
FOR STUDENTS

TIP SHEET

*Introducing
Yourself to
Prospective
Employers*

When you meet a hiring manager in, let's say, a job "expo," or a career fair, you'll have an opportunity to introduce yourself--briefly. You could say, "I'm a history major with an interest in Renaissance art." As you watch her interest start to wilt, you could add "My senior thesis is about the influence of the social climate in Italy on the work of DaVinci!"

That may be technically correct, but if you had any doubt about whether we're wondering whether you'd just lost the prospective manager's attention, don't be confused: You did.

It's unlikely the prospective manager is going to make the connection between what she needs on the job and the research, analysis and the communication abilities your examination of the Italian Renaissance demanded.

So here's the tip: When you have that minute or two of a hiring manager's attention, ***don't say what you're majoring in. Say what you know.*** Something like this:

"I have excellent verbal and written communication skills, thanks to years of learning to write and speak in school. I'm also an experienced analyst—researching, organizing, re-shaping and presenting qualitative information. My education has prepared me for this. It's the kind of work we do in the liberal arts."

Now she's intrigued! She'll scan your resume and ask about your major. "I see here you majored in history. Tell me more about that."

Don't change your approach. Continue to explain the value of a liberal arts major in the workplace:

"Studying history has equipped me with great job skills. We invest significant time in developing our analytical abilities and communication skills. We also study culture—an important thing in business, to have an understanding of the behaviors and expectations of people from many parts of the world, given that this is a global economy."

Now add to your liberal arts mix. Do you speak any foreign languages? Have you traveled? In other countries, how did your education help you, and what did you notice? Any insights about commerce wherever you were? Play this up! It probably goes without saying that if you have studied about regions of the world that are emerging as economic powers (China, India), don't keep that to yourself!

So save the part about the Italian Renaissance for later, and meantime stick to the job-relevant skills you're equipped with, thanks to having majored in history.

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