



- Career Resources Manual -

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Careers

Many different industries employ public relations practitioners; thus, charting your course can be challenging. The brief descriptions that follow are meant to serve as a starting point to determine a specialization area that suits you.

Consult with professionals who work in the area you are interested in and talk to your professors, as they usually have a wide variety of experience in their background. Learning as much as possible about various public relations careers will help you find the right fit for your skills and interests.

The brief descriptions that follow are meant to serve as a starting point to determine a specialization area that suits you.

Development and Donor Relations:

Development and donor relations practitioners identify possible donors through research. Responsibilities in this specialization area often include fundraising efforts such as interacting with potential donors, writing grant proposals, preparing presentation books, explaining estate planning, creating videotapes, designing brochures and writing pitch letters. Positions as a development or donor relations practitioner may be found in a nonprofit organization, educational institution or other similar organization.

Educational Public Relations:

Educational institutions are commonly nonprofit and are either public or private. Private institutions are funded primarily with tuition and private fundraising. Public institutions are funded similarly to private institutions, except they also receive state funding. Responsibilities of practitioners in educational public relations often include fundraising, student recruitment, legislative affairs and media relations. A college campus is one of the few environments that provide the opportunity to practice public relations in education, sports, law enforcement, government, legal, philanthropy, prospect recruitment and community engagement.

Employee Relations:

Employee relations focuses on internal communication by preparing quarterly and annual reports, compiling employee publications and newsletters, and organizing internal special events.

Financial Public Relations and Investor Relations:

Financial public relations and investor relations practitioners communicate with press, shareholders or members of an organization regarding the organization's financial performance. To complete this objective, practitioners may prepare periodic and annual reports, arrange stockholders meetings and write press releases on earnings or the financial implications of new product development. Public relations practitioners in finance and investor relations also coordinate interviews between organization executives and security analysts. Timing is key in this specialization because releasing a news item can drastically affect the value of stocks.

Health Care Public Relations:

Health Care public relations practitioners share medical information with the organization's publics. Positions in health care public relations can be found at public relations agencies, or in-house for hospitals or health-focused nonprofits. When seeking a position in health care public relations, a science and marketing background is particularly useful.

International Public Relations:

When working in international public relations, knowledge of the language and customs of another country is extremely important and beneficial. Positions in international public relations often involve working with community leaders, government officials and media to establish a link between the home and international office.

Lobbying:

Lobbyists work closely with federal and state representatives and senators to explain the intricacies of proposed legislation, as well as persuade lawmakers to adopt specific viewpoints. Lobbyists can work for large organizations, special interest groups, private individuals or the general public. In each of these areas, lobbyists must be well-informed, persuasive and self-confident in order to be successful.

Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) Relations:

NGOs are organizations — typically nonprofits — that operate independently from all forms of government, and often focus on social problems such as human rights, environmental issues and development work. Public relations practitioners that work for NGOs deal extensively with the government, media and community to promote their organization's goals.

Political Public Relations:

Political public relations practitioners assist candidates running for office with speechwriting, strategizing, policy and publicity. When seeking a position in political public relations, a government or history background is helpful.

Public Affairs:

Public affairs is communication that focuses on issues of politics and policy. Often, in the area of public affairs, practitioners advocate for issues that are of public interest. Public affairs can be practiced in an agency, government or corporate setting. Many agencies have public affairs clients, most corporations have government relations and public affairs teams, and the communicators in the government and military have clear policy aspects to their jobs.

Government: Public relations practitioners work for the federal, state or local government to communicate the programs and issues of public interest. Titles in this specialization include public information officer and public affairs officer. As previously stated, in a position such as this, practitioners serve the public interest by advocating and creating awareness about certain issues or programs.

Military: Military public affairs officers (PAO) fulfill the military's obligation to keep citizens, as well as military members, informed. PAOs tell the military story through command information, which keeps internal audiences informed; community relations, which enhances community awareness and supportiveness of military programs; social media, which tells the military story instantaneously; and media relations, which engages and creates relationships with media.

Speechwriting:

Speechwriters write for CEOs, top executives or politicians. Sometimes, speechwriters also ghostwrite articles on behalf of their employer for trade and consumer publications.

