



CAL STATE **EAST BAY**

CAREER
EMPOWERMENT
CENTER

Career Handbook

Dear Pioneer,

As you are working towards your degree, it is normal to prioritize your academics and related skills. While these aspects are important, it is equally essential to think about your future career path and invest time into your personal and professional growth. You are on the right track by reading this handbook to learn more about career development.

Inside, we will frame our conversation around the “Four D’s” of career development: **Discover, Document, Design, and Decide***. There are also workbook pages within each section to help guide your personal journey and keep track of any thoughts, questions, or ideas you may come across. While we will discuss these concepts separately, know that career development is not a linear path; it is a lifelong process where you identify and improve your values, skills, and interests. It is normal to explore different options, and setbacks can be valuable learning experiences. By actively engaging in each of the different areas of career development while you are a student, you will be better prepared to navigate the working world and find a rewarding career.

In your career development journey, remember that you are not alone. The Career Services Team is here to support you through one-on-one appointments and workshops that cover various aspects of career growth. Additionally, we encourage you to connect with peers, faculty, mentors, and other campus services. Collaborating with fellow students can lead to valuable insights and partnerships, while professors and mentors can provide tailored advice and opportunities within your field of interest. Take advantage of counseling services, workshops, and student clubs to enhance your skills and knowledge.

Embrace these resources and the connections you make as they can lead to new opportunities and enrich your overall college experience.

In conclusion, as you continue your education, make career development a priority. Understand yourself, connect with others, gain meaningful experiences, and keep learning and growing. By doing this, you will be ready to succeed in your chosen career path.

Wishing you all the best in your academic and career pursuits,

California State East Bay’s Career Services Team

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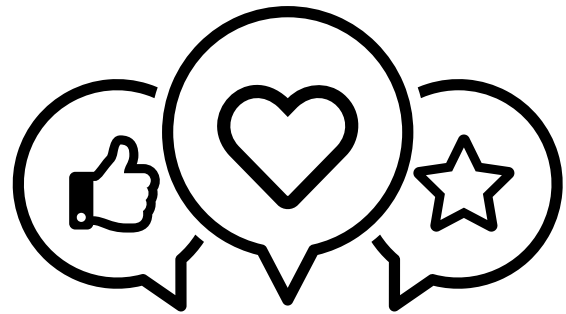
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Last Updated Fall 2025

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A dynamic, AI-enhanced career access platform connecting students, alumni, and mentors for lifelong support and opportunity.

[PATHWAYU](#)

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Figure 1

This image uses a bridge metaphor to illustrate the concept of career development as the pathway between the classroom and a career. The bridge is supported by four foundational pillars labeled:

Discover, Document, Design, Decide



Discover – exploring interests, values, and skills.

Document – creating resumes, portfolios, and records of experience.

Design – planning career goals and pathways.

Decide – making informed choices about future steps.

Discover



I.A. Career Exploration & Preparation

INTERNSHIP SEARCH

Exploring various avenues for gaining practical experience is crucial during your academic journey. While paid internships offer valuable insights, there are indeed other avenues that can be equally beneficial. Let's delve into some of these options:

Paid Internships

These provide a structured learning environment, often within companies or organizations related to your field. You gain hands-on experience, build professional networks, and receive compensation.

Volunteer Work

Volunteering allows you to contribute to causes you're passionate about while honing skills. Consider volunteering at relevant events, nonprofits, or community initiatives.

Non-Paid Internships:

Although unpaid, these internships offer valuable exposure. Look for positions that align with your interests and allow you to learn from experienced professionals.

Projects and Assignments:

Collaborate on class projects, research papers, or independent studies. These help you apply theoretical knowledge and develop problem-solving skills.

Freelancing or Side Projects:

Take on freelance work or personal projects related to your field. These demonstrate initiative and can be added to your portfolio.

Networking Events and Conferences:

Attend industry-specific events, workshops, and conferences. Networking opens doors to opportunities and introduces you to potential mentors.

Remember, the goal is to accumulate experiences that enhance your understanding, skills, and adaptability. When you graduate, having a diverse range of experiences—whether paid or not—will strengthen your professional profile.

I.B.

