

Strategic Career Planning & Management Industry Leader Survey Analysis

Background

In 2014, the Division of Professional Communications piloted its first Strategic Career Planning and Management course for graduate students in the Public Relations/Corporate Communications and Journalism programs. This interactive course provides students with strategies and tactics to ensure they are competitive in a challenging job market and successful throughout their careers. During the free, non-credit course, students learn a universal model for career development that is customizable to specific industries and areas of interest. This model includes the following elements:

- Personal Branding
- Researching
- Creating Resumes and Cover Letters
- Networking
- Interviewing
- Negotiating Salary and Compensation
- Succeeding on the Job

In effort to ensure that this course is on track with what business and nonprofits leaders in the industry expect of potential job candidates, the Georgetown University Division of Professional Communications conducted an industry survey of hiring managers in September 2014.

Summary

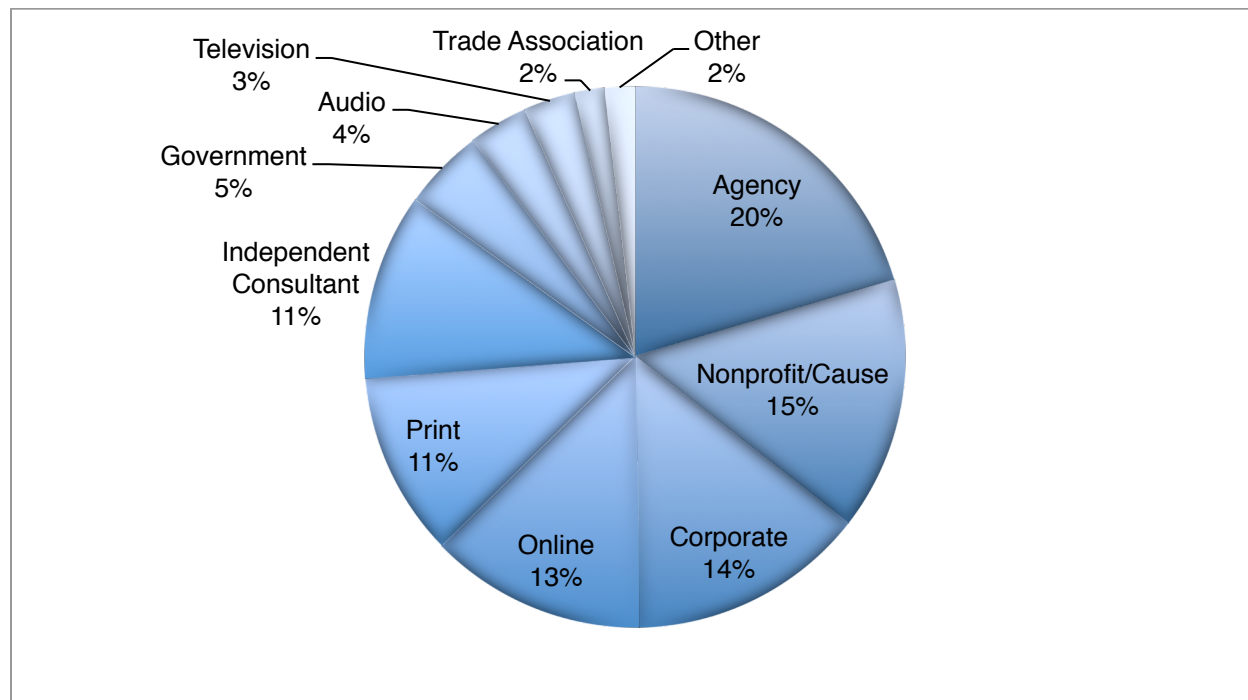
The results of the survey conclusively showed that the content of the career course reflects what employers in the fields of communications, journalism, and public relations seek when hiring employees. Overall, the survey indicates that

- While LinkedIn is the overall preferred location to post jobs, many are also posted on job boards specific to the industry.
- Employers will review the social media presence of a candidate when considering them for a position.
- In many cases, a portfolio may be the difference between a hiring manager calling for an interview or passing on an application. The expectation to customize the portfolio contents to the position is higher for journalism than for PR.
- About half of hiring managers administer a writing test, assignment, or challenge as part of the hiring process.
- Hiring managers want applicants to have done more research on the company and the job before coming in for an interview.
- Digital skills, writing, and creativity were identified as emerging skills needed in organizations.
- Strong writers are highly in demand in the communications field.



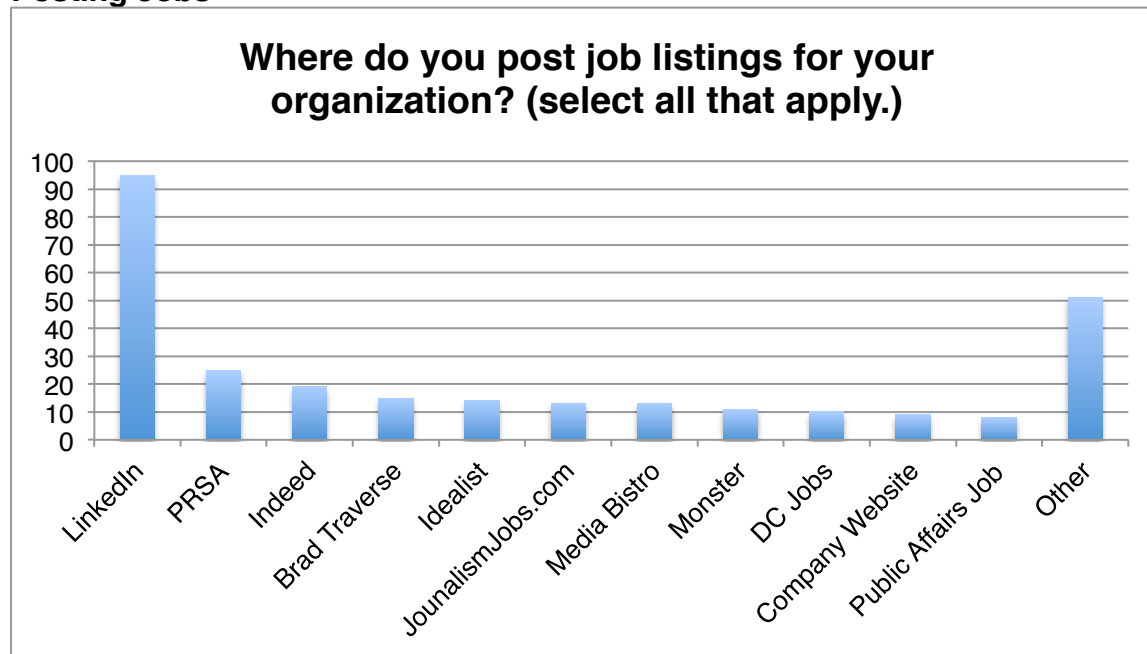
Demographics

When asked to classify their profession between journalism and PR, 73% of respondents selected public relations, 17% selected journalism and 10% indicated both (PR and journalism). The following chart outlines the respondents' industries:



Survey Results

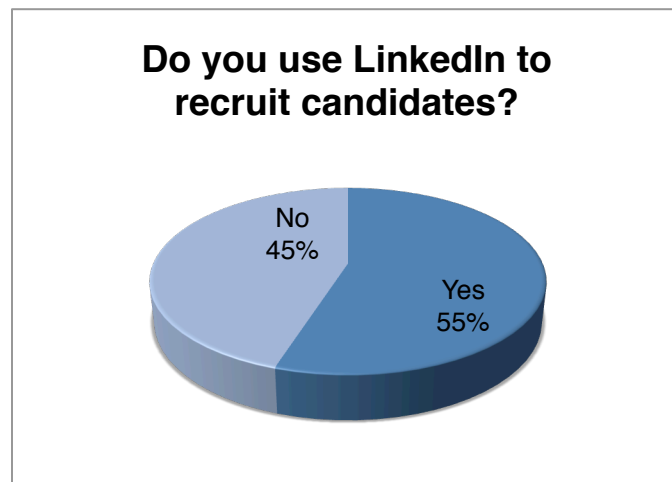
Posting Jobs



The chart above outlines where respondents and their organizations post job listings. The 'other' category is comprised of 33 unique responses that primarily reflect industry-specific locations. For example Jewishjobs.com, Tech Wire, WWPR, and PAC.org were included in this category. This category also included personal connections, Facebook and Twitter.

From this data, LinkedIn is the most popular site overall for job postings. However, the large number of 'other' responses reflects how many jobs are posted in the industry that the communications professional would be serving. There is no "catch-all" place to find communications jobs online, and job seekers may need to look in several places to find job listings that match their interests and skill set.

LinkedIn



More than half of respondents indicated that they had used LinkedIn to recruit candidates. From this data, candidates can conclude that a comprehensive, updated LinkedIn profile can only help them in the job search.

The survey also asked, "What filters or phrases do you use to search LinkedIn profiles?"

This question generated a large variety of responses with over 40 unique responses to this question.

While there are few key areas that received multiple mentions, it is clear that searches tend to be highly specific to the needs of the job employers are seeking to fill. Overall, searches tended to include specific skills.

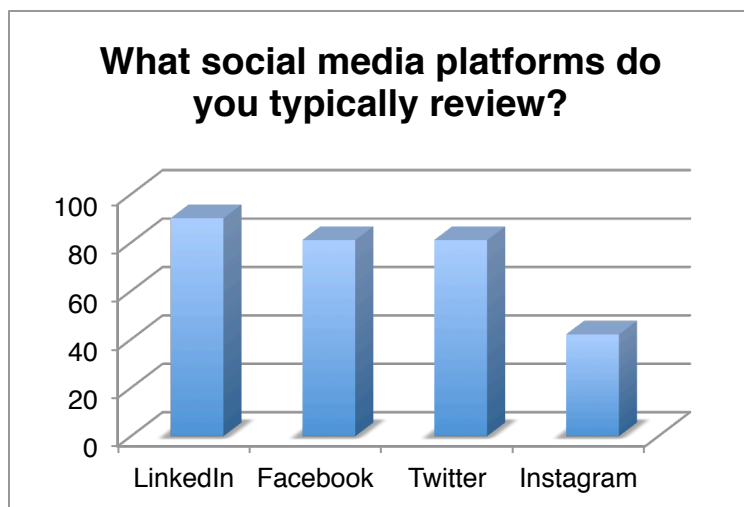
Some of the more common searches indicated by our survey respondents included:

- Public Relations
- Communications
- Writing/Writer
- Social Media
- Marketing
- Digital/Multimedia
- Strategic Communications

3. Social Media

Over 93% of the survey respondents review some aspect of a candidate's social media presence as part of the hiring process.





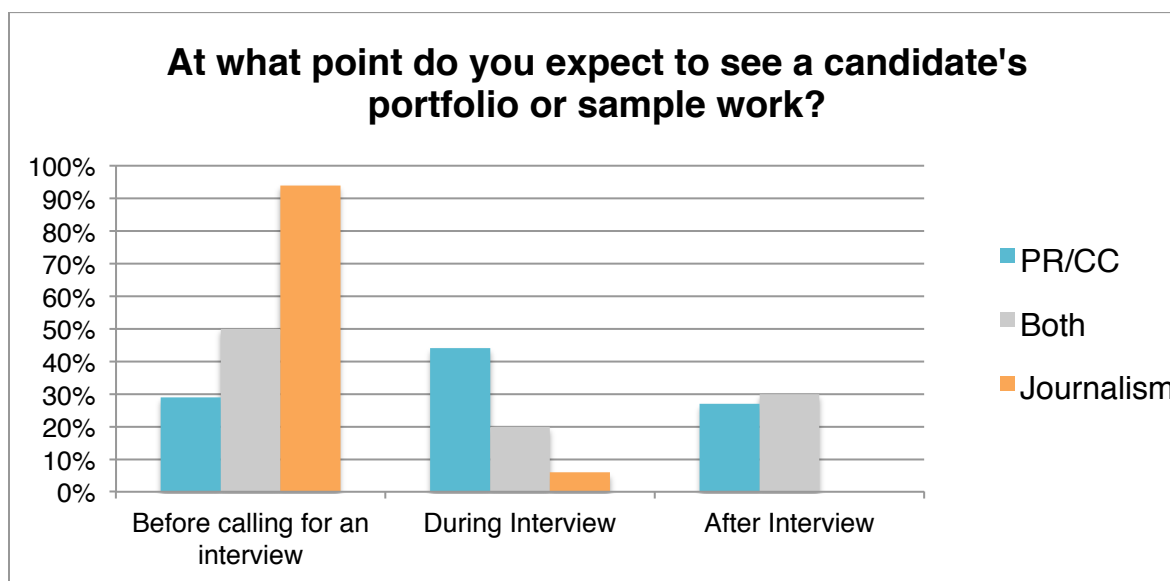
Over 80% of survey respondents check LinkedIn, Facebook and/or Twitter during the interview process. In addition, 42% also look at the Instagram account of potential employees. Survey respondents mentioned not only checking social media platforms, but also completing a full Google search of candidates that would include looking at items like Goggle images, blogs, YouTube, Tumbler, Vine and Vimeo.