Sports Public Relations:

Sports public relations practitioners handle relations with investors, players, stadium owners, community supporters, media, transportation and housing facilities, fans and the public. Positions in sports public relations can be found with sports teams, as well as with consumer brands that have a particular focus on sports. Another career avenue that sports public relations practitioners have available is to work for athletic conferences and governing bodies, such as the NCAA, NFL or

Travel and Tourism:

Travel and tourism public relations practitioners work in travel- and hospitality-related organizations such as state and national tourism offices, convention and visitor's bureaus, hotels, resorts, airlines, cruise lines, rental car companies, attractions, restaurants, concessions, museums and historic sites. The goal of the tourism industry is to stimulate the public's desire to travel and then turn this desire into the purchase of tickets. Public relations practitioners play a vital role in this process by not only attracting visitors to destinations but also keeping them happy once they arrive.

Corporate Public Relations:

Corporate public relations often means working for a company in-house. Responsibilities include trends analysis, issues management and public opinion evaluation. Often, a corporate public relations practitioner reports to the CEO and top executives on media issues.

Nonprofit Organizations:

Public relations practitioners in nonprofit organizations — such as schools and universities, hospitals, and human and social service agencies — work in support of awareness programs, fundraising programs, and staff and volunteer recruiting. Additionally, practitioners in nonprofits seek to increase the patronage of their services. Responsibilities of practitioners in nonprofit public relations include training volunteers, promoting programming, fundraising, seeking and writing grants, and designing public relations campaigns.

Public Relations Firms:

Clients of public relations firms include all types of organizations such as businesses, nonprofits, government agencies and high-profile individuals. Often, firms conduct programming, research and evaluate campaigns, interact with the media, and write and edit content. Below are positions that can be held in public relations firms in ascending order:

Assistant Account Executive or Account Coordinator:

Responsibilities of an assistant account executive or account coordinator include updating media lists, writing press releases, sending pitch letters, calling media representatives, researching and planning special events.

Account Executive: Responsibilities of an account executive may include the creative and planning aspects of public relations campaigns, as well as client contact.

Senior Account Executive or Account Supervisor:

Responsibilities of a senior account executive or account supervisor include supervising one large account or several smaller accounts.

Senior Manager or Senior Counselor: Responsibilities of a senior manager or senior counselor include managing people and accounts, as well as attaining clients through business development.

- Agricultural Public Relations
 - Business to Business Public Relations
 - Community Relations
 - Consumer Public Relations
 - Crisis Communication
 - Digital Public Relations
 - Financial and Investor Relations
 - Food and Beverage Public Relations
 - Health Care Public Relations
 - Internal Communications
 - Nonprofit Public Relations
 - Property Development Public Relations
 - Public Affairs
 - Reputation Management
 - Retail Public Relations
-

Extra Information:

To learn more information on a specialization, talk to a professional who has experience in that area. The Champions for PRSSA is a great place to find a professional willing to discuss his or her public relations career. Visit the [Champions for PRSSA page](#) and click on Champions Directory.

[PRSA's Career Descriptions by Specialization](#)



Cover Letters

The purpose of a cover letter is to obtain an interview, not tell a lengthy story. The focus should be on your qualifications and what you would bring to the company.

There are two types of cover letters — specific and general. The specific cover letter is directed at a specific person and position within a company, and personally addresses the company’s needs. Writing a specific cover letter sends a positive message and lets the employer know that you are truly interested in working for them because you took the time to write a targeted letter. A general cover letter is directed at a specific company but it is often not addressed to a specific person and emphasizes your qualifications in hopes that a position is available to utilize your skills.

It’s always advantageous to research and write a cover letter that includes the company, hiring manager and position for which you are applying. Sometimes, however, writing a specific cover letter is not an option. In these cases, write a general cover letter that focuses on not only your qualifications but also what you would bring to the company.

A Good Cover Letter:

- Makes an immediate connection to the position or company.
- Is written directly to the person responsible for the position.
- Does not sound desperate.
- Rarely begins sentences with “I”.
- Is brief and to the point.
- Does not sound like a formal letter.
- Successfully markets the job seeker.
- Directly asks for a specific form of response.
- Requests a meeting rather than an interview.
- Has correct spelling and is written professionally.

- Paragraph 1: How did you hear about this position and company? What is your objective?
- Paragraph 2: Why are you interested in the position? What makes you uniquely qualified for the position?
- Paragraph 3: How will you benefit the company? What will you bring to the company?
- Paragraph 4: Request an opportunity to call and speak directly to the employer (within five days after receiving the cover letter and resume). Thank the person for their time and consideration.

