

GET THAT JOB!

The Book of Random Lists

...to help you on your way (Last updated: Dec. 14th, 2010)



By Fidelma Wallace and Liam Horan
Sli Nua Careers



In conjunction with **Macra na Feirme**

There are more people than ever looking for jobs.

So what are you going to do to get noticed? How are you going to stand out as someone who can bring value?

This book helps you do just that.

But it should do more than that. It should also get you thinking, really thinking, about how you are approaching your job search.

Ultimately, the answers lie within you. This book can only help you to find those answers. Now, go seek.

Macra na Feirme



Macra na Feirme

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interview training - cv preparation – mock interviews – www.SliNuaCareers.com

1 *brief message from...*

Macra na Feirme

Members,

I am delighted that Macra na Feirme has this opportunity to support our members in their efforts to gain employment, or develop their career, by distributing this comprehensive handbook.

The personal development of members is central to the goal of Macra and we continue to support members through our training weekends and leadership awards. I hope this handbook will help members to get through these difficult economic times and assist them to grow their careers.

This handbook includes practical advice on how to stand out when applying for a job and the best approach to take. It's also important, when searching for work, to stay motivated and maintain a positive outlook. The job market is showing signs of improvement and the best prepared candidates will succeed.

As a member of Macra na Feirme, you are demonstrating that you are a team player and any leadership role you hold will enhance your skill set. Your participation in your Macra club is an asset in your job search.

Taking part in the Leadership Awards is an opportunity to showcase, and get acknowledged for, your outstanding contribution to Macra.

Now is the time when Macra members will demonstrate their strength in their communities by supporting their friends and family members who are looking for work and supporting Irish businesses by buying Irish.

I wish to thank Liam Horan & Fidelma Wallace of Sli Nua Careers for compiling this e-book, and for giving us the opportunity to circulate it to our members. I urge you to put this resource to good use.

Sli Nua Careers offer a 15 per cent discount to members of Macra na Feirme. To obtain the discount, just mention that you are a member of the Macra na Feirme when contacting Sli Nua Careers.

- Michael Gowing

Macra na Feirme National President 2009 – 2011

www.macra.ie

12 things to remember when...

Writing Your CV

1. Know your strengths. Really know them. Write them down. Ask your family and friends. Sometimes we don't realise our strengths. Take time to identify yours.
2. **Know your competencies. Competency-based interviews are all the rage these days. Know what yours are: what skills and competencies have you built up from education and / or work.**
3. Know what area you would like to work in. This might sound an obvious statement, but a great deal of people are vague about their aspirations. Get specific. Find out what rocks your boat. And tailor your CV accordingly.
4. **Know the value you'll bring to an organisation. If you are an engineer and you think you can save money for your potential employers, make sure you put that in your CV. It can come under your key competencies. Just make sure you know what you can bring to them: ultimately the employer cares more for what you can bring to them than what you brought to your last place of employment. You must bring value.**
5. List your voluntary activity, particularly anything that may be relevant in your area of work (i.e. a trainee Solicitor should mention the voluntary work he/she did for the Student Legal Services in college). Being a willing volunteer tells a lot about you as a person. Use it to your advantage.
6. **List your hobbies. These people have to work with you, day in, day out: let them know you are an interesting, wide-ranging person. Don't over-play your hobbies, but don't hide them either.**
7. If you've won awards, list them. They show you are an achiever, someone who commits to a project. Those are transferrable attributes.
8. **Don't list vague traits – be specific. If you claim you're a hard worker or highly-motivated, prove your assertion with real examples. You will do more of this in the Job Interview.**
9. Double-check the spelling. Make sure you use capital letters where appropriate. Get someone to look over your CV if you feel you're weak in this area. In fact, get someone to look over your CV, full stop.
10. **Know your CV. Become familiar with it. A good CV will set the tone for the job interview.**
11. Go for early impact. Some employers just glance at CVs. Make sure when they glance at yours, they see more than your Primary School education details.
12. **Tailor your CV for the very position you're targeting. Your CV can be tweaked from job to job – tweak it so that it best sells you for the next position. Don't treat your CV as a work of art that can't be amended.**

10 reasons why you should...