From this data, job seekers can conclude that a well-maintained, professional, and appropriate online presence is integral to securing a position in communications.

Portfolio and Sample Work

Over 83% of respondent expect to see either a portfolio or sample work from candidates. Hiring managers were flexible regarding the format they wished to see the portfolio in; 74% preferred it online, while 60% wanted a hard copy, and 64% would take it via e-mail.

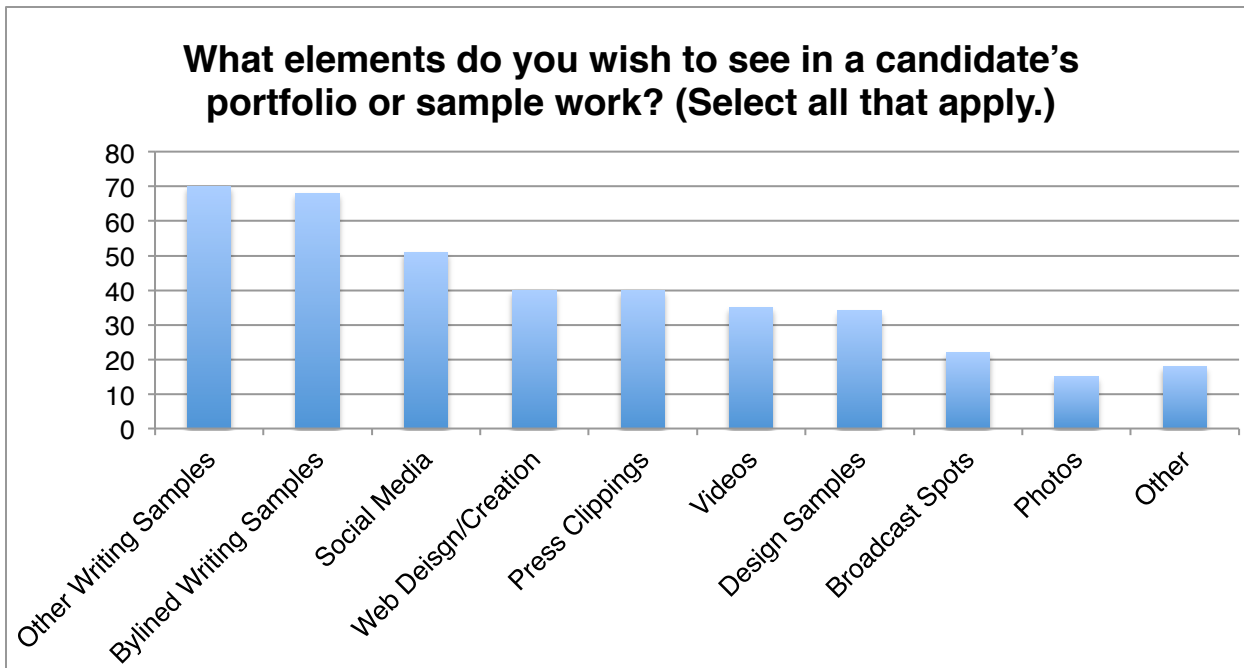
Because of the variance in requested formats, candidates should have their portfolio available online, in file format, and in hard copy, and inquire regarding which one to send according to the hiring manager's preference.



While some hiring managers will review a portfolio during or after an interview, it is likely to be a deciding factor in whether a candidate will get a call for an



interview, particularly in journalism, where 94% of respondents reported reviewing the portfolio before calling a candidate.



While the most popular items were 'other writing samples' and 'bylined writing samples,' respondents wanted to see a variety of items in a portfolio reflective of the scope of work the candidate is capable of doing.

The 'other' category contained items that would be specific to the position a candidate would be applying for or is the personal preference of the person hiring. Some people like to see draft work while others do not. In addition, some are ok reviewing collaborative work while others would prefer to only see work the applicant is 100% responsible for creating. If possible, candidates should inquire as to the hiring manager's preference before submitting a portfolio. If the preference is unknown, including pieces in draft and published format and indicating what was collaborative and what was done independently would be the best course of action for job candidates submitting a portfolio.

What elements would you NOT like to see in a portfolio?

1. College/school work
2. Items not relevant to position
3. Personal work/vacation-related items

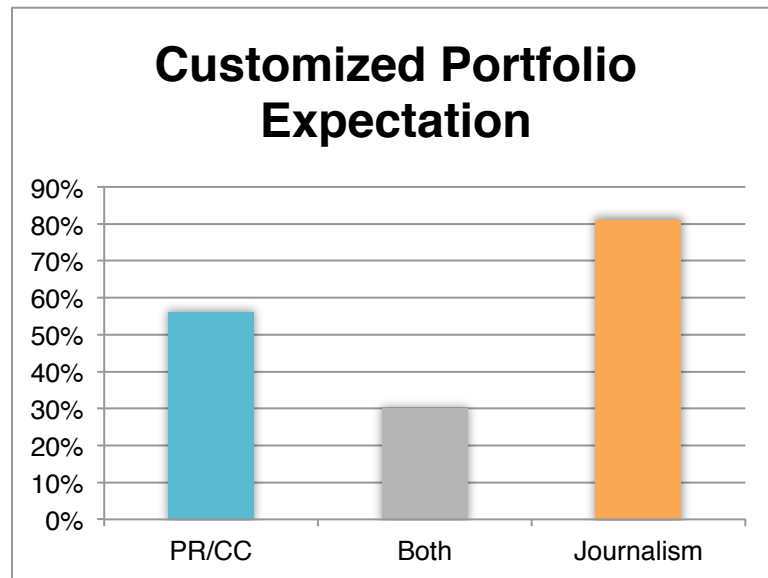
When asked what they would not want to see in a portfolio, respondents did not want to see schoolwork, non-professional work, or items that weren't relevant to the position.