Extra Information:

Although touching on all the points outlined above is important, you also must remember to be brief. Make your sentences concise and paragraphs short.

For more information on writing cover letters, visit the resources listed below:

[“A Brief Guide to Writing Exceptional Cover Letters”](#) -- an article from PR Daily

Cover letter [tips](#) from *PR Tactics* (PRSA's newsletter)

Resumes

The first step in writing a resume is to make a list of everything that you have done professionally that is significant. Review what you have written and try to establish a pattern of interests. It is important to create a snapshot of your experiences and interests so that you can pique the interest of potential employers.

Employers only spend approximately 15–30 seconds looking at a resume for the first time. Many companies are now scanning resumes into a database, so you need to keep your resume simple.

A Good Resume:

- Is limited to one page.
- Includes bullet points.
- Leaves ample white space.
- Uses concise wording.
- Includes limited italics, script and underlining.
- Does not use graphics and shading.
- Is free of typos, grammatical errors and personal data.
- Has an easy to understand chronology.
- Includes action words (see next page).

Extra Information:

For more information on writing a resume, visit the resources listed below:

“[12 Dangerous Resume Mistakes](#)” -- an article from *PR Daily*

“[What Matters on a Resume?](#)” -- an article from *The Dish*

Resume [tips](#) from *PR Tactics* (PRSA’s newsletter)

Along with effective organization, the appearance of your resume can make or break its successfulness. When creating your resume, keep the following points in mind:

Fonts: Whether you email, fax or mail your resume to prospective employers, try to keep the font easy to read. This means you must select a reasonable font size – anywhere between 10 and 12 point font is acceptable.

Formatting: Using multiple fonts, colors and graphic embellishments only distracts from the content of your resume. Keep the formatting simple; bullet points will best separate your duties and skills. Formatting should highlight your accomplishments, not draw attention away from them.

Paper: Even if you don't mail your resume to employers, you should have hard copies on hand to bring to interviews. These copies should be on tasteful resume-quality paper. White, off-white and cream are the easiest to read. Your cover letters, mailing envelopes and resumes should all match.

Action Words: Successful resume writers use action words to describe the contributions that they made to an organization. Instead of saying that you were responsible for certain tasks, say that you initiated a successful new program or that you generated new business leads. Use the action words below in your resume:

Addressed	Created	Guided	Participated
Analyzed	Delegated	Implemented	Performed
Arranged	Designed	Improved	Produced
Assisted	Documented	Increased	Publicized
Attained	Edited	Initiated	Recruited
Budgeted	Enforced	Interpreted	Reduced
Chartered	Established	Maintained	Served
Coached	Evaluated	Managed	Utilized
Collected	Expanded	Mentored	Volunteered
Communicated	Facilitated	Observed	Wrote
Completed	Formulated	Obtained	
Computed	Gathered	Operated	
Coordinated	Generated	Organized	

Salary

In order to gain a better understanding of the opinions of its members and those interested in the field of public relations, PRSA, together with Bacon's Information, Inc., surveyed members via an online survey. The research conducted in 2006 by Delahaye, a division of Bacon's Information, explored several areas of interest to PRSA members and nonmembers interested in the field of public relations. One of the specific areas analyzed in the survey was salary.

The median annual salary reported by respondents was \$71,480 overall. There was little variation between the median salary for those working in small companies (\$64,460) and medium-sized companies (\$66,800), while the median salary for those working in larger companies was \$82,300.

As can be inferred, authority level directly affects annual salary figures:

- Senior or executive level authority reported a median salary of \$94,800.
- Managers reported a median salary of \$71,600.
- Account executives or public relations specialists reported a median salary of \$47,500.
- Entry-level associates reported a median salary of \$26,000.

For more information on salary based on location, position and company, [visit the PRSA website](#).

Networking

Networking is a supportive system of sharing information and services among individuals who have a common interest. Essentially, networking is creating relationships with others in the industries and organizations that you are interested in.

The Benefits of Networking:

Networking can help connect you with career opportunities such as internships or jobs, now or in the future. Often, after creating and nurturing relationships, those industry professionals can introduce you to someone else who is hiring or can give you information about organizations that have openings.

Myths and Realities:

Myth: You should only network with people who can help you get a job.

Reality: Don't set limits — think broadly because people may know someone else who can help you get a job or internship.

Myth: You need to know the “right” people to network effectively.