Networking

Connect with People on Campus

Building a strong network and connecting with others on campus is important for both your academic and career growth. Do not hesitate to interact with your peers, as they might be experiencing similar thoughts and challenges. Collaborating with fellow students can lead to valuable insights and potential partnerships in the future. Your professors and faculty members are another valuable resource. They possess a wealth of knowledge and expertise, and they can provide academic and career advice tailored to your field of interest. Establishing good relationships with them can lead to valuable recommendations and opportunities in the future. Additionally, take advantage of other services available on campus. Find connections through our different affinity centers, student clubs and organizations, and various workshops. Engaging with these resources can further enhance your skills, knowledge, and overall college experience.

Attend Career Fairs

The Career Services Team typically hosts 2 in-person career fairs every Fall and Spring semester and various online career fairs. Both students and alumni are encouraged to attend. Other campus departments also host career fairs specific to their field. Be sure to activate your East Bay Handshake account to keep track of the different career-related events throughout campus.

Attend Conferences

Many fields organize regular conferences that facilitate networking, information sharing, and discussions on best practices. As a current student, you can inquire with your department or various student organizations about opportunities to attend these types of conferences. If you find a conference that interests you, do not hesitate to discuss it with a faculty or staff member for further guidance and support.

Set Up an Informational Interview

When students think of interviews, they often think in the perspective of the interviewee. With this method, you get to be the interviewer and discover information about occupations or positions you are interested in from a primary source. Conducting an informational interview is an effective way to begin either occupational research or the networking process – especially when you are researching a field where you currently do not have contacts. You will find out important details about the company and position of the person you are interviewing, and have an opportunity to begin a relationship with this person.

For more detailed information on the informational interview process, see page 43.

Remember, reaching out and making connections with others not only enriches your journey but also opens doors to new opportunities. Embrace the support system available to you as you embark on your career development journey, and do not hesitate to seek help whenever you need it.

At the end of the day, you will not genuinely know how well a particular career path suits you until you gain some experience in that field. While the internet and other people may share their perspectives, you will not understand what you like and dislike about specific parts of a career until you try it out yourself. Moreover, experience is often a requirement when applying for jobs after earning your degree. While a degree holds significant value, it may not be sufficient to advance beyond entry-level positions. Here are several ways you can acquire experience both as a student and beyond:

Research Opportunities:

This experience is especially important for those considering research careers and/ or graduate school. Talk to faculty members about their research and inquire for research assistant opportunities.

Internships (Paid or Unpaid):

Internships are typically training opportunities within specific fields and be paid or unpaid. They can even count as course units (depending on your department and eligibility). Find out more about internships on page [X]

Shadowing:

While networking, see if there are any opportunities there are any opportunities to shadow people doing the work that interests you. You can see first-hand what their day-to-day looks like and all of the responsibilities that come with the job.

Jobs:

Sometimes, specific career paths don't necessarily require a degree to begin. If you come across a job opportunity that matches your interests and meets the basic qualifications, don't hesitate to pursue it! You can use your degree later to advance further in your career.

Volunteer

Search for volunteer opportunities in your community, with your network, or with organizations that interest you.

Document



II.A. Purpose of a Resume

Your resume is usually the first contact you will have with an employer. It is important that you put forth your best effort to give a good first impression. Whether or not you have written a resume before, it is always a good idea to stay current on resume trends and expectations. Below, we will provide some general best practices and tips to get you started.

Resumes serve several purposes. They are a well organized, concise and well-written summary of your skills, knowledge, and achievements (SKAs). They serve as a professional first impression and writing sample. The resume should convince employers that you would be successful in the position. The primary purpose of a resume, however, is to get you to the next stage in the hiring process (which is typically an interview). We know a resume is successful if everytime you submit it in an application or hand it out while networking, you are getting scheduled for an interview or receiving some sort of call back. If you notice that your resume is not achieving these success markers, then it is time to re-evaluate it and make revisions based on best practices and feedback from peers, mentors, or career advisors.

Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)

ATS are the computer algorithms of the hiring world. They are used to initially filter applicants. Basic versions typically take information from the resume and categorize it for easier viewing by hiring managers or committees, while more advanced versions take the information from your resume, compare it to their job description, and produce a score that will rank you amongst other applicants. Advanced ATS are becoming more and more accessible to employers today. This is one reason why it is so important to tailor your resume to a specific job description. Identify keywords, buzzwords, and skills that you possess that are also on the job description and be sure to include them in your resume.

To find out more about how they work, try an ATS simulator. We recommend starting with jobscan.co. This website has information on ATS, resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn profile optimization, as well as ATS-friendly resume templates.