Fly During An Interview

1. When you've got your CV right, the interview will flow from there. A well-written CV will lure the interviewer down certain roads that suit you - control your CV, influence the interview.
2. **Nerves are good. Great sportspeople are regularly so consumed by nerves before major events that they can barely talk. Learn that nerves are inevitable: and focus instead on what you're going to be asked to do. You're going to be asked to talk about yourself (a subject you know well), your background (ditto), your education (ditto), and what value you can bring to the employer (ditto). Therefore, like the great sportsman, your nerves should dissipate once you get rolling in the interview. The subject matter is familiar to you so you have nothing to fear.**
3. They don't want you to fail either. Contrary to popular opinion, interviewers (with the very rare exception) take no delight in seeing a candidate fall apart, and will generally do anything to avoid this happening. They can make a decision on the best candidate without reducing the rest to tears. By and large, they will help you along and make it as easy as possible for you. It's like a Best Man at a wedding: everyone wants him to do well.
4. **Take it one question at a time. Treat every question as an opportunity to 'sell' yourself. Don't force it, but don't pass up opportunities to talk yourself up either. Most people are not arrogant, and therefore even if they talk themselves up a bit more than usual, they will still not come across as arrogant or conceited.**
5. Do the preparation work. Get friends to do mock interviews with you. Even just one question. Driving in the car, articulate answers. Best not do that on the bus or train, though, for obvious reasons. Ideally, do yourself the favour of an Interview Training Session. Professional expertise can really bring out the best in you.
6. **Relax. Don't imbue the interview with too great a significance. It's just one job. There will be more. Even in this environment, there will be more. Focus not on getting the job, but on doing the best you can do. Treat each interview almost as a rehearsal for the next one: never let any one interview become too big in your mind. Fine-tune your interview performance over and over. Eventually, hopefully sooner rather than later, you will do enough to get the job.**
7. Back to nerves – they don't notice your nerves as much as you do. We are our own worst critics in this area. Plus to be nervous is to be human. Don't worry about it. It's only natural.
8. **Yes, yes, yes – a firm handshake is advisable. But, please, don't wait to hear the crack of knuckle.**
9. The interview is not just about you – it's about what you can bring to the company. So, first of all, decide what the company is looking for. Write down the words that describe their requirements. Then, and only then, see how you fit the bill. If you decide they need a good communicator, and you feel you're a good communicator, then you've got to tell them that – and you've also got to back it up with concrete examples that prove you're a good communicator. Prove it with examples from your previous work, or from your personal life or hobbies. But until you prove it with an example, they can't really be sure it's true.
10. **Paint pictures. If you're a school-teacher who takes the time to bring the students on extra-curricular trips, paint that picture – tell the interviewer about the recent trip to the theatre to see a play. Name the play. Name the theatre. Let the interviewer gain a strong visual sense of you with that group in that theatre. When you achieve that, you have embedded something valuable in the interviewer's mind.**

5 *things to bear in mind when...*

Writing A Cover Letter

1. It should be brief. If your CV is doing its job properly, there is no need to re-hash the information all over again in the Cover Letter.
2. **It should provide relevant information – your contact details, plus the job for which you’re applying. Be courteous, but it is rarely necessary to write more than four sentences.**
3. “I didn’t have time to write you a short letter, so I wrote a long one” – Mark Twain nailed it in one. The more you write, beyond a certain minimum amount of detail, the more you run the danger of your key message being lost.
4. **Double-check spellings, names, and the like.**
5. Something we are compelled to flag here: the amount of people who write their own name without a first capital letter amazes us. an other should be AN Other. And there’s only one thing worse than down-playing your own name in that way – and that’s down-playing the name of the person to whom you are writing in the hope of securing gainful employment.



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12 things you should note when...

Going On The Job Trail

1. Jobs pop up everywhere and anywhere these days. Familiarise yourself with these locations.
2. **Newspapers are still popular places for job ads.**
3. Online sites are another key area. We have a list of such sites – just ask us for it.
4. **Jobs even get advertised in the noticeboard of your local supermarket – keep an eye out there.**
5. Recruitment Agencies – impress, impress, impress. That smiling Recruitment Agent you meet might well have a leg-in to a dozen jobs in your sphere right now. Make sure they see the best of you: some people treat the trip to the Recruitment Agency almost as a necessary evil. You should view it much differently. Recruitment Agents are decision-makers too. Approach that meeting as you would a job interview – dress well, have your answers thought through, illustrate what value you can bring to an employer.
6. **Head-hunters exist too – don't sit waiting at home waiting for one, but if one does come knocking on your door, immediately fall into your 'selling myself' mode.**
7. If you've decided there are specific companies where you'd like to work, get thee to their websites. You'd be surprised what you'd see there – there's often a job sitting there for months and months that they've struggled to fill. Can you do the needful?
8. **Don't write vague, non-specific letters to companies. Don't say that "I am willing to work in any role you might have in mind for me." That is akin to asking the company to make a career decision for you. Instead, study that company and see where you might be able to bring value – and target that area. They'll respect someone who writes to say "I believe I can help you greatly with your Asian markets, due to my knowledge of that region, and my command of three of its main languages."**
9. When writing to companies, get the name of THE person in your area. Don't just send of a letter to the HR Manager. Find out who is the key person in the very section you want to work, and write to that person. How? By researching their site. By googling. By ringing the local Chamber of Commerce. By talking to people already in the company. Whatever it takes.
10. **A week after sending a speculative email or letter to a company, follow up with a phonecall.**
11. Lots of jobs never get advertised – instead people 'create' their own position with a well-written letter carrying a carefully-constructed approach. Employers generally react positively to someone being clever and creative in their efforts to get a job.
12. **You can learn a lot about a company on LinkedIn. See who's moving up, try to enter their network without being a stalker. Companies like when you know stuff about them (nearly everyone has this niggling thing called The Ego), and are rarely impressed when someone professes ignorance.**