Responses also included a variety of items that are specific preferences of the person or organization hiring. For

example, depending on the job, it may be ok to include satire or creative



writing and for some jobs, this would not be acceptable. Candidates need to consider the organization they are applying to and whether the tone and content of portfolio pieces are complementary to the organization they are applying to. *See section (b) of the appendices below for verbatim comments from survey respondents.*



The expectation for portfolio customization is highest for Journalism, but more than half of PR hiring managers expect it as well.

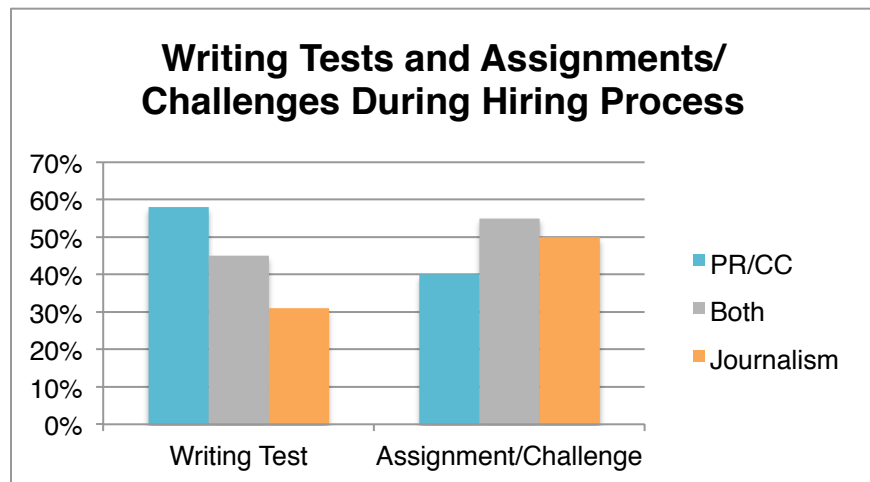
Job candidates can best position themselves to get the job they want by customizing their portfolio. A customized portfolio demonstrates knowledge of the organization, the ability to tailor content to an audience, and enthusiasm for the job.

Writing Tests/Challenge

About half of employers surveyed issue a writing test or challenge to candidates, and most assignments are timed/time-bound.

Writing challenges were more popular for PR, while assignments and challenges were more common for journalism or hybrid positions. For many, the specific

test/challenge depends on the level of the open position; some employers administer tests only to more junior candidates. Some have a simpler assignment for junior level (e.g., press release) and more challenging assignment for senior level (e.g., mini-plan or similar) candidates.



What employers are assessing through writing tests/challenges

- Candidates' performance under deadline pressure
- Better understanding of candidates' thought processes and problem-solving skills



Types of tests

- AP Style
- Spelling/grammar
- Editing
- Reading

Types of writing assignments:

- Press release
- Op-ed
- Media pitch
- Open letter
- E-blast
- Persuasive email
- Brochure content
- Social media posts
- Speech
- Campaign outline
- Strategic communications plan
- Social media strategy
- Media plan, digital advertising plan
- Creative brief
- 8-10 story ideas
- Next-day news assignment relevant to beat
- Storyboard for video

Sample strategic assignments

- Analyze a news article from a PR perspective
- Frame an issue or pitch and draft memo and/or media outreach
- Given real life case study, develop communications plan, research memo and two tactical assignments to respond to the issue
- Provided with a typical client situation, draft a short op-ed, letter-to-the-editor, Tweet, recruitment social media ad and employee engagement email.
- Provided with scenarios concerning the organization, write a news release and an internal announcements
- Provided with one-page summary of client issue, write a press release, summary email to client, or other document related to the client issue
- Describe their personal brand in terms of selling themselves in a similar manner that they would sell a client's brand

See section (a) of the appendices below for verbatim comments from respondents.

Thoughts from hiring managers

- **What candidates should do differently:** Primarily, hiring managers wish that applicant would do more research before applying to a job. This includes research on: the organization, issues and priorities of the organization or field, the particular position being applied for, and on the potential boss of the position.

See section (c) of the appendices below for verbatim survey comments.



- **Emerging Needs in Organizations:** There is a broad range of emerging skills, many of which are specific to the organizations industry. Consistent themes across industries include:
 - Excellent writing/editing
 - Digital, especially analysis
 - Social Media
 - Storytelling across multiple platforms
 - Creativity
 - Project management
 - Basic skills: pitching, presenting, research, industry understanding

See section (d) of the appendices below for verbatim comments from respondents.

- **Skills Needed:** Respondents indicated that the number one skill that is lacking in applicants is the ability to write and use correct grammar. Over 50% of respondents mentioned this lacking quality. In addition, applicants are lacking critical thinking and research skills, as well as professionalism and non-digital communications skills. Applicants/recent hires should make sure they take the time to fully master the basics or core skills of their job/field before attempting to move forward in their career.

Non-digital communications difficulties cited include 1-1, within office personnel, in person with clients and on the phone. Emails and 140 character tweets are not the same as real human conversations. *See section (e) of the appendices below for verbatim comments.*

Method

The electronic industry survey was sent via e-mail to 263 individuals who work within the communications field, mostly in the Washington, D.C. metro area. The survey consisted of 26 questions, 14 multiple-choice and 12 open-ended. Responses were submitted from September 3–15, 2014. The response rate was 46.4% (122 responses). 32% of those respondents (39 individuals) are current or past adjunct faculty members within the journalism or public relations masters programs at Georgetown University. Because of the small sample size, the data analysis is not comprehensive and should be considered directional in nature.



Appendices

The following appendices break out the open-ended comments into PR, Journalism, and 'Both' respondents. The following comments are verbatim and are only edited for consistency and clarity.