GIVE JOBSCAN A TRY!

II.B.

Formatting

Format is an important part of resume writing. A hiring person only reads a resume for about 9 to 13 seconds on average. That's not a lot of time! You will want to make sure your resume is easy to read through so that they can identify the important information quickly. Paying close attention to how you are formatting your resume will help.

Here is a checklist to follow when formatting your resume:

- 1-2 pages in length: Be sure to pay attention to directions! If they say 1 page resume, stick to just 1 page
- 0.5 - 1 inch margins: Sometimes narrowing your margins can look more professional and help create space for more information.
- Easy to read font: Times News Roman, Calibri, Arial, or Garamond. 10.5pt to 12pt font: For your resume content. Your name should use a larger pt font at the top of your resume (16pt to 20pt)
- Effective use of bolding, italics, and (parentheses): Contrast makes your resume easier to read
- Formatting is consistent: Keep your resume professional and easy to read
- Avoid too much white space: Use as much of the space as possible while still keeping it easy to read
- Avoid chunks of statements (e.g. large paragraphs): Bulleted lists are your friend!
- Submit your resume as a PDF (for online applications): This will make sure your formatting stays the same on any computer
- If you need the Resume section to be longer than a page, I would cut off the first page here and have the next page dedicated to skills/the section contents. It's ok if it needs to be more than 2 pages– use your best judgment.
- Have clear and distinct sections: Organize your information in a way that is easy to identify and understand

II.C.

Resume Building

General Resume Do's and Don'ts:

DO Use the correct tense consistently (if it happened in the past, use past tense; if it is currently happening, use present tense).

DO use keywords and buzzwords found on the job description when possible.

DO begin descriptions with action verbs like performed, executed, created.

DO include statements that are descriptive, concise, and specific (numbers, scope, etc.).

DO NOT have grammar or spelling errors.

DO NOT lie or over-exaggerate your own skills, knowledge, and achievements.

DO NOT use “I” “me” or “my” (they know the resume is about you).

Types of Skills

Transferable (soft) Skills: Skills that are applicable to any field of work that any employer could to any field of work that any employer would want an employee to have.
Examples: flexible, organized, problem solving, verbal/ written communication, teamwork

Technical (hard) Skills: Skills that are specifically related to a particular field/to the job description
Examples: data analysis, patient care, lesson planning, graphic design, Python, Microsoft Office, bilingual/multilingual

Section Content

Heading: The heading of your resume will include your name and contact information, including:

First & Last Name: Make it nice and big at the top (20pt font recommended)

Address: For privacy reasons, you only need to include the city and state (or county and state) you live in. If employers need your full street address, they will find it on your application.

Cell Number: If employers or recruiters want to contact you, they might call. Check that your voicemail is set up and has a professional message.

Email: Many employers, recruiters, and professionals use email for communication. Use a professional email that you check regularly.

Link to an online professional presence (optional): Give employers, recruiters, and network contacts another way to learn more about you. Examples of online professional presences include LinkedIn, Github, and Portfolium.

Resume Building

Professional Summary

This section is optional but can help provide employers with a quick summary of your skills, knowledge, and achievements (SKAs) in 3-to-5 statements. We recommend having this section if you do not have the opportunity to share a cover letter. Your professional summary should highlight SKAs found on the job description that you think are the most important. For examples, please see the sample resumes on pages [X-X].

Skills Summary

List skills you want to emphasize on your resume. Usually, professionals only list technical skills in this section instead of transferable skills. Pay attention to and use the key skills included on the job description.

Experience

Traditionally, resumes only include “professional” work experience. As students, you may or may not have work experience directly related to your field. However, your experience section can follow functional resume methods to show employers what you are capable of. This section can include volunteer work, internships, projects, research experience, and more. You can also break down the different types into separate sections if you do not want to have it all in one “Experience” section. Be sure to only include relevant experience. Irrelevant positions can either be completely removed or included in an “Additional Experience” section without any bullet points.

List your experiences in reverse-chronological order (newest listed first).

Each experience should include:

Type of experience (position title, project title, etc.)

Organization/company of the experience

Location of the experience

Dates that you started and finished the experience (months and years are sufficient) A list of 3-5 action statements that start with an action verb. Action statements describe experience responsibilities, knowledge and skills gained or used, and accomplishments. Refer to the BAR method to the right and see resume samples on pages [X-X] for example action statements.

