

Day 4

**Thursday Article**

# *View from the Other Side: Inside the Mind of Your Corporate Recruiter*

by Holly Paul, US Recruiting Leader

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## **Personal Brand Week 2.0**

### **Thursday**

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I remember how I felt when I went through the campus recruiting process during my college days. I was nervous, excited and, above all, eager to know what was going through the mind of that recruiter who was shaking my hand and asking me to tell her a little about myself.

Now that I work on the other side of the equation as US Recruiting Leader at PwC, the largest employer of recent college graduates, I find that today's students are wondering the same thing: What is my recruiter thinking?

To save you from some of the apprehension I felt, I asked a few of PwC's campus recruiters to give me the scoop and reveal their secrets: What really impresses them? What secretly irritates them? And, most importantly, what does it take to get a job offer from them?

What I learned above all is the importance of developing a personal brand that differentiates you from your peers in today's ultra-competitive environment. As one recruiter put it, "I have 100 students with good GPAs coming up to my table. What makes you stand out?"

***If you are not yet sure how to answer that question, here are some tips***

#### ***Little things mean a lot***

While "personal brand" is a big concept, your brand is actually comprised of many small components, all of which add up to the overall professional impression you project. Recruiters told me that they notice every detail of your image and advise against wearing too much perfume or cologne, noisy jewelry, wrinkled clothing or anything else that "will distract from the qualities that are in your head." Keep your eyes on the prize.

Another recruiter pet peeve is lack of eye contact at recruiting events. "I frequently have students who are looking around when I'm talking. I get the impression they are looking for someone else to talk to," said one colleague I interviewed. "Focus on the person you are talking to and you'll make a good impression." Passion is contagious.

What else is a recruiter looking for in a face-to-face interaction? "I love when I meet when someone who is passionate about something," said one recruiter. "You can be passionate about fishing, horses, anything! Passion is interesting and memorable."

#### ***Leaders rule***

When it comes to standing out on paper, recruiters are unanimous in their excitement about students with leadership positions on their resumes. They look for titles such as sports captain, student government officeholder and club president. "This shows that you're proactive and that you have the skills to fit into a leadership role when you're on the job," a recruiter explained. "Not everybody can be a leader all the time, but we want somebody who can step up when required."

***Online recommendations matter***

In addition to your in-person and on-paper personas, recruiters today are considering your online image. In particular, they are impressed when a student's personal brand includes a professional LinkedIn profile. And one area of these profiles stands out more than others. "When I look at a student's LinkedIn profile, I'm impressed when they have recommendations from a professor, internship manager or other professional. It shows that they do such good work that someone else was willing to make the effort to vouch for them."

***Listening counts***

Finally, according to recruiters, too many students stand out in a negative way -- by not following directions. "All of the application and recruiting instructions are on our website and distributed at events, but half of students miss stuff and I have to follow up with them," lamented a recruiter. "The people who really stand out are the students I never have to chase down for information. They RSVP for events, they are on time for dinners, they send thank you notes afterwards. Following instructions consistently is another way to really impress me."

It seems that recruiting today isn't all that different from when I graduated from college. Companies want professionals with a strong work ethic, good manners and common sense. When your personal brand is built on these core attributes, you'll have the best chance to stand out from the crowd and land the job of your dreams.