I. Public Relations & Corporate Communications

a. Writing Test/Challenge:

- It depends on the position. It might be a question around developing a strategy and assessing the ability to think broadly about stakeholders.
- [We only issue writing tests] with more junior candidates.
- AP style test, drafting a media pitch.
- We give two different tests based on real assignments: Rewrite of an open letter and development of content for a brochure.
- They receive a one-page summary of the client situation and the assignment such as writing a press release, summary email to the client, or other document related to the client issue.
- Depends on exact position. May be a blog post, a social strategy, or social posts.
- AP style test, editing exercise, news release writing exercise, tied to social media (e.g., Twitter and Facebook posts to complement the news release)
- We present scenarios concerning our business and ask that they write a news release and an internal announcement from that scenario.
- Organization-specific: write the story of your own personal Jewish or religious journey for hillel.org.
- Writing assignments but mostly for junior candidates.
- We used to do this and I believe it was create a press release for a certain topic but not certain that happens anymore or why it stopped. We may require something of our web/design applicants.
- Write a blog post; write a communications plan; or write a press release.
- Candidates must pass (with 90% grade or higher) a spelling, grammar test. If they pass that then we administer a timed writing assignment that presents a typical client situation and asks the candidate to complete drafting a short opinion editorial, letter-to-the-editor, Tweet, recruitment social media ad, and an employee engagement email.
- Really depends. Not always.
- Write a new hire press announcing your hire with our company. 2) Draft a 700 to 800 word op-ed on a topic that we assign. Both assignments are timed.
- Short analysis of a news article from a public relations perspective.
- If media relations, candidate writes a press release.
- Either a news release or op-ed writing test, or an outline of a strategic communications plan.



- Given a writing assignment with an imaginary context. Given two goals: produce the assignment in one hour; also they need to explain how they would navigate the draft of the assignment down the internal organization track to sign off.
- Sometimes. I usually like to see how their brain works and how well they problem-solve. I will often say, 'We have an awareness issue around XXX -- please tell me how you would address this issue.' Hint: the answer to this question is ALWAYS 'ask questions.' Of course a candidate just coming in has no idea how to solve this problem, but I'd like to see that they know enough to know what they don't know...and realize they need to start out by sitting down and talking with stakeholders to learn more about the problem. If they jump directly to a tactic e.g., 'I'd make a video!' it tells me they are not focused on the big picture.
- Write a press release
- Provide a plan for a project
- Usually a critical thinking assignment that requires the applicant to frame and issue or 'pitch' and draft memo and/or media outreach.
- I ask them to develop a public relations and social media plan for the launch of a new product for a client.
- Usually I provide them incomplete information (first names without last names...organization without summary, etc.) to see how well they can go out and find the right information to fill in the context of a press release/media advisory. It also answers the question: how scrappy and independent are they? Do they need their hand held or can they find the right information?
- Ask to develop a strategic communications plan.
- Generally a press release or persuasive e-mail.
- Write a blog post; develop a campaign outline...
- Depending on the position, we typically make a modest assignment to a candidate to see how he/she performs under deadline pressure.
- Writing tests depend on the level - simpler for junior level (e.g., a press release) and more challenging for senior level (e.g., mini-plan or similar).
- Digital Advertising plan, coding test, when applicable.
- Depending on the level of the position, we require candidates to do either a writing or a writing and strategic exercise to gain a better understanding of their thought process.
- Candidates are given a real-life situational case study and asked to develop a communications plan, research memo and two tactical assignments to respond to the issue.
- Ask them to describe a their personal brand in terms of selling themselves to me in a similar manner that they would sell a client's brand.
- Typically I have them write a press release or an OpEd.
- We ask them to write a blog or press release on a specific topic. We might



- ask them, if it's a more senior position, to lay out an approach to a problem or challenge.
- Simple release
 - The first test is a simple writing challenge. The second requires critical thinking and strategic insights.
 - It depends on the position, but have asked candidates to write a press release, a script or a letter.
 - A typical assignment: we provide background about a campaign and asked them to craft a press release (or modified outline) and a social media strategy.
 - The answer is 'sometimes.' If a position is a junior or entry position, inputs as to talent and skill are necessary. We have issued writing assignments and assignments that demonstrate strategic thinking and marketing acumen.
 - Draft and design e-blast.
 - Drafting a press release after reading a something we have given the candidate.
 - Situational and resolving issues, writing.
 - I provide a prompt for a client case and ask candidates to propose a social media promotion they would execute to help that client.
 - For entry jobs, we do a writing exercise of summarizing a long program release into a 250-word highlight and picking an appropriate photo.

b. Do Not Include in Portfolio:

- Examples of other people's work that they have known and liked.
- Personal vacation photos.
- Something that you know was heavily edited or something that doesn't credit them in the byline or contact section.
- Personal artistic works intended to demonstrate candidate's creativity.
- I no longer ask for press clippings.
- More than one example of each thing.
- Management materials, like budget sheets, etc.
- Out of date material (older than a year).
- Anything vulgar or too personal.
- Long papers.
- Info that isn't relevant to the job.
- Writing samples that are full of mistakes.
- Photography and/or illustration not really expected, even for designers.
- Creative writing, college papers/other course work.
- I don't want to see anything that the candidate did *not* have a substantial role in accomplishing. Junior candidates *must* learn that hiring managers do *not* expect them to have that much experience. Candidates must be honest and try not to present a profile that exceeds their actual



- responsibilities.
- Poor quality work.
- Material that is not relevant to the scope of the position.
- Personal blog content. Personal social media content. Personal political, religious, or opinion material - it is influential and often irrelevant to whether a candidate is suitable for a position.
- Research paper for a college class.
- 'Cute' is not really appreciated. Young candidates, in particular, sometimes reveal their immaturity by including inappropriate work examples (typically spec work, or volunteer work from college... 'I created this poster for our fraternity bowl-a-thon'). I work in Government Affairs, and we are very buttoned-up. When submitting work examples, know your audience.
- I'm all for being comprehensive and if they are young then I think it's ok to put things in the portfolio that might be removed in a few years (e.g., college clippings, sorority/fraternity stuff, etc.).
- College essays.
- A lot of general stuff.
- Clips.
- Academic writing assignments/scholarly writing samples.

c. What do you wish candidates would do differently when applying?