Reality: It's up to you to create the connections that will eventually help you.

Myth: Strangers may resent you for requesting help with your job or internship search.

Reality: If you approach people properly and make reasonable requests, they will most likely help.

Create a List of Contacts:

Think of your network list in the shape of a pyramid, broken down into levels.

Level One: These are people you are the most comfortable approaching for names and other requests. Level one consists of your friends, neighbors and relatives with whom you have regular contact.

Level Two: These are people who know you distantly. You may deal with them on a professional level (i.e., your doctor). Level two also consists of your colleagues and acquaintances that you see occasionally.

Level Three: This is the toughest level. These are strangers — people you have yet to meet. You have heard about them from someone in level one or two, or you found his or her name on LinkedIn or elsewhere online.

Now that you have brainstormed your networking contacts — and the level that each contact may fall into — it's time to organize the names into a spreadsheet.

Network Spreadsheet:

A network spreadsheet is simply a way to keep your contacts organized and in one place. While you probably have many contacts, actually reaching out to anyone is difficult without knowing how to connect with them — a problem easily solved by creating a network spreadsheet. Consider arranging the document by the levels detailed above. Your spreadsheet should include:

- Contact name
- Title
- Company
- Business address
- Phone number
- Email address

In the spreadsheet, it also would be helpful for you to explain:

- The nature of this connection (i.e., met at PRSSA National Conference Career Exhibition).
- The names of other people or companies.
- The comments section that details any meetings you have had or emails you have sent.

Reaching Out to Contacts:

Generally, people are happy to help a student who is looking to begin his or her career, because everyone has experienced that type of situation before. Be sure to make your requests articulate, speak naturally and have confidence.

Here is an example of what you can say to a potential network contact: "Hi, my name is _____ and I got your name from _____. For the past ____ years, I have been studying at _____. During that time, I've had the opportunity to develop my public relations skills in the areas of _____. I will be graduating in _____ and am looking for _____.

Remember, once you begin developing a relationship with professionals, colleagues and friends — or anyone for that matter — you must nurture that relationship. Maintain consistent contact, and avoid always asking for a favor each time you make contact.

Source: Stanton Hudson, past National PRSSA Professional Adviser, presentation given at PRSSA National Assembly, San Francisco, 1999.

Extra Information:

[“Four Strategies for Your One-on-One Networking Meeting”](#) – an article from the *Daily Muse*

[“Three Tips for Making the Most Out of a Networking Event”](#) – an article from

[“Five Rules for Asking Your LinkedIn Connections for Help”](#) – an article from the *Daily Muse*

Networking [resources](#) from PRSA

General Career Tips

The transition from student to professional is challenging; however, if you keep in mind a few basic principles, the transition will be much easier. Remember that it is no longer acceptable to do “C” or even “B” work; to excel in the public relations job market, every assignment that you complete must be “A+” material. Here are a few more tips for succeeding in the public relations industry:

- Strive for excellence in everything you do.
- Volunteer for new projects.
- Make yourself indispensable.
- Dress for the position you want, not the position you have.
- Take advantage of opportunities to learn.
- Adapt to your surroundings.
- Stay true to your word.
- Always appear confident, but never arrogant.
- Arrive early, leave late.
- Stay well-rounded by taking a break during your days off.

On the Phone:

- Avoid putting people on speaker phone.
- Always identify yourself and your company.
- Always get the name of the person you are speaking with.
- Immediately write down what you will do and when you will contact the person again.

With Clients:

- Do what you say you will do.
- Be honest and straightforward.
- Return calls and emails promptly.
- Be respectful of their time.
- Be flexible.

Time Management:

- Set priorities daily, weekly and monthly.
- Delegate whenever necessary.
- Keep a to-do list.
- Plan and control interruptions.
- Sometimes saying “no” is OK.
- Think and plan ahead.
- Confirm all meetings and appointments.

Public Speaking:

- Take any opportunity that you have to speak in front of a group.
- Pause before beginning and take a deep breath.
- If necessary, use notes.
- Use hand gestures.
- When making an important statement, change your pace and enunciate.

Extra Information:

For more career tips, visit the resources listed below:

Job tips from PRSA

Personal branding and SEO tips from PRSA

The Interview

The most important part of interviewing is to ask yourself before you go into the interview what you want the interviewer to know about you. Having clear points that you would like to get across will keep you focused and concise.