8 *random thoughts about...*

Random Job Things

1. Look to your network. The girl who plays beside you on the hockey team – does she know people in your industry? Let people know what you work at, and what you want to work at. In social or sporting situations, people have the guard down. If you play on the same team, it's likely the sense of fraternity will inspire them to put a word in for you somewhere. Maybe best not to go looking for referrals the day your own goal costs the team the title...
2. **Everyone can help. Don't exclude people just because they don't appear to be influential. There are stories about the crusty-looking janitor actually turning out to be the owner. Develop the habit of talking to everyone as if they are real people (which, in fact, they are).**
3. Employers like when someone is prepared to stand out from the crowd. We're not saying turn up for the interview in a Big Bird costume, but...
4. **Network, network, network. Everywhere you can. Make sure people remember you.**
5. Join professional bodies, business clubs, and anywhere else that'll help to get your name and face out there.
6. **Get in the habit of dressing well – and not just for interviews. You'd never know when you'd bump into somebody who can help.**
7. Do certain things for free, trusting that they will stand to you in the long run. If you want to be a journalist, build a portfolio based on unpaid contributions to your local newspaper or magazine. Train a local sports team if your chosen career is as a PE Teacher.
8. **The first time an employer might hear your voice is on your voicemail. So always have a clear, professional-sounding voicemail, without going over the top. Equally, always answer the phone clearly and in a professional manner – you'd never know when the call might come.**

6 ways you can get ahead of the posse...

While Still In college

1. Join LinkedIn.
2. **Did you hear us? Join LinkedIn.**
3. Did we mention – join LinkedIn.
4. **Think twice before putting stuff up on Facebook that could come back to haunt you. Our 2010 survey revealed that a worryingly high number of employers check out Facebook BEFORE employing people. They'll never admit that in public, but it's a fact. Facebook is for life. Be circumspect.**
5. Get relevant work experience. Don't always look for payment (but don't turn it down either, if it comes your way). First and foremost, think of the benefit it will be on your CV.
6. **Impress people with your enthusiasm – with an innocence-of-youth approach, you can get to key people in companies. A lot of employers have developed a cynicism about students. "Back in our day..." It's an evolutionary thing. Be the one student who gives them a chance to say "you know what, a young person like that would make you feel good about the country again." Be the one who impresses. Be the one they'll talk about in 20 years time: "I remember the first email she sent me – he said *Dear Ms AN Other, I think I can bring value to your company – and if you give me ten minutes of your time, I will show you how.*" Of course, it goes without saying that if you make a promise like that, you must arrive with something good in the tank.**

Macra na Feirme

5 *thoughts we'd like to plant in your mind about...*

Your Personal Brand

1. You may change jobs – but you are still the same person. What are you doing to ensure that your 'personal brand' (and, yes, we dislike the term too, but we can't find a better one) travels with you?
2. **We recommend a personal website in your name – www.ANOther.ie or .com. Here you can provide some detail on who you are, where you work, your interests, your achievements, etc. It's a place where people can get a sense of you. It's almost like an online CV. It does more than give info about you – it also transmits the message that you take your career seriously.**
3. Facebook posts about great nights out might be innocent at the time – but they can come back to haunt you. Be careful what you put up there. It's a public forum, even though it sometimes feels like a private conversation between friends.
4. **LinkedIn is an excellent forum for displaying your worth, and it is subtle and under-stated, rather than being 'in your face.'**
5. Bear in mind that you are a 'brand'. Always keep an eye on promoting your own name too. Successful people move from company to company, or project to project, but continue to transmit a sense of themselves to the public. Keep a little bit for yourself. It'll stand to you in the long run.