- Always do your homework on the company and the people you're interviewing with.
- Research the organization (including reaching out to and interviewing former employees who can be found on LinkedIn), tailor the application to that organization's environments and needs...but if you feel functionally qualified but not familiar with the industry, say so rather than making things up...it'll be refreshing honesty!
- Research the company they are talking to.
- Be thorough and complete. *Triple-check* spelling. You're applying for a *communications* job!
- Do their homework.
- Take time to write a good cover letter, noting relevant experience and interest in job.
- Research our company more extensively to show a better understanding of the job we're hiring for and what their role would be.
- Shorten cover letters. Lead with digital experience. Show measurable results achieved.
- Really think through their cover letters and resume to customize to the job they are applying for...and not to follow-up too aggressively. If a company is interested, they will contact a candidate. In addition, there is a fine balance between confidence and arrogance that candidates need to be



- cautious not to overstep.
- Understand better what they are applying for, the difference between PR and marketing, the difference between different types of marketing, starting at the bottom, learning a trade.
 - Spell check. Respond in a timely manner. Tighten up a resume for a quick scan. Investigate my company or area of expertise and add value in an interview.
 - Fully read the description and actually connect their experience with the job responsibilities.
 - Send thank you notes.
 - More preparation research of our team. Have some good questions.
 - Dress in a business and office appropriate way. Send a thank you note.
 - Don't be afraid to discuss gaps in employment.
 - Share quantitative results —how they broke into a new audience, boosted engagement, got hits. In general, share a snapshot of a situation and what they did to improve it.
 - Research the organization and its issues.
 - It varies too much from applicant to applicant. But mainly, don't be overly confident. We're looking for hard workers willing to learn, not someone who thinks they know it all (but they really don't).
 - Learn about the culture of the org they are applying to. Customize their career objective to the organization.
 - Tailor resume and cover letter to our company, our work, and the position applied for.
 - Know as much as possible about the organization/company and about the job for which they're interviewing.
 - Research as reflected in a tailored cover letter describing why they're uniquely qualified for the position.
 - Show the willingness to do whatever it takes to get the job. Enthusiasm for work itself matters.
 - Spend more time reviewing website/agency and tailor application to our needs.
 - Send tailored cover letters highlighting information not in their resumes. Show me you understand what I'm looking for, don't just rehash your previous jobs. Proof their materials—come on, you are applying for a communications job, show me you can edit.
 - Write formal thank you notes.
 - Do their homework - they need to know about our company and who they are meeting with.
 - Read the job description and respond accordingly
 - Follow up after informational interviews - with a thank you note and a second note when they land a new job.
 - Do a little research before you interview; know a little about our clients,



- work, culture, awards, people, etc.
- Come having researched the organizations and having relevant questions.
 - Focus their resumes on the most important experience.
 - Proofread.
 - Make inquiry specific to organization; prove assertions.
 - Remember—it's really not all about you. Yes, you are very special, but that shouldn't be the focus of the interview. Remember, they are hiring because they have a problem/need, and are looking for a solution. They are wondering if *you* are the solution! So, throughout the interview process, *show them how you can help solve their problems!* Put yourselves in the hiring manager's shoes and try to imagine what they need. Ask questions about the challenges they are facing. Then, tell them why you are qualified to help solve those challenges.
 - It's a basic: please *please please* proofread for spelling and grammatical errors. I immediately discard any applicant who sends in/applies with errors.
 - Come prepared! Know to speak to the skills they have that would directly qualify them for the position.
 - Do their homework about the organization they are applying.
 - Demonstrate that they have researched the company and person interviewing them in advance.
 - Do their research on the industry/clients relevant to the role.
 - Write more interesting cover letters, something that is beyond the boilerplate and memorable; convey more strongly that they have a handle on what our organization is about, the association world, and why they're best suited to add value and what that is.
 - Read the job description and apply with specific, relevant experience outlined. Do not apply if you do not have the relevant experience.
 - I love it when a candidate links their experience and curiosity with work we have done.
 - Specify their resume, cover letter and collaterals to the job. Research potential boss (me) and the organization. Come in with thoughtful questions and an idea or two.
 - Talk about themselves less and the job more.
 - Network —if they are applying for a job, figure out who they know at the firm so that we can get feedback from different sources about the person's talents/skills/experience.
 - Pay more attention to detail, do their homework to research the organization and/or more about the position.
 - Have something to say about the organization based on their advance research...rather than just the job opening.
 - Be more careful with typos in resumes and communication. Know how to be more concise in their resumes.



- In my role, I am mainly looking for other communications/digital/graphic design consultants to partner with me on a project for a client.
- Have specific examples of communications issues/challenges they've managed and offer to discuss them if I forget to ask the question.
- Tell me about your accomplishments.
- Consistently do their research on our firm and us so that they know at least a bit about us before walking in the door.
- Make sure the job is within their skill set.
- More humility.
- Highlight their applicable experience up front, rather than focus on past accomplishments that, while impressive, don't apply to the job at hand.

d. What skills are emerging as needs for your organization?

- We are becoming an organization of specialists, versus the traditional general PR model. So increasingly, candidates with specialized skills matching our community needs are more highly valued than generalists who are good at many things.
- Multimedia, writing, photography, video, web.
- Social media managers, media relations, solid writing and editing, research, presentation skills, plan/proposal writing, design.
- Social media director.
- Social media important but not at expense of the basics: really good analysis, writing, judgment, pitching.
- Social media, video, but also strong writing/editing still, and understanding of media, which means being a consistent consumer/reader/viewer of media.
- Writing for digital user experience!
- Analytical and creative thinking.
- Social media, direct marketing, communications.
- Social media, not necessarily doing it, but understanding how various forms of communications must be able to live, be accessed or shared via social media.
- Target audience insights, social media expertise, video campaign development.
- We need people who understand our issues and mission (and care about them), as well as have the experience with today's communications tactics.
- Multi-platform communications management: traditional and digital
- Digital knowledge.
- Writing, creative strategy, traditional and social media.
- Social media, the ability to do other tasks (photography, editing, etc.).
- Multi-talented: social media managers who can also do graphic design, for instance.