Before the interview, make sure that you know and understand the location of the interview. Arrive 15 minutes early, review notes and introduce yourself five minutes early. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when going into your next important interview:

Traits of a Good Interviewee:

- Is nice to the secretary.
- Is honest and straightforward.
- Practices interviewing as much as possible.
- Adapts to the person he or she is meeting with.
- Is brief and to the point.
- Is dressed professionally.
- Maintains good posture.
- Never interrupts.
- Is always on time.
- Is up on current events.
- Is considerate of the interviewer's time.
- Shows that he or she is interested in the job.
- Has a positive attitude.
- Elaborates on all answers.
- Practices a solid handshake.
- Has a focus, even if he or she does not know what to do in the future yet.
- Appears in demand and selective, but is cautious of sounding overconfident.

Common Interview Questions:

Consider the below questions and decide how you would respond to each. Answer honestly — if you try to sound perfect, the interviewer is left wondering what you have not told him or her. Your responses should accurately reflect who you are: your ambition, motivation, dedication and integrity. The more you personalize your answers, the more you will stand out from the other interviewees.

- What do you want to do?
- Where do you want to be in five years?
- Why should I hire you?
- What can you bring to this company?
- What motivates you?
- What has been your biggest challenge?
- What has been your biggest accomplishment?
- What has been your biggest failure?
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- What are you interested in?
- What are you good at?
- Can you work under pressure?

Good Questions to Ask the Interviewer:

A good candidate comes with intelligent questions to ask throughout, as well as at the end of, an interview. Consider asking the below questions; however, remember that you also can ask questions unique to the organization or interviewer. For example, if you know your interviewer has extensive experience in internal communication, ask questions specifically about that experience. This will show two things: that you've done your research and that you are truly investing in becoming an employee at the organization.

- What has your career path looked like within this company?
- What do you look for in an intern or employee?
- What is the company culture at this organization?
- What gets you excited about work every day?
- Is there anything else on your mind that I can address?

After the interview, make a list of pros and cons about the job. Attach your notes to the information you have on the company. This may help in making a decision later. Always send a thank you letter afterwards, thanking the interviewer for his or her time and consideration.

USA Today recently published an Accountemps study of 150 senior executives. The study lists the most common mistakes that employers notice while interviewing job candidates; however, each of these mistakes can be avoided with proper preparation. Don't just wing it!

1. Little or No Knowledge of the Company:

Research the company before the interview, and know its structure, products, services and history. Find and read any recent news articles so that you are informed about current happenings in the company, as well as the industry.

2. Unprepared to Discuss Skills and Experience:

Know what your skills and experience are, and come prepared to answer questions about them. This means you must practice ahead of time. Consider talking through your resume with a friend before the interview.

3. Unprepared to Discuss Career Plans and Goals:

Enter the interview with the ability to articulate your long-term goals and passions. Where do you see yourself in several years? What makes you passionate about your goals? Remember, your goals should relate in some way to the organization and the position for which you are interviewing.

4. Limited Enthusiasm:

Apply for positions in which you are truly interested. One of the best ways to showcase your enthusiasm is to ask the employer intelligent and unique questions about the company and position. These questions will show that you are interested enough in the position to have done advance research.

5. Lack of Eye Contact:

Maintain eye contact with the interviewer (though be careful not to stare).

Extra Information:

After the interview, don't forget to follow up with a thank you note and email. Also, consider following up in a way that will make you stand out from the crowd; learn how in [this article](#).

For more interview tips, visit the resources listed below:

[“Things You Should Know Before Your Job Search”](#) -- an infographic by NerdGraph

[“Five Ways to Look Relaxed During a Job Interview”](#)-- an article by CBS News

Portfolios

A professional portfolio is a reflection of you as a professional. It showcases your professional development, skill in public relations tasks and accomplishments in the industry thus far.

The Benefits of Building a Professional Portfolio:

- Marketing your public relations capabilities in job interviews.
- Negotiating promotions and raises.
- Applying for bonuses, scholarships or grants.
- Documenting the quality of your professional development.

Gathering material is the most challenging aspect of putting together a good portfolio. The best advice in this regard is to keep everything that you work on during internships, PRSSA and extracurricular activities; you can decide later what to include. Remember, keep editable versions of the documents so that you can make adjustments later. Items that are typically found in professional public relations portfolios include:

- Resume.
- Evidence of specific skills such as leadership, writing and public speaking.
- Work samples produced during internship or professional experiences such as media writing, blogging, strategic plans and pitches.
- Evidence of professional affiliations.
- Licenses or certifications.
- Letters of reference.

