



# OKAY, I'M DONE WITH STUDY - IT'S TIME TO GET A JOB



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You're putting the finishing touches to your last assignments, cramming for your final exams; and now the moments you've been waiting for are almost 'round the corner – no more study, graduation, and getting a job. Here are some tips to help you along the way.

## No More Study?

Well...maybe not. Think about it like this. You're probably going to be working for at least another forty years. And, if you consider that heavyweight marketing guru Professor Philip Kotler is now in his eighties and still going strong - globetrotting, writing, speaking, and

consulting; then you may be working for a couple more decades beyond that forty years.

If we bring into the marketing mix the fact that there's 24/7 global competition at a level never experienced previously; and change, knowledge, and technological advancements are rapidly expanding

elements within this – then face a reality where we are all going to have to study more frequently and for longer. Plus, there are already a growing number of people with even more qualifications than ever before; all of whom are mindful of the fact that no job is for life.

Each year there are more specialist

marketing courses and qualifications, which reflect the growing number of marketing tools and techniques like branded Vine adverts, native and realtime advertising, big data, and multi-screen. Marketing has become yet another profession like law, accountancy and engineering where specific qualifications are expected. I think that this is only going to increase, and we will see more MAs, MScs, MBAs, PhDs, and DBAs not just in academia, but also in industry with specialisms. Business and Management programmes will be linked to other social and life sciences subjects like pharmacology, neuroscience, food technology, architecture and town planning, anthropology, behavioural psychology, political science, journalism, and religion amongst others. It's a way not just to stand out, but also to raise standards. Also, learning marketing won't just be about marketing products and services; it will extend to marketing nations, ideas, policies, and you.

So a key question will be, how soon do you make the plunge to sign up for another qualification? Paying bills and family life will always get in the way, and there's no right time. But the sooner you do, then the longer you have to benefit from the intellectual and social capital that they have to offer. Plus, whilst you're still in the groove of study and accustomed to living the life of a poor student, then it may make more sense to bite the bullet earlier. Also, it may help to consider that some universities are offering incentives



like discounts and scholarships to students who want to stay on, as a loyalty deal and two-way risk reduction strategy - because they and you know that you have what it takes to succeed in study.

#### **Making the Most of Graduating**

Attend your graduation ceremony – you earned it and you deserve it! Enjoy the moment. But don't just party hard – use it as a time to network and tie up all that

unfinished business. Take photos and Selfies with people – but make sure you annotate, file and share them with the people in the photos. Get a business card made, so that everyone has your details. Sure we use social media, but business cards still have a place in the modern world. These are going to be useful things to help remind people of who you are now and in the future. You'll be around an elite group of ambitious people who are only going to become greater and more influential over time.

Make sure you say thank-you to







worse, what about those people that forget to say thank-you at all!

At the risk of sounding like a grumpy old man, I find that all too often students or graduates are actually quite bad at this part of the job. Many late night emails and job references are sent out - and then as fast as they appear, some of those students disappear. These are the favours that are forgotten by people who, without knowing, underestimate how this behaviour damages networks - because these tasks aren't core or a compulsory part of the job for others. There are only so many hours in the day, hundreds of students in any year, and everyone in business focuses on tasks that deliver the most value - personal value, market value, and a sense of satisfaction. I've applied for some jobs that ask for 4-6 references. Think about how much stress that puts on you once you've done all the hard work of making the cut, but you're not sure whether you can count on others to take the time to make themselves available and support your application.

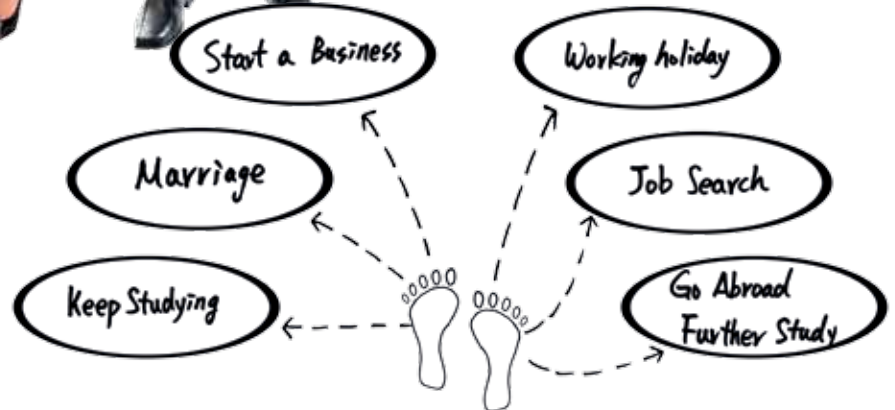
Actually, thank-you is not just about ego fuelling, it's also a way of keeping the

everyone who has helped you along the way - your peers, academic staff, non-academic staff, friends and families. Saying thank-you is so important. I remember a saying from one of the four rightly guided Caliphs of Islam, Ali (may God be pleased with him), who was also one of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) companions:

*"Courtesy costs nothing, but buys everything".*

Business is all about making friends, forging relationships, and having people that you can call upon. Everyone needs friends and those bodies to lean on.