Learning Outcomes

Turning Your Education into Skills You Can Explain

Learning outcomes are used by accredited institutions of higher learning to describe the education and experience a student can gain through attending their school. In simple terms, learning outcomes are the “living, breathing” version of a degree: they capture the skills, knowledge, and abilities students develop through their program and the courses they successfully complete.

When a student graduates from an accredited institution, they leave with more than a diploma, they also carry the learning outcomes they’ve demonstrated through their coursework and experiences. Students can use learning outcomes to connect what they’ve learned to career goals, strengthen application materials, and prepare for interviews by translating academic experiences into clear, employer-friendly skills and examples.

Learning outcomes can also serve as a helpful “translation tool” when students are unsure how to describe their education on a resume or in an interview. They offer ready-made language for identifying strengths, selecting relevant examples from coursework or projects, and communicating growth over time. Even when a student has limited professional experience, learning outcomes can help them highlight what they can do—and back it up with evidence from classes, internships, campus involvement, and applied assignments.

Learning outcomes are generally organized into three categories. The following pages describe each category and provide examples of how students can apply them to career development and job searching:

- Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)
- Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)
- Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

What is an Institutional Learning Outcome?

Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are campus-wide learning goals that describe what all CSU East Bay graduates should be able to demonstrate by the time they complete a degree. They reflect broad, transferable abilities developed through General Education, major coursework, and co-curricular experiences—such as critical and creative thinking, clear communication, collaboration, and the responsible application of knowledge in diverse communities.

Note: Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) may not directly align with career-readiness. However, understanding ILOs can help you recognize and describe the transferable abilities you build through your education. They are broad academic outcomes that describe the skills and capacities CSU East Bay expects all graduates to develop.

Upon graduation, CSUEB students will be able to demonstrate the following Institutional Learning Outcomes. If you choose to align these ILOs with a career goal, translate each outcome into resume and cover letter language supported by your projects, work experience, and campus involvement.

- Think critically and creatively and apply analytical and quantitative reasoning to address complex challenges and everyday problems.
- Communicate ideas, perspectives, and values clearly and persuasively while listening openly to others.
- Apply knowledge of diversity and multicultural competencies to promote equity and social justice in our communities.
- Work collaboratively and respectfully as members and leaders of diverse teams and communities.
- Act responsibly and sustainably at local, national, and global levels.
- Demonstrate expertise and integration of ideas, methods, theory and practice in a specialized discipline of study

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

What is a Program Learning Outcome?

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities students are expected to demonstrate by graduation from a degree program. Think of PLOs as the “big picture” goals of your major—they reflect what your program is preparing you to do in professional and real-world settings.

Why are PLOs important?

PLOs help you:

- Understand the purpose of your degree beyond individual courses.
- Identify your strengths (research, communication, analysis, collaboration, etc.).
- Connect academic work to career goals by translating what you learned into workplace ready skills.
- Communicate your value to employers and graduate programs using clear, credible language.

How PLOs support career readiness

PLOs often align with what employers look for—skills such as critical thinking, communication, research, problem-solving, and ethical decision-making. When you use PLOs to describe your experience, you show employers that your skills were developed intentionally through your program.

Tips for turning a PLO into a resume bullet:

- Start with an action verb (Analyzed, Designed, Created, Led, Presented).
- Add context (project, course, internship, organization).
- Include a result when possible (improved, increased, completed, delivered, presented to X).

Example: PLO → resume language (*Reference from Communication, B.A.*)

PLO: Understand and apply communication theories to real-world scenarios.

Resume bullet: “Applied communication theory to analyze audience needs and improve messaging for a class campaign project.”

PLO: Demonstrate research skills and interpret evidence.

Resume bullet: “Formulated research questions, synthesized scholarly sources, and interpreted evidence to develop a theory-based argument in a research report.”

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

What is a Student Learning Outcome?

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) describe what you should be able to know, do, or demonstrate by the end of a course. SLOs are more specific than Program Learning Outcomes. They often connect directly to assignments like papers, presentations, group projects, case studies, lab work, portfolios, and exams

Why are SLOs important?

SLOs help you:

- Understand what skills you are building in each course.
- Identify career-relevant skills, even if you have limited work experience.
- Describe class projects in a professional way for resumes, cover letters, and interviews.
- Build confidence by recognizing the skills you've gained and practiced.

