie. Credit cards are a convenient way to gather airline miles and avoid dealing with cash. They are not a good source of credit. They must be paid in full every month. If you don’t have the cash to pay it off, don’t buy it!
10. Act interested during your interview. Ask lots of questions and tell them you’d like to work there.
11. Once you've got the job, TAKE NOTES! The #1 complaint in my office about new grads is that they don’t understand the importance of taking detailed notes in meetings and disseminating them afterwards. I certainly didn't invite you to the meeting so that you could sit there and look bored!
12. Once you have the job: KEEP IT FOR AT LEAST FIVE TO TEN YEARS! It’s sad to see so many recent grads back on the market after a year or so because they never integrated into the company and

figured out how to make it work. If you have a bad start, try hard to turn it around. If you succeed, your relationship with your boss will be stronger for it, and he/she will respect you more.

13. Frequently ask your boss for feedback. Ask your boss what's important to him/her. Discuss priorities with your boss a lot more than you think is necessary. Know you can't read his/her mind.
14. Ask your boss what the single most important task someone in the company (or division or group) can perform and figure out how to do it.
15. For young women only: once you have that great job and have worked for a couple of years, find a nice boyfriend, get married, and plan on starting a family by the time you are 30. A woman's fertility drops off every year and it is almost impossible to have a baby at 40 (unlike what you see the movie stars doing). And remember, the best guys get snapped up fast.
16. For young men only: have some fun, but know that the most fun comes when you find a special girl who becomes your new best friend. Plan on getting married and starting a family while you are both young enough to snowboard with your kids. You don't want to be the 50 year old at your kindergartener's parade.
17. Lastly, know that as a recent grad, you are in the top 1% for gifts and resources in the world. Use your skills and gifts wisely, and make a lasting difference for those less fortunate and those to come.