Think about what difference it would make to your job-hunting if you show people that they matter in advance, rather than right before you need them. We've all had people pay us compliments and then in the same breath ask for something - remember how that felt? Or people that say thank-you only after you have helped them - not bad, but not the same as sincere gratitude expressed upfront before you have something to gain. That's the difference between transactional and relationship marketing right?! Or even



lines of communication open. It's about extending courtesy to someone, showing you care, and that their contribution is vital and necessary. You are keeping them in the loop and people like to know that they have made a difference. I've found that there are many times when a grateful recipient has then gone onto offer further vital insight, advice and access to their network, which wouldn't have happened otherwise.

Even better than just a thank-you, is also sharing something else. Remembering events and things dear to that person, offering solutions to niggling problems; and sharing articles or your own career successes, are all great ways to strengthen bonds – even if they are non-work related. I learned a lot of that from my time as an Advertising Key Accounts Manager. Also in some cases, later on in my career I have returned the favour and offered the same people references or potential vacancies that provided references for me in the past.

I like to think that if I am asking a favour of someone, I've spent maybe more time preparing and writing my request than I am asking them to spend on me. Don't be afraid to offer suggestions, guidelines, edited information, and even ghost-written short possible paragraphs. Of course, it's up to them to decide what they use and take, but it can't hurt. In Public Relations, if we were seeking article coverage from a journalist, this is common practice and perfectly acceptable – so why not try it here.

### **Finding a job is actually a full-time job**

The more time you spend looking for a job, the better you are going to fare. I mean, after all of that study, you don't just want a job do you? You want an amazing job; and actually, you want a career. That takes thought, work, preparation, a strategy, and a plan.

Throughout your career you need to work on your CV and have it up to date and waiting on ice. Think about the fact that you might bump into someone who asks you to send it over to them. If you rush it or are ill prepared, you may make mistakes or miss the moment, because it's taking you a few days to write.

Also, there's always a better way to present the facts. This isn't just about adding new achievements once you have one – it takes constant revisions and refinement. Get hold of and study as many CVs as you can. Different jobs require different CVs. For example a practitioner

CV may only be 2-4 pages, but for an academic post they may be expecting something which is about 20 pages.

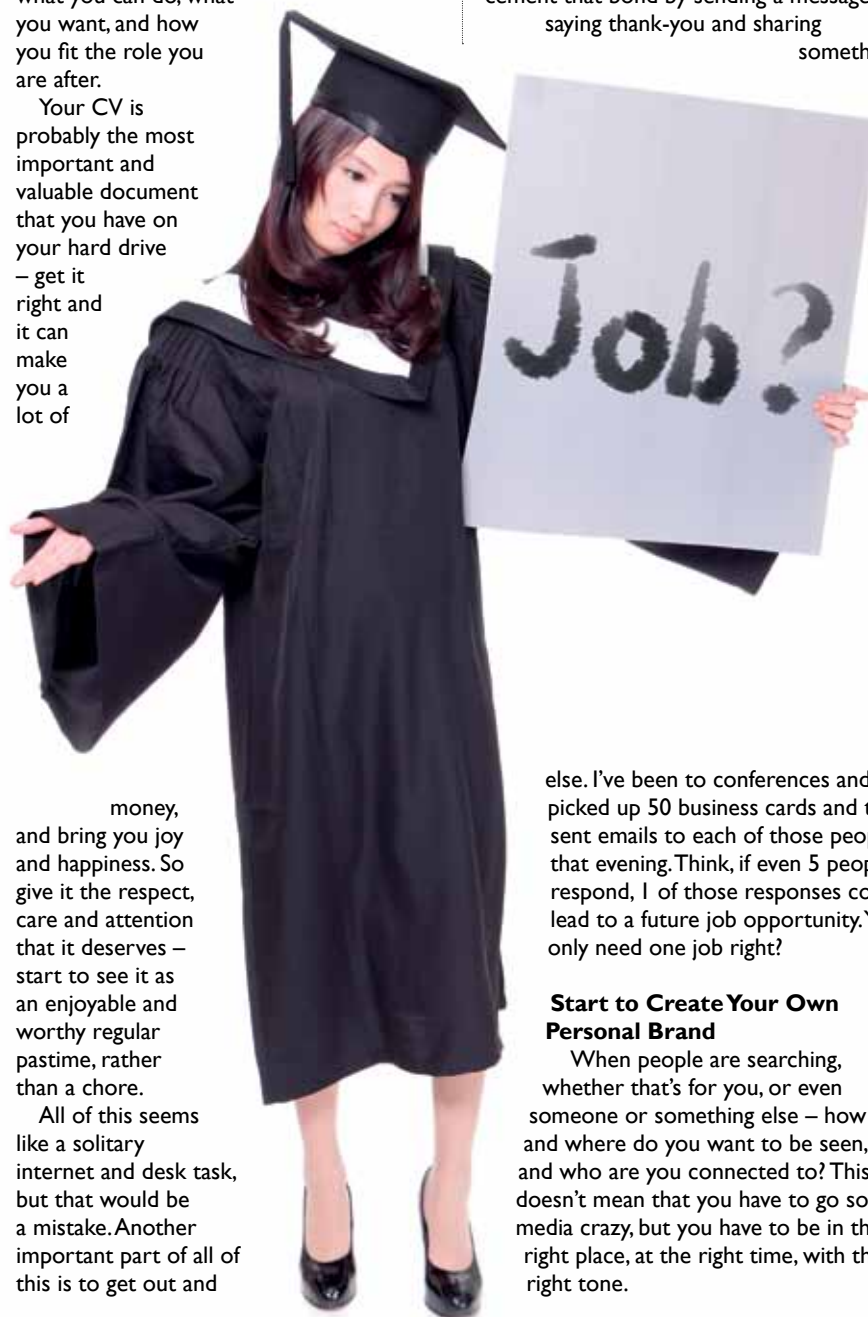
So get feedback on yours. Ask people who know you, you trust and respect. Also, ask them how they would describe you and whether what you've written does you justice. Remember, the CV is about the only place that it's okay to show off – but don't exaggerate or lie! Word Cloud software like wordle.net is a good way to get a snap shot as to whether the key words you are using give an accurate overall picture of who you are, what you can do, what you want, and how you fit the role you are after.