How SLOs support career readiness

SLOs are a useful bridge between coursework and employment because they translate academic learning into workplace competencies. Many SLOs reflect the same abilities employers want- analysis, research, communication, teamwork, and technology awareness.

Tips for turning a SLO into a resume bullet:

- Focus on the deliverable (report, presentation, analysis, campaign, research project).
- Show how you did it (methods, tools, framework).
- Add a result when possible (completed, presented, improved, evaluated, recommended).

Example: SLO → resume language (*Reference from COMM 203*)

SLO: Identify, analyze, and apply a broad spectrum of communication theories.

Resume bullet: “Analyzed communication scenarios using multiple theories and summarized findings in written reports and presentations.”

SLO: Demonstrate an understanding of both traditional and critical perspectives.

Resume bullet: “Compared traditional and critical frameworks to evaluate media messages and their impact on audiences.”

Resume Building

Write your action statements with the BAR Method!

Background: What did you do? Include the responsibility or task

Action: How did you do it? Include relevant transferable and technical skills, as well as the context of the responsibility/task

Result: Why did you do it? Include specific outcomes that demonstrate why that task/responsibility was important

(Note: The different components of the BAR method do not necessarily need to be in this order)

Education:

As a degree holder (or soon-to-be), you should definitely add your education experience onto your resume. Do not include your high school experience; employers can assume you have a high school diploma given that you have postsecondary education.

Your education section should include:

Degree title: Spell out the type of degree (Bachelor of Science, Master of Arts, etc.) and the discipline (Psychology, Computer Science, etc.)

Date of (expected) graduation: Include the month and year of when you graduated or expect to graduate. Employers do not need to know how long it took for you to graduate; they only need to know when you will be done.

GPA: Only include if your GPA is on a 4.0 scale and greater than 3.0. Also include any earned latin honors (Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, Summa Cum Laude)

Memberships: Includes Dean's List, Greek Organizations, Honors Organizations, and other student organizations.

Relevant Learning Outcomes: Include keywords from learning outcomes listed on your course syllabi or program catalog pages as they relate to the job description.

II.D. Resumes & Cover Letters Examples

Other sections can include “Certifications and Licenses,” “Hobbies and Interests,” “Publications,” and more. Remember to only include additional sections if they speak to your skills, knowledge, and achievements as well as the job description.

A Note on References: We do not recommend having references or “references available upon request” on your resume. If an employer needs references, they will have a separate section on the application for you to input your references or upload a separate references document. This will free up extra space on your resume for relevant information. Always be sure to ask your references if you can include them in your applications before submitting.

Cover letters are not always required, but when they are, they offer you an additional chance to create a strong first impression for potential employers. Similar to resumes, cover letters should be tailored to a specific role using relevant keywords and phrases. They are also typically one page in length. It is important to note that cover letters should not merely repeat the content of your resume in paragraph form. Instead, they serve as a platform for introducing yourself, explaining your motivation for applying, and elaborating on your experiences.

Refer to the template below for a general outline of a cover letter, as well as a sample cover letter on the following page for reference.

Start with the same or similar professional heading that you are comfortable using.

Cover Letter Template

Date (Month Day, Year)

Contact Person or Department Professional

Title (if Person)

Organization

Name

Mailing

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Contact Name or Attention: Department (DO NOT write “To Whom it May Concern”)

First Paragraph: Indicate your reason for writing. Name the position you are applying for and how you found it. Introduce how you think you will be a good fit based on your skills and experience. The goal for the cover letter is to compel the reader to look at your resume.

Second & Third Paragraphs: Elaborate on your skills, experience, achievements, and traits that this specific employer is looking for in a candidate for this specific position. Use key words from the listed job qualifications that you meet and give examples. This section can be two to three paragraphs long depending on what you want to include.

Last Paragraph: Thank the recipient for considering you for the position. State that you would appreciate an interview for the opportunity and to discuss how you could benefit the company.

Regards (or Sincerely),

(signature)

Your Name

JONATHON DOE

Hayward, CA 94542 | 555-555-5555 | johndoe@email.com | linkedin.com/in/johndoe

CERTIFIED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

Reliable, service-focused nursing professional with excellent patient-care and charting skills gained through three years of experience as a CNA. Compassionate and technically skilled in attending to patients in diverse healthcare settings. BLS and CPR certified (current).