- Maximizing social media presence. Good story development and media relations skills.
- Humility. Too many young applicants suffer severely from the Above Average Effect.
- Social media, analysis, writing, project management.
- Still the number one skill is the ability to write and to translate writing to all forms of media.
- Deep story telling ability and experience selling stories on all channels, e.g., social, print, video.
- Technical writing (website copy etc.) people who are proficient in Web/digital strategy, terminology, skills etc. but can also serve as account staff (i.e., client skills).
- Social media branding is innovative for non-profit organizations.
- Social media.
- Strong writing, new business development acumen.
- Social media marketing.
- Qualitative and quantitative research skills, data handling and analysis skills.
- More and more need for strong writers.
- Ability to write and present well. A hunger/desire to do well.
- Digital strategy, design, web development.
- Research, visualization, writing.
- Good multi-dimensional folks. Fewer specialists; we want people who can pinch-hit for nearly any team.
- Project manager, media relations, strong writing, and marketing background.
- Social media publicity and buying online ads are emerging; constant are project management and lateral thinking.
- Video is becoming an increasingly important medium.
- Social media as a part of every single public relations plan.
- Social media know how and strong writing.
- Digital.
- Digital and social media for all positions. In the future there will not be a 'digital guy/gal' in the room for pitches, the expectation is that we all will have digital/social proficiency.
- Social media analytical skills are becoming increasingly more valuable to our organization along with content development.
- People who are strong writers, with use of proper grammar.
- Versatile players. While specific skills are critical for certain jobs, the most valuable practitioners are the ones who can fill many roles.
- Social media skills and contacts.
- Social media communications.
 - Data analytics.



- Deep knowledge of technology/emerging trends. General knowledge outside their expertise.
- Less traditional and more digital. Wide base of skills from creative oversight, content strategy, project management and measurement/analytics.
- Social media and data analytics.
- Digital storytelling, video, production.
- Strong writing is critical obviously but also strong use of social media and technology skills.
- Most of my positions are with pharmacies and require a PharmD and licensure.
- Excellent writing skills. Digital media savvy. Professionalism. Ability to make deadlines. Ability to connect with clients and work as a team with other consultants.
- Multimedia production
- Stakeholder relationships, intergenerational communications, Hispanic audience communications.
- Design thinking/creative skills, integration between traditional project management, online/digital and creative and ability to understand and direct all of these in the service of a single communications strategy.
- I try to hire the smartest person I can.
- Writing, creative, digital.
- Social media.
- Critical thinking, good writers, project management skills.
- Website design and creative work are in high demand, as well as coding and effective project management.

e. What skills are lacking in applicants today?

- We still don't see the kind of writing quality that we'd like from candidates coming out of school. Nothing makes a good impression like a well-written cover note and resume.
- Writing proficiency -- something beyond 140 character tweets!
- Focus and checking details so they don't look sloppy.
- Surprised how poor applicants job letters are, people who don't follow directions in terms of what is asked for in the application process, aren't prepared for the interview, and if interested don't follow up. I don't want to hire someone who is average. Average people fall into the categories above. Top performers do things right, are creative and are smart--all of which comes across in the interview.
- It's less about skills that are missing and more an understanding that employers are looking for committed people who understand how to work and think.
- Project management. Understanding customer needs, as in how to work



- with clients whether internal or external.
- Big picture thinking and goal setting.
 - We receive a lot of resumes from folks who just aren't qualified for positions. If you see a job you are interested in but aren't at that level, send a letter of interest instead of applying for the position.
 - Writing, writing, writing. Pitching.
 - Strong writing skills (drives me nuts). Evidence of ambition or passion about a particular area of interest
 - It's often more about common sense, attitude in the workplace, and the desire to take an assignment to the next level, rather than doing exactly what is asked and nothing more...then expecting praise for completing it!
 - Face to face social skills. Grammar skills.
 - Sometimes too much reliance on social media, losing the understanding that traditional is very important, and social is simply a way to distribute it. You can't only communicate in 140 characters.
 - Researching our organization so they can share relevant examples and ask the right questions at interviews.
 - Ability to clearly articulate what they're particular expertise and interest
 - A willingness to take their time to learn by doing very basic things to start.
 - Writing. Grammar. Ability to work hard every day. Ability to anticipate.
 - Organization, lucid thought, detail orientation.
 - Good writing skills... it's still where everything starts in the world of communications.
 - Persuasive writing.
 - Knowledge of grammar and punctuation.
 - Great writing.
 - Writing. Interpersonal skills-- candidates seem to have a hard time articulating verbally their skills and nobody wants to cold-call a reporter anymore. Talking to people is still the best way to build a relationship. Willingness to research a space and dive deep into a topic to understand what a client may need.
 - Self awareness and attention to detail, sometimes lack of maturity.
 - Social media marketing.
 - Quantitative research skills.
 - Writing skills.
 - Ability to write and present well.
 - It's difficult to find well-rounded social media experts.
 - Research, visualization, writing.
 - Basic PR: media relations, etc.
 - Public relations (agency) background.
 - Writing skills.
 - People skills: ability to build consensus, communicate well with coworkers, grace under pressure...



- Comprehensive writing skills still lacking in many recent college grads.
- No one can write!
- Work ethic. They want the world but are not will to put the hours in.
- Digital/social media. Writing skills.
- Solid writing skills.
- Writing.
- Writing.
- Writing; people skills; strategic and organizational skills; self awareness
- Understanding of social media communications, media training
- Great writing, editing. A fluent understanding between strategy and tactics. Believe it or not this is the single greatest flaw in new (and current) employees.
- Writing.
- Writing skills, critical thinking.
- Technology skills.
- Sometimes they are more comfortable with online and electronic communication that they cannot hold a simple conversation on the phone.
- Often writing.
- Writing (really good, not just proficient).
- Forward thinking, entrepreneurial.
- Diplomacy and ability to navigate internal politics to get buy in, sidestep inertia, and deliver results.
- Storytelling.
- Strong media relations, good writing.
- Social media. Strategic thinking
- Critical thinking, project management experience.
- Basic writing skills are often lacking. Many applicants can pass the sniff test by typing on a computer, but when it comes down to editing or reading things for comprehension there is a void.



II. Both: Journalism and PR/CC

a. Writing Test/Challenge:

- We administer a customer assessment, Web application testing and skill assessment for competency.
- Draft a press release based on provided information.
- It's a simple writing/editing assignment.
- It is one or the other depending on the job. Usually the writing test is one involving SEO and or the assignment would be similar to a creative brief document.
- We pay for work relevant to the job in line with an actual project.
- They are to write a storyboard for a video.

b. Do Not Include in Portfolio:

- Items that are not relevant to position.
- School or academic papers.
- Irrelevant work.
- Too much content in general, like to see only the best work.
- Long position papers. Or Power Points that need explanation.

c. What do you wish candidates would do differently when applying for a job?

- Complete all required files required for the application.
- Make resumes more concise, familiarize yourself with organization and relevant issues/priorities prior to interview
- I would like to see them dress more professionally, look me in the eye and offer a firm handshake. Sounds old fashioned, but it demonstrates professionalism, focus and serious interest in the position.
- It's always a good idea to research the company before applying.
- Always ask questions; research heavily the org you're interviewing with - not just look at the website but other sources to get more insight.
- Indicate their specific interest and talents as it relates to not just the role, but mission of the organization, industry and applicable approaches they would take to succeed in your organization.
- Customize their resume/ cover letter to a job, often we receive more generic materials.
- Dress more professionally.

d. What skills are emerging as needs for your organization?

- Social media analytic knowledge
- Rapid response, social media, third party outreach/partnerships
- Website development, writing, presentation skills



- Communicating effectively using social media and online metrics is very important.
- SEO, design, development, digital strategy
- Even as media or communications professionals, an ease with technology and various applications are critical to being hired at my org.
- Reorganization, so mainly prioritization.
- Photo, video, Instavideo
- Coding.

e. What skills are lacking in applicants today?

- Writing skills, media relations judgment.
- Proper spelling and grammar.
- Good grammar.
- A polished portfolio, polished online profiles, basic understanding of professionalism in the workplace.
- Showing how their own results have a clear and direct impact on the organizations they've worked for previously.
- Real vs. perceived skills and knowledge vs. demonstrated experience reflecting results.
- High quality video production.
- Resourcefulness.



III. Journalism

a. Writing Test/Challenge

- Next day news assignment relevant to the beat being applied for.
- For a recent photo editor position we gave candidates a photo editing assignment to complete in 45 minutes.
- We often ask for a list of 8-10 story ideas and sometimes a sample blog post.
- Reading and editing test.
- Depending on the position, we will have applicants write sample social media posts or have them describe what they would do in a breaking news/sensitive news situation. Also, we administer design tests by having applicant design sample ads.
- Generate ideas.
- Only if I think they should do one--then they need to write a brief news story and/or edit an interview.
- The assignment or challenge is hidden. I have a set of expectations that they will come to the interview telling me how they can make my organization better, not what my organization can do for their career.

b. Do Not Include in a Portfolio:

- LONG lists of stories. Chose the three best.
- Onion-type satire/articles.
- Unrelated skills, internships if the candidate is mid career, unrelated jobs in college if the candidate is entry level.
- I prefer to see published work, even if it's on a personal blog. I do not want to see class papers that were not strong enough to be published online.
- General letters of recommendation.
- Personal projects, unless something that is well-done and could be published.
- Unpublished school assignments, with some exceptions like a Capstone project.
- Class work that was only ever seen by a professor.
- Artwork.
- I'm in the minority, certainly, but I prefer working Web stuff and code samples to printouts or screenshots.
- Grade point average, courses taken, non-related jobs.

c. What do you wish applicants would do differently when applying to a job?

- Pick up the phone and call or email. Don't just submit a resume to the general mailbox.



- Details are important. Make absolutely sure you have spelled my name properly and have my correct title. If you haven't bothered to check the details, you're not going to get the job.
- Published work is important but often can be edited so much that it no longer reflects the abilities and talents of the applicant. I go out of my way to see raw copy: unedited work of any kind (including personal blogs, tweets, Facebook posts, etc.) that allows me to evaluate an applicant's writing style.
- Be more professional. Really study the place to which you're applying.
- Spell-check and grammar check their cover letters. Also, make sure they are tailoring cover letters for the job they are applying. We do look at those.
- Better research and preparation that shows they understand the DNA of our publication.
- Do their homework—research the site in questions and spend time reading it deeply. Avoid asking for leg-up informational interviews instead of doing the research themselves.
- Handwritten thank you notes after interviews. More research on me and where I work before interviews. Better story ideas of things they would write for me if they came to work here.
- Apply for jobs for which they are actually qualified. Read and study the company before applying. Do not apply out of desperation. Have someone read their stuff for errors before sending it.
- Be familiar with our company, it's broadcasts and its major correspondents *and* the person they are meeting. Also a little humility would be helpful!
- Always send a strong, online portfolio when applying.
- Show off working code. Show off existing projects that demonstrate some passion or excitement in an area, like a beat.

d. What skills are emerging as needs for your organization?

- Crowd sourcing, data collection and analysis, event management, project management, research, administrative support.
- Speed, accuracy, clear and concise writing, and solid reporting skills are the most important requirements. We can teach you everything else.
- Awareness of digital trends, ability to use data visualization/graphics/databases to tell stories
- Organizations skills and also a drive to work on projects beyond the scope of work given to them.
- Social media, web development, multimedia
- Writing quickly and without error is at a premium. Copy editors are a vanishing breed.
- Critical thinking remains vital. I see less of it. The ability to understand how



- ideas become stories. It's vital that schools have students do the work needed while in school so students can land jobs.
- Social media skills.
 - The ability to balance reporting, video shooting, video editing, audio gathering and production skills.
 - Writing software, Linux/Unix understanding, and awareness of how the Internet works, and hosting an application on the web under strain of traffic.

e. What skills are lacking in job applicants?

- Strong writing
- Diligence, follow through, problem solving. Independent and critical thinking. Ability to improvise, master core skills, but build on them
- Reporting. If they can't Google it, they don't know how to find it. Interviewing.
- Finding the full package can be tough when we want applicants who can write with their own voice when needed (on our blogs) but also avoid inserting their voice into news stories. Today's media world requires a journalist to operate across multiple platforms and styles seamlessly.
- Sense of long-term goals. Candidates sometimes appear to want to achieve and progress too quickly.
- Web development, multimedia, and ability to be multi-faceted.
- Good writing. Too much sloppy and/or poor writing.
- Poor writing skills.
- Portfolios with a variety of different types of stories.

