How to Market a Master’s Degree

Connecting your knowledge and skills in the job search
What makes a candidate the best?

“The best candidates have the right combination of knowledge, skills and attributes that the employer is searching for. The best candidate gets the job because they have self-analyzed, done their career research and met the employer’s needs. These truisms apply equally to undergraduates and postgraduates.”

- Stephen Isherwood
Chief Executive
Association of Graduate Recruiters
How can a master’s degree improve chances?

“Where a student has used master’s studies to “demonstrate their passions or build relationships”, this can ultimately “improve their chances” of securing the job they want. “It’s not having done the master’s [that matters], it’s how they’ve done it and how they’re applying the knowledge they’ve gained.”

- Richard Irwin, head of recruitment at PwC
Skills acquired during master’s studies

• Flexibility
  • Adapt working methods and role to task at hand, whether working independently or in a group.

• Time management
  • Responsibility and flexibility to produce results against deadlines – on own.

• Critical thinking, problem solving, and analysis
  • Clearly express ideas, intellectual curiosity, and personal responsibility.
Skills acquired during master’s studies (Cont’d)

• Project management, depending
  • Communication, leadership and team management, negotiation, personal organization, and risk management.

• Presentation skills
  • More experience, more confidence from talking about your work with peers.

• Research and writing
  • Ability to research, synthesize, analyze, condense, and report is useful in many contexts.
How to discover full diversity of career options in your particular field or specialization?

• Know yourself.
  • Who you are, strengths and weaknesses, preferences in work and life.

• Conduct your research.
  • Select some companies you’d like to work for and some specific jobs that match your specialized qualifications and experience.
‘Types’ of postgrad employers

- **Generalist** – Indifferent to postgrad studies. Not considered extra training in job posting. Up to you to market your extra qualifications.
  
  E.g., small businesses

- **Preferential** – Not advertising for postgrad role, but will acknowledge benefits. Might help you earn higher starting salary.
  
  E.g., newspaper or media organizations

- **Targeted** – Seeking postgrads. May state as preference in posting. May offset lack of experience.
  
  E.g., specialized organizations seeking niche roles (i.e., marketing co.)

- **Essential** – Basic requirement. May be due to professional regulations or advanced expertise for entry-level position.
  
  E.g., position depends on specialized knowledge (i.e., pharmaceutical co.)
How can emerging professionals maximize the benefits of their master’s studies?

• **Emphasize yourself not the degree.**
  - Skills gained that show who you are and what you can bring to a company. Frame from their point of view.

• **Connect how obtaining degree substantiates.**
  - Commitment and motivation to learning, further developing, and embracing new challenges.

• **Be aware of new opportunities.**
  - Networking events or online networks in industry.

• **Put into practice.**
  - Part-time jobs, internships, or volunteering. Highlight ‘real world’ understanding.

• **Have realistic expectations.**
  - Know the job market and avoid a deficit approach.
Resources, by courtesy of the Career Center

• Focus 2, self-assessment
• What can I do with this Major
• California Occupational Guides
• Occupational Outlook Handbook
• Career Spots
• Optimal Resume
• Perfect Interview and Interview Stream
• Handshake
• Vault Career Insider
• LinkedIn
• And our flyers and presentations.

[Links]
calstatela.edu/careercenter/careerexpress
calstatela.edu/careercenter/flyers
References

Abeid, c. (2015, April 7). 6 essential skills for project managers. [Web blog]. Retrieved from liquidplanner.com/blog/6-essential-skills-for-project-managers/


Tips on how to market your masters when you apply for jobs. [Web blog]. Retrieved from targetpostgrad.com/advice/postgrad-and-your-career/tips-on-how-to-market-your-masters-when-you-apply-for-jobs

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