

What Employers Want to See on a Resume

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BETHLEHEM, PA — When a new college graduate puts together a one-page resume (as experts recommend), every word must count. An employer spends just seconds scanning each resume to decide if it's going into the "interview" or the "toss" pile.

In addition to a solid knowledge of the new grad's field (noted by earning a good GPA and participation in internships), employers are looking for grads who have a number of "soft" skills, according to a new survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Employers taking part in NACE's *Job Outlook 2013* survey say they look for a range of soft skills, including leadership abilities, initiative, the ability to communicate, and more. (See Figure 1.)

"Eight out of 10 employers who review the resumes of potential college hires are seeking evidence of leadership skills," says Andrea Koncz, NACE's employment information manager. "In addition, 75 percent of employers are looking for problem-solving skills."

How does a new college graduate demonstrate these attributes? Here's where outside activities and interests are important. Joining and holding an office in a profession-related organization, participating in intramural sports, and volunteering are some of the activities employers look for as evidence of a student's taking the opportunity to learn those skills.

Figure 1



About the survey: The *Job Outlook* survey is a forecast of hiring intentions of employers as they relate to new college graduates. Each year, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) surveys its employer members about their hiring plans and other employment-related issues in order to project the market for new college graduates for the current class and to assess a variety of conditions that may influence that market. From July 25, 2012, through September 10, 2012, data were collected for the *Job Outlook 2013* survey. A total of 244 surveys were returned—a 25.2 percent response rate.