In your professional portfolio, you do not need to include everything that you wrote while in college — just the outstanding pieces that showcase your abilities. This will impress the employer more than a large portfolio that includes mediocre work alongside your best work.

A Good Portfolio:

- Includes writing samples. If you must, use an academic writing sample and clearly mark it as such.
- Is organized and free of typos; any errors will jump off the page.
- Is clearly labeled with your name, address and phone number.
- Highlights what you would most like to be doing in the future.
- Is representative of your skills.
- Provides the employer with a mixture of your skills and talents.

These tips apply to both hardcopy and online public relations portfolios. In the past, hardcopy portfolios were the standard expectation; however, employers now also expect students to have a well-developed online portfolio. For more information on how to create a professional online portfolio, visit [this Progressions blog post](#) on the subject.

Student Activity Planner

This section was created to serve as a guideline for members to plan their college careers. Everyone has different paths in their professional and academic experiences; however, the student activity planner can get you started in the planning process. Think ahead and consider your options. You have four years to lay the groundwork for your future, so make the most of them, and remember to let PRSSA help.

The following is a prospective calendar of opportunities in PRSSA and the public relations industry. The pace and level of involvement is subjective. Organizing your activities into a calendar will help you attain your goals and plan for the future.

Freshman Year:

This is the time to explore; take advantage of any opportunities that interest you. Go after opportunities with enthusiasm, and try to learn a little about many different topics. This will allow you to discover what you love and help you to decide where you want to focus in the future. Consider learning a language or acquiring a skill, such as design or computer programming. Remember, keep copies of everything that you write, design, create or produce.

Fall:

- Join PRSSA.
- Offer to work on a committee.
- Assist with fundraising, recruitment and publicity.
- Attend National Conference.
- Become involved with or begin a mentor program.

Spring:

- Attend National Assembly.
- Offer to lead a committee or event in the next year.
- Apply for National Scholarships.
- Apply for several internships through the Internship Center.
- Assist in organizing a Regional Conference.

Summer:

- Set goals for PRSSA for the next year.
- Organize a tentative calendar of PRSSA events.
- Complete an internship in an area that interests you.

Sophomore Year:

At this point, you should know of several things that you enjoy doing. During sophomore year, take the time to further develop your understanding and knowledge in the areas that interest you. Also, build on your leadership and delegation skills — it will pay off in the long run.

Fall:

- Assist the Chapter leadership with any initiatives.
- Offer to edit the newsletter, revise the budget, improve the website, start an email list or redesign Chapter promotional materials.
- Attend National Conference.
- Attend PRSA functions.
- Participate in firm activities.

Spring:

- Run for a leadership position within your Chapter.
- Attend National Assembly.
- Apply for scholarships, awards and internships.
- Organize a Regional Conference.

Summer:

- Set goals and plan for the next year.
- Complete second internship.

Junior Year:

This year is a good time to focus on networking. When networking, remember to listen more than you speak, and always ask if the person knows of anyone else you may contact in the field that you are interested in.

Fall:

- Attend National Conference.
- Organize or apply for your Chapter's Bateman team.
- Focus on increasing membership by encouraging freshmen and sophomores to become involved.

Spring:

- Run for a leadership position within your Chapter or nationally.
- Lead your Chapter in submitting a bid to edit *FORUM*.
- Attend National Assembly.

- Host a Regional Conference.
- Apply for scholarships and awards.

Summer:

- Hold third internship.
- Plan for PRSSA for the next year.

Senior Year:

Your main focus this year is your job search campaign. Begin as early as possible so that you have a clearly defined plan. At this point, it's important to assess your skills and interests. In your job search campaign, you will identify and focus on jobs that complement your skills.

Fall:

- Attend National Conference.
- Begin researching and identifying the top 20 employers that you'd like to work for; track when applications for internships are due.
- Use your network to connect with professionals in these organizations.
- Organize your portfolio — both hardcopy and online.
- Update your resume.

Spring:

- Attend National Assembly.
- Send out cover letters and resumes to the employers that you previously identified.
- Search the Internship Center for job and internship openings.
- Apply for PRSA Associate Membership.

Summer:

- Relocate and begin your career.
- Attend PRSA Meetings and learn how you can become involved in Chapter activities.