Summary of Skills

- Patient Care & Safety
- Medical Terminology
- Electronic Medical Records
- Vital Signs & Patient Monitoring
- Medication Administration
- Privacy / HIPAA Regulations
- Patient Advocacy and Support
- Multilingual in English, Cantonese & Mandarin

Professional Experience

Certified Nursing Assistant, BCA Staffing Company, Hayward, CA 2014 to Present

- Providing optimum patient care as a professional CNA within acute-care, rehabilitation, surgical, home healthcare and nursing-home settings
- Preserving patient dignity and assuring patient's dignity while carrying out tasks such as diapering, bed-pan changes, bathing and emptying drainage bags
- Appreciated for effective team collaboration, patient relations, chart accuracy and consistent deliverance of empathetic care

Medical Receptionist LifeLong Medical Care, Berkeley, CA 2014 – 2015

- Managed client flow from front desk to back office; responsible for patient reception and client intake
- Answered clinic phones and directs calls appropriately
- Maintained inventory of front desk supplies and forms; sorted and distributed clinic mail
- Performed computer data entry in registration, scheduling and other programs as assigned
- Performed other duties as assigned by the Front Desk Supervisor and Clinic Director

Hospital Volunteer, Eden Medical Center, Castro Valley, CA 2012 – 2014

- Provided limited direct patient care, Answered patient call buttons
- Aided nurses in moving patients and providing supplies
- Supported residents in transferring from bed to wheel chair and vice versa
- Transported patients from to and from procedure rooms
- Utilized advanced communication to answer phones and relayed detailed messages

Education & Certifications

California State University, East Bay June 2018

B.S. Health Science, Pre-Clinical; minor: Human Development GPA 3.61

City College of San Francisco

Nursing Assistant-Home Health Aide, Certification

Associate of Arts, Liberal Studies

May 2014

May 2015

II.E. Other Forms of Documentation

There are several other forms of documentation that you may encounter on your career path. If you would like to learn more about any of the below, consider making an appointment with a career advisor today.

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A Curriculum Vitae or CV is often used in academia. They are similar to resumes in that they are a summary of your skills, knowledge, and achievements. Unlike resumes, however, CVs place a larger emphasis on your academia-related achievements such as your degrees, coursework, publications, presentations, university service, and more. It is also not limited to just one-to-two pages. In fact, mid-to-senior level professionals in academia often have CVs longer than three pages.

Graduate School Application Statements

If you are considering graduate school, you will likely need to write a personal statement, a statement of purpose, and/or a diversity statement. These statements provide programs with insights into who you are, why you are interested in their program, and how you would contribute to their institution. The key to each of these statements is to carefully follow the prompts provided by each program. While the concepts behind these statements are similar, each program will have specific criteria they seek to ensure that you are a good fit.

Letters of Recommendation

Graduate schools and some employers require letters of recommendation to verify the information you provide. These letters are akin to references, but instead of a simple phone call, they are thoughtfully crafted letters written by professionals who can speak positively about your skills and work ethic. When seeking letters of recommendation for non-academic careers, you can approach various professional connections, including faculty members, managers, coaches, community leaders, and mentors. For graduate school programs, you will typically need two to three letters of recommendation from faculty members within the field of interest.

Normally, letters of recommendation are submitted electronically by the writer, and you usually do not have access to read them to maintain the trust and honesty of the process. It is important to give your recommenders a minimum of one month to write these letters, and do not hesitate to send reminders as the deadline approaches. Providing work samples, transcripts, and other supporting documents can be helpful to your recommenders, especially if they are individuals with whom you have not had extensive

Other Forms of Documentation

Transcripts

Like letters of recommendation, transcripts can be requested both by graduate school programs and employers. They may request unofficial transcripts and/or official transcripts. Be aware of your university's process of requesting official transcripts and where to find unofficial transcripts. You find more information about East Bay's processes [here](#).

Certifications/Licenses

If you include any certifications or licenses on your resume or within the application, you may be required to provide proof. Make sure you have electronic or physical copies readily available, as well as any official license numbers and related information, as these may be requested.

Portfolios

A portfolio, whether in physical or digital form, is a collection of your finest work, showcasing your skills and accomplishments. It can encompass your resume, a personal statement, awards, certifications, work samples, and more. Work samples may range from photos, social media posts, and writing samples to websites and marketing plans, among other materials. These samples should emphasize the skills relevant to the field you are applying for.