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10 things you should do straightaway on...

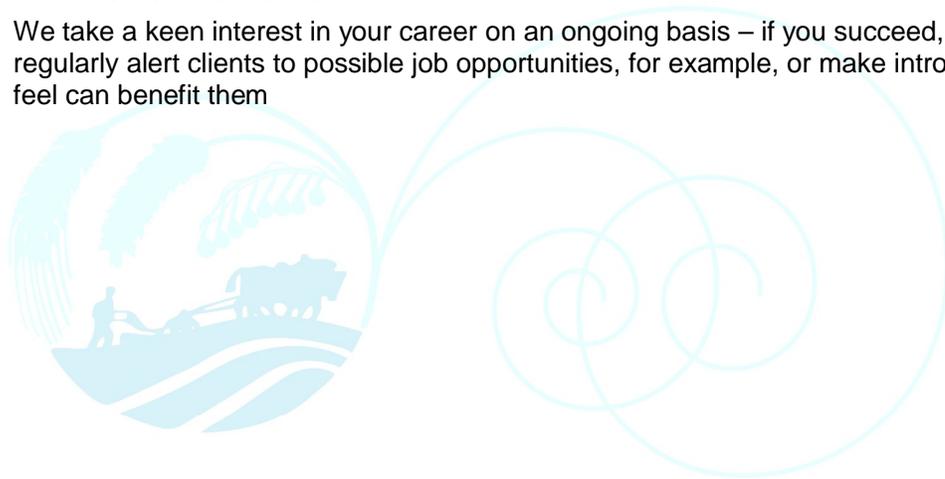
LinkedIn.com

1. Join. For free, to start. And free (or 'basic' as they call it) should do for the rest of your days on LinkedIn.com. See here to get some info on what LinkedIn.com is all about: <http://press.linkedin.com/faq>
2. **Build your profile. Tack in where you've worked and what you did. Make sure to use a photo.**
3. Add your Twitter account, if you have one. And try to post Tweets that enhance your career profile.
4. **Connect with people you know. In the early stages, this will take a bit of time as you sift through Connections of Connections – as is the case with Facebook. But once you achieve some critical mass, it will become easier until one day, hopefully a long way off just yet, you are back to slim pickings again. But, by then, you will have dozens or maybe even hundreds of useful Connections.**
5. Add us as Connections – Liam Horan & Fidelma Wallace.
6. **Get Connections to recommend you in whatever way they can - even someone for whom you worked on a summer job. Get in the habit of asking people to recommend you. No job too small.**
7. Join groups in your area of interest. For example, as I'm writing this here, I did a search for Civil Engineer groups – a total of 67 came up. Look through to see what one is of interest/relevance to you.
8. **Search for jobs. Again, it couldn't be easier – LinkedIn is remarkably user-friendly.**
9. Respond to questions that people ask, if you can (and if your answer is useful). This is another way of building your profile.
10. **Do a little bit every day or two. Build your profile bit by bit. Ditto with your network: build it bit by bit, and, more importantly, build your network before you need it.**

Macra na Feirme

The Sli Nua Careers Approach

1. We seek to draw out of you the best attributes you have – we don't try to impose a magic solution or a silver bullet upon you. The answers lie within you. Our job is to draw them out.
2. **When you've got your 'interview game-plan' in place, the language finds you. It is not about rehearsing answers: it is about orientating yourself properly in the build-up to the interview, and trusting that, thus orientated, you will produce the answers and insights that will help you get that job.**
3. We don't have a one-size-fits-all solution – everyone is different, everyone has their own strong points, and we just work with those.
4. **Our approach can be adapted by your for any job you go for in the future – we show you how to prepare properly for an interview, and that preparation will stand to you forever**
5. We take a keen interest in your career on an ongoing basis – if you succeed, we succeed. We regularly alert clients to possible job opportunities, for example, or make introductions that we feel can benefit them



Macra na Feirme



If you feel Sli Nua Careers can help you in any of the following areas, do not hesitate to contact us:

- Interview Training
- Mock Interviews
- CV Preparation
- Personal Branding
- Career Direction

We do One-on-one Sessions in Person, or by Telephone/Skype

If you take your career seriously, so will we

This book is updated on a regular basis. At any given time, you can get the most up-to-date version, free of charge, by emailing GetThatJob@SliNuaCareers.com. Feel free to pass that address onto your friends too.

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