If there are few internships in your area or if you have little experience, consider gaining experience through the student activities office, campus outreach office, public affairs office or campus newspaper. Then if you get the chance, go away for the summer for an internship in a larger city.

Professional Transition

What You May Need to Transition

The fourth year of college is particularly stressful for students. Many students are waiting to graduate, and on top of completing their studies, are simultaneously beginning the job search. The transition from student to professional can, at times, be difficult. This page gives tips on how to make the transition process successfully.

Portfolio:

In the beginning of your senior year, begin creating a professional portfolio, which should contain your best public relations work from your four years in college. For more information on portfolio creation, visit the [PRSSA Career Resources page called Portfolios](#).

Informational Interviews:

At the start of the last semester or term in college, begin scheduling informational interviews with professionals in various positions at different companies that interest you. Inquire about the company, the hiring process, the work atmosphere and any other questions that you may have. This is an opportunity for you to get your questions answered and name out there.

A Network:

A solid network of professional contacts is a significant asset in any job search or professional transition. During your entire college career, you are building your network; however, at the start of your senior year, begin strategic efforts to connect with professionals in specializations that interest you. To build your network, attend PRSA Chapter meetings and events, and conduct informational interviews.

PRSA Associate Membership:

PRSSA offers graduating seniors the opportunity to apply for PRSA Associate Membership. For the first two years after graduation, those who apply will pay \$60 for yearly dues.

The Associate Membership gives new professionals access to all PRSA member benefits at a discounted price, including the PRSA JobCenter. New professionals will have the opportunity to involve themselves in PRSA Chapter activities and networking opportunities. If you choose to join your local PRSA Chapter, there may be additional [Chapter dues](#).

PRSA New Professionals Section:

The New Professionals Section is a community of PRSA members with less than three years' experience in the public relations profession that is dedicated to helping ease the transition into a professional career in public relations. This Section offers its members networking opportunities, access to New Professionals webinars and advanced professional development.

Price: \$20 per year or free for PRSSA students

Benefits of New Professionals Section:

- Networking
- Resources: articles and case studies
- Webinars
- Discounted networking events
- Newsletter
- Volunteer opportunities

For more information regarding PRSA New Professionals, contact the [Section chair](#).

Ten Tips for PRSSA Members Entering the Job Field:

1. Attend job fairs: Job fairs provide an arena for practice, and practice makes perfect. Job fairs host various businesses, organizations and potential employers, which provide students with an opportunity to network and create relationships with those employers.
2. Connect with the Champions for PRSSA: Student members have a network of PRSSA advocates around the country who are committed to assisting in the professional advancement of the next generation of public relations practitioners. The Champions can provide professional advice and guidance.
3. Attend Regional Conferences: Regional Conferences provide PRSSA members with a day or two of professional mentorship and networking. These conferences are an opportunity for students to broaden their professional networks.
4. Be open: One of the biggest mistakes PRSSA members can make when looking for a job is to restrict themselves geographically or by industry. It's important to explore all of the options that are out there.

5. Dress the part: First impressions are powerful. Men, it's important to look sharp and clean. Ladies, finding the perfect balance is hard but incredibly crucial. Remember to always dress for the job that you want, not the job that you have.
6. Tap into your resources: The public relations world is small, and PRSSA members can use this to their advantage. Contacts made through PRSSA, as well as prior work and internship experiences can aid in the job search.
7. Attend PRSA Chapter meetings: A strong relationship with a PRSA sponsor Chapter is a tremendous advantage when searching for a job. Attending PRSA events may help with the transition to professional life.
8. Communicate: Keeping a healthy stream of communication helps nurture the relationship with employers. Without overwhelming employers, a simple email demonstrates passion and care.
9. Post-grad internships: Post-grad internships can be a great option for public relations graduates as they can provide additional experience and professional contacts, as well as more time to dedicate to the job search.
10. Attend PRSSA National Conference: Networking, professional development sessions, a career exhibition, and the list goes on. The National Conference atmosphere ignites the PRSSA passion and prepares PRSSA members for a successful transition to the professional world.

Entry-Level Assistance from PRSA:

- PRSA's Entry-Level [Homepage](#)
- PRSA Job [Feeds](#)
- Create a Job [Alert](#) through PRSA.
- Post your Resume on the [PRSA Jobcenter](#).
- Search for [jobs](#) on the PRSA Jobcenter.
- The [PRSA Job Seeker Benefits Page](#)