Writing Samples

In some fields, such as journalism and creative writing positions, or for graduate school applications, you may be asked to provide writing samples. These samples could be pieces you have previously completed or submitted in prior roles, or they might request a new one based on their prompts. It is important to carefully follow their instructions and give yourself as much time as possible to present your best work.

Working on your Document section

Continue to the next page to go through the workbook.

Design



III.A.

Building your Brand

Building your personal brand is important in today's interconnected world. Your brand is your reputation, the way you present yourself to the world, and the values you represent. It is the story you tell about yourself through your actions, online presence, and interactions with others. A strong personal brand can set you apart in a competitive job market, attract opportunities, and foster trust among peers and potential employers. It is a way to showcase your unique strengths, expertise, and personality, making it easier for others to understand what you bring to the table. Cultivating a consistent and authentic personal brand can open doors, drive success, and leave a lasting positive impression on those you encounter. In sum, your personal brand is your professional identity, and taking time to develop it is an investment in your future.

Let's break down the different components of personal branding:

Identify Your Values

Identifying your values is the foundation for establishing an authentic professional brand. Your values represent the core principles and beliefs that guide your decisions, actions, and interactions in the workplace. When you align your professional brand with your values, you project a consistent and genuine image to colleagues, employers, and clients.

Here are some questions to consider when thinking about your values:

Think about people you admire or look up to.

What qualities or values do they possess that you resonate with?

Consider moments in your life when you felt proud, content, or truly yourself.

What values were at play during those times?

Imagine your ideal work environment or company culture.

What values and principles would be at its core?

Building your Brand

Set Professional Development Goals

Once you have identified your desired occupation or career field in the Discover phase of your career development journey, the next step is to set your professional development goals and milestones. These milestones demonstrate your commitment to growth and improvement, which is a key aspect of any compelling brand. Whether it is acquiring new skills, earning certifications, or broadening your industry knowledge, your professional development goals become part of your brand story. They show that you are dedicated to staying relevant and adaptable. In essence, by setting and achieving these goals, you are not only advancing your career but also creating a brand identity that stands out as someone who is driven, resourceful, and continuously evolving in their field.

When setting your milestones, consider using the SMART Goals method:

Specific: Consider the who, what, when, where, and why of your goal. Narrowing down each aspect will keep you focused.

Measurable: Define what success means for your specific goal with measurable criteria. This not only helps you track your progress but also indicates when you have achieved a milestone.

Attainable: Set milestones that are realistic and within your reach. Take into account the resources at your disposal, your current skill set, and any limitations.

Relevant: Ensure that your professional goals align with your long-term career aspirations and the context you are in.

Time-Bound: Having a well-defined timeline will keep you focused on each milestone and stay on track.

Building your Brand

Frame your goals using positive language as well! This not only maintains a constructive mindset but also sets yourself up for success. Whether you are just starting out in your career or looking to advance, emphasizing the positive aspects of your goals creates a sense of possibility and encourages continuous learning and growth.

And remember, career development and goals can evolve and shift over time as you learn more about yourself and your field. It is ok for the path you are on to change direction, loop around, or branch completely off the beaten path. This is why it is important to regularly reflect on your current goals and if they are right for you.

The Importance of Job Aggregator Sites, Social Media, and Other Online Platforms

In today's digital age, online platforms are important tools for building and showcasing your professional brand. Job aggregator sites like LinkedIn and Handshake, or industry-specific platforms like GitHub and Portfolium, provide the opportunity to connect with industry professionals, share your achievements, and establish your expertise. These platforms offer a global stage to demonstrate your skills and build a network of like-minded individuals. Social media, when used strategically, can also amplify your brand by sharing your knowledge, insights, and engaging with a wider audience. The combined power of these online resources not only enables you to establish your professional identity but also makes it accessible to potential employers, clients, and collaborators. Leveraging these platforms effectively can enhance your visibility and credibility, ultimately contributing to your career success.

III.B. 30 Second Commercial

Develop a 30-Second Commercial

One tool you can use to help communicate your brand is a 30-second commercial, also commonly referred to as an elevator pitch. You want to be able to communicate our brand quickly and effectively whenever you meet a new network connection, whether that be at a career fair, virtually, at a conference, or any other professional setting. Create a positive first impression by summarizing your talents, skills, accomplishments, and interests. Begin by introducing yourself with your name and highlighting your professional achievements. Explain the actions you've taken (or would take) to attain these results, ensuring they align with your career objectives. Conclude by focusing on your future, sharing your vision of where you see yourself in the next five years, and how you plan to leverage your specific talents, skills, accomplishments, and interests.

