

FIRST-TIME JOB SEEKER MISTAKES TO AVOID

by Kristine Penning, AgCareers.com Creative Marketing Specialist

I REMEMBER FEELING very apprehensive about the job search process my senior year of college. While I had a few internships under my belt, looking for a full-time, salaried job felt like a different ball game. Here are a few things I've learned as an AgCareers.com employee about first-time job seeking.

Creating a Generic Resume: While it's okay to have a resume template ready to go, be sure to customize it to each role you apply to. Adjust your work experience to include only relevant roles with transferable skills and duties listed. Add in keywords from the job description to your resume where possible for each customization you create.

Not Preparing for the Interview: There are a lot of ways to prepare for

the interview, but be sure that you do at least something to prepare. Research the company, practice example interview questions (they are in endless supply on the internet), and prepare some questions to ask your interviewer about the role or company.

Oversharing: Don't sabotage yourself by talking too much or sharing information better left unsaid. Try to keep political views out of the interview—you don't want to clash. And you don't have to let them know you received disciplinary action at your last job—trust me, this won't help.

Inappropriate Dress: Because we live in an increasingly informal world, interview dress has followed suit (no pun intended). If you show up in a

sweater and khaki pants against a fellow candidate in a suit, who do you think will make a better impression on the interviewer?

Entitlement: This advice is coming from a Millennial: you aren't owed anything. You are not owed a job, and you are not owed a CEO-level salary as a new graduate. Humility will make you stand out while entitlement will make employers think twice about hiring you. **AG**



TOP OF MIND, TOP OF RESUME

by Bonnie Johnson, AgCareers.com Marketing Specialist

YOUR RESUME IS THE REAL first impression with a potential employer. The top of your resume can make or break your chance to get an interview.

There's much debate about how to begin a resume. One component that's not debatable is your contact information—the obvious place to start. Who can mess this up, right? Well, there are a few caveats that may inhibit your ability to become a top candidate.

Start with a simple, straight-forward full name, email, and phone number. Address is becoming optional! Let's look at the 'address' section a little more in-depth as there are just a few options.

Since most employer communication is electronic, you have the option to omit a specific mailing address altogether

(this is helpful if you are in transition or looking to relocate, or for safety/privacy reasons). You may also simplify your address to show just your city/state. Some employers will look for local candidates, so keep this in mind when deciding the specificity of your address on a resume. It can be beneficial if you're in the area, or questionable if you're not local; it all depends on your location and the preferences of the employer. The other option for students is including both a college and permanent address.

Your email address should be professional (nothing like teenage-dreamZZ@ or stupidgoose20@). If your email address is through your college, make sure you'll have continued access to the account post-graduation.

You may also include links to your social media profiles (especially LinkedIn), your personal website, blog, or online portfolio.

When you're applying online do NOT put your contact information in headers or tables. Data in this format may be accidentally omitted when information is transferred electronically. Either the computer system doesn't read the table/header data, or you copy/paste your resume without those all-important contact details—oops! Imagine all the hard work you've put into your resume; the employer gets your education, skills and work experience and then wonders who is the exceptionally qualified candidate? Where's their contact information? **AG**

REAL CONSEQUENCES OF *Ghosting* EMPLOYERS

by Kristine Penning, AgCareers.com Creative Marketing Specialist

“GHOSTING,” ORIGINALLY A TERM used to describe the lack of response from someone via text or a messaging app, has spilled over into the working world with employers and employees “ghosting” each other during the hiring process. Though ghosting certainly goes both ways and some employers unfortunately never respond to candidates, ghosting can be one of the worst things you can do professionally.

When You Don't Get the Job: When you get word that you did not get the job you interviewed for, you're likely to experience an array of negative emotions including disappointment and even anger. Your gut reaction may be to just blow off the employer. However, if they have taken the time to interview and consider you as a candidate, the least you can

do is to reply with, “Thank you for the opportunity.” It will reflect poorly on you to not respond at all, and employers will remember that.

When You Get the Job: It is mind-boggling to employers when they send the exciting news that you have gotten the job you interviewed for, and then you suddenly fall off the face of the earth. It's likely the employer will feel angry and bewildered, as you would if you never heard back after an interview. This feeling won't soon be forgotten, and employers will certainly remember you as the candidate who ghosted them and put them in a difficult position.

You might have “reasonable” intentions for ghosting such as waiting to see if you got another job you applied to. But respond regardless of the situation.

It's okay to graciously decline a job offer, and it's definitely preferable over not responding at all. If you need some time to think, just ask for it.

How Ghosting Can Hurt Your Career:

The agricultural industry is tight-knit. What are the chances that you attend a conference and cross paths with the employer you ghosted? Furthermore, employers in agriculture regularly network with colleagues across the industry. What if your name comes up in conversation as someone a fellow employer is considering?

Ultimately, ghosting is never a good idea and will label you as unprofessional and immature. Respond in a graceful way that does not burn bridges or damage your professional reputation. **AG**

MENTAL HEALTH AMID A PANDEMIC

by Erika Osmundson, AgCareers.com Director of Marketing & Communications

SINCE THE PANDEMIC, mental health has taken on a new perspective to businesses, and agriculture and food employers are stepping up. In a recent survey conducted by AgCareers.com, over 50% of the employees participating said that their employers have specifically addressed mental health in the workplace during the times of the pandemic. This realization that maybe more of us are experiencing these negative impacts because of the uncertain times has made the conversations around mental health easier.

Addressing Mental Health:

Whether you are a student or a young professional, how you show up and address your own mental health will set

an example for those around you.

In a recent article from *Inc.* they talked about “COVID Brain.” While it isn't exactly a mental health condition, it is an outcome of additional stress, sleep deprivation due to worry, anxiety, or other mental health triggers. COVID Brain is really about focus or lack thereof caused by the pandemic.

This article provided some practical tips that are so relevant for wherever you find yourself in this pandemic journey.

1. Rethink your stress. Focus on thinking with a positive mindset. Almost like we will our body's response to stress based on how we think about it. The author, Jessica Stillman, mentioned that time and self-compassion are key.

2. Chill out with the right tunes.

Research shows that music can influence a person's mood. Calm or upbeat music might be what you need to regain that focus.

3. Mindfulness. Seems like a “buzzword” but again research proves that things like meditation, intentional breathing, and taking breaks work.

People struggling with mental health are all around—at school, at work, in your community. Maybe you yourself are struggling, whether because of COVID or some other underlying challenge. Being able to speak up and communicate without stigma is a continual road. Perhaps the heightened awareness and conversation due to the pandemic is one good thing COVID can do for us! **AG**