Your CV is probably the most important and valuable document that you have on your hard drive – get it right and it can make you a lot of

money, and bring you joy and happiness. So give it the respect, care and attention that it deserves – start to see it as an enjoyable and worthy regular pastime, rather than a chore.

All of this seems like a solitary internet and desk task, but that would be a mistake. Another important part of all of this is to get out and

meet people. Face-to-face is still where it's at – even if people can be reached through an email, LinkedIn, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter etc. Find events related to your career and even be prepared to talk business at non-business events – because after all we have lives outside of business right?! Some of my jobs have come through sharing a love and interest of a particular pastime. Whenever you meet people, follow up and try and stay in touch. Too many people take business cards and they sit in a draw gathering dust like souvenirs. While you're still in someone's mind, cement that bond by sending a message saying thank-you and sharing something



else. I've been to conferences and picked up 50 business cards and then sent emails to each of those people that evening. Think, if even 5 people respond, 1 of those responses could lead to a future job opportunity. You only need one job right?

### **Start to Create Your Own Personal Brand**

When people are searching, whether that's for you, or even someone or something else – how and where do you want to be seen, and who are you connected to? This doesn't mean that you have to go social media crazy, but you have to be in the right place, at the right time, with the right tone.



Here are what I think are the minimum requirements of a marketing professional today:

**LinkedIn profile** – get busy and fill out all of the fields, it's like painting by numbers. Look at other people's profiles and be inspired.

**SlideShare** your presentations, assignments, and dissertation – but change the format. You have a lot of work sitting on your hard drive, is it now fair to

relegate it towards being dead and buried? Sure, you've got a grade for it, but couldn't you get more out of it by recycling it and making it work harder for you? Open your best pieces up and give them a makeover. Cut them down, reformat them, add images, make sure your contact details are there, add keywords, attach them to your LinkedIn profile, and share them.

Now I've written about it before in my Marketeers columns - *Communication is*

*Crucial, and Culture is Cool.*

Companies want to see as many examples as possible in advance of how you are able to communicate. That means the full range of short pieces, longer reports and spoken communications – to a variety of audiences.

Previously, a lot of business education in many ways was about producing professionals who were like butlers - impeccable manners, well trained, and designed to fit into a corporate structure. That's not to say that those skills and attributes are out of date, but they are not enough.

I'm saying *Culture is Cool*, because with so much competition, companies are now looking for that unique and extra edge that puts you above everybody else. There's too much disruptive innovation around - and that requires a new breed of fit and agile professionals, who aren't afraid to both follow and take the lead when needed.

Even if it's not stated explicitly, from my experiences there is a tacit appetite for these shining stars. Often, companies don't know how to express what it is they are looking for in these areas; but when see people with these skills and mindset, they know that this is what is needed. Think about those times when marketers have marketed a product to you that previously you didn't think you wanted or needed - until that moment, when marketers tapped into a hidden need and desire of yours. Finding talent can be exactly like that.

So rather than thinking that your qualification will be the thing that gets you a job, it's the thing that opens the door, reassures companies that you have the necessary 'butler' skills, and grants you the permission to show them who you really are.

Everyone fills out applications saying that they are ambitious; passionate; hardworking; can work in teams or independently; have an attention to detail; good timekeeping, communication and numerical skills – but what else can you *really* do? What makes you who you are? What are you looking for? What do you know about them? What proves that you would love to take the role that they have on offer? What evidence do you have of being a safe pair of hands? What shows that you would be a person that they would want to spend time with – especially when perhaps this will be for more hours than the family and friends that they would rather be with?

Good luck, go out and get that job you deserve, and thank-you for reading this!