A 30-second commercial can also be used in the context of an interview. It can help you answer questions such as:

Tell me about yourself.
Why should I hire you?
What are your strengths?
What qualifications do you have for this job?
How will you succeed in this position?
Why do you want this job?

It can also assist you in concluding the interview on a memorable note. You might say something like, "I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you today. In summary, allow me to highlight what I would bring to this role... [insert your 30-second commercial]."

Example 1: "Hi, I'm John Doe and I can provide the care and professionalism your clients deserve. Getting to the person's need opens the door to how I can best resolve their concern. I do this with compassion and empathy, finding common ground to move forward. I always achieve positive feedback and frequent referrals because of my ability to connect and support who I am working with to gain what they need."

Continue on to the workbook section to start reflecting on your brand and start crafting your 30-second commercial.

III.C. How to Create a 30-Second Commercial

A **30-second commercial** is a brief, impactful introduction you can use to highlight your qualifications and career goals. It's especially useful during networking events, interviews, or casual conversations with professionals in your field. You can structure your commercial into four concise sentences:

Introduce Yourself

State your name, your school, your major, and your focus area.

Example: "Hi my name is Perry Falcon. I'm a junior in the Data Science program at Cal State East Bay, with an emphasis in data management."

Share a Strength

Mention a skill or something you're particularly good at in your field.

Example: "I'm skilled at analyzing aggregate data sets using Excel, and I enjoy creating pivot tables to uncover trends."

Express Your Passion

Talk about what excites you or what you're passionate about in your field.

Example: "I love letting numbers tell a story and using data to uncover insights that drive decision-making."

Make an Ask or Pose a Question

End with a question or request that invites further conversation.

Example: "Do you have any opportunities like this at your company? I'd love to connect and learn more about your role."

IV.C. More on Informational Interviews

Prepare and practice

Informational interviews are, “a safe environment to ask questions.” You want to come across in a way that inspires others to help you. Do your homework. Study up on industry lingo. Learn who the players are. Be able to talk about the most important trends. You do not want to waste your expert’s time asking Google-able questions. Work on your listening and conversation skills, practice asking great questions and conveying memorable energy with people who are easy to talk to, such as your family, your friends, and friends of friends.

Keep your introduction short

It is not a venue to practice your elevator pitch; it is a place to absorb information and find stuff out. Prepare a brief, succinct explanation about yourself that you can recite in three minutes max: “Here is my background, here is what I am thinking, and I would like your feedback.” People cannot help you unless they understand what you are looking for. Be brief.

Set the tone

You want to leave a positive impression and enough information to recommend you to others. At the beginning state that “you are interested in talking to 10 industry experts” during your information-gathering phase so the person knows that you are looking for additional sources. If you wait until the end to ask for other referrals, they might be caught off guard. Ask about time constraints. If you are having a good conversation at the end of the time allotted, say, “I want to respect your time. I would love to keep talking, but if you need to go, I understand.”

Think like a journalist

Prepare informed, intelligent questions. You do not need to stick to the script, but if you are unfocused, you risk offending the person. Approach your interview like an investigative journalist. You are not cross-examining your expert and you do not want to come across as pushy or difficult. Instead, gently probe through curiosity, then listen. Consider Daniel Porot’s “Pie Method”:

How do you get into this line of work? What do you enjoy about it? What’s not so great about it? What’s changing in the sector? What kinds of people do well in this industry?

You can adapt these questions to fit your needs. The idea is to help you spot the roles and fields that match your skills and experience and give you an understanding of how top performers are described.

More on Informational Interviews

Deliberately test your hypotheses

Your mission is to grasp the reality of the industry and the job so you can begin to decide if it is right for you. Do not shy away from sensitive topics. Such as:

What are the worst parts of your job? What didn't you know before you got into this industry that you wish someone had told you?

Some topics may seem taboo but can be broached delicately. Say something like, “I have done some research and it seems that the typical salary range is this,” so you are asking for confirmation of public information. It is also okay to ask for advice on how to position yourself for a job in the industry by making your experience and skills sound relevant: “Based on what you know about my background, what do you see as my weaknesses? And what would I need to do to allay the concerns of a potential hiring manager?” If the