

General Resources/Skills that I must have as a professional

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(business cards, resume, CV, personal statement, cover letter, communication skills)

It does not matter if you are in high school or someone almost at the retirement stage of their career; it is clear there is a **toolkit** that makes a professional pathway a more efficient one. The toolkit is composed of those documents, presentation, publications or things that will become your cover letter for jobs, schools, networking, and any other opportunity.

The toolkit can be an updated package of business cards, Resume, CV, cover letter, writing samples, list of references, list of publications and presentations, interviews, phone calls, emails, etc. There is both a written and an oral part for this toolkit.

Let's start with the written part. The key here is UPDATE. Yes, you need to revise and edit and make sure your toolkit presents who you are NOW. Your interests will change over time as well as your background, your experiences and your goals. Make sure ALL these written resources reflect your changes.

If you speak various languages and you aim to work in settings with different languages, if possible make sure you have your toolkit available in various languages.

When to start having business cards? The best time is as soon as you have access to events where you can network. Networking is KEY skill to

develop. Life and professional development depends largely on networking. A business card is simple and a quick way to make sure someone has your contact information.

Cover letters or personal statements or lengthy responses to specific questions in applications are the first pieces of information about you for jobs, internships and college applications. Make sure that they are what you want them to be. Make sure that you show enthusiasm, creativity, a spark, how you fit with the goals of the program and the investigator.

Resume must be short until after you start having publications and presentations and you are at a more advanced level in your career. The major difference between the Resume and the CV is the length and the details included. The CV is the more detailed one.

Writing samples, especially if you have done independent research project like a BA honors thesis and thus far has not published, make sure you have a short 10-25 pages document that can be used to show others about your writing skills. If you already have publications and presentations, make sure you have an electronic and paper file with these publications. Writing samples can facilitate your work and help you during job, college and even tenure reviews, or any assessments measuring your competences.

In terms of the oral part of the toolkit, one the most significant ones is interviews. Interviews consists of a face to face interaction with one or more people evaluating your oral and overall whether you are the right candidate for a job or for a school. The interview can be typically to confirm what you have presented on paper but also can turn into a new opportunity to learn more about you. This is one of the moments requires for you to be honest on paper, in person and, at all times since this can be the start of a new liaison or network.

While using email and phone communication, make sure that you are always well mannered and show honest appreciation for the services and the given attention. Many times we forget that our paychecks, course enrollment and other important mandatory lengthy administrative processes are completed by the people who answer the phones or receive our emails. These contacts are as important as the mentor and your laboratory or project; they are the foundations for the department and thus your academic or research institution. Show them your appreciation as much as you can.

The oral part heavily depends not only in spoken language but also in “body” language. The body language is the gestures and other parts that are not spoken or written. There is also a physical language and these are the other factors that can influence your evaluation: your cloth, your ability to be there and focus on the moment, what to do to prepare for a stressful event like the interview.

The general resources or the toolkit can become a diligent way of preparing yourself for any given exciting opportunity for your career, academic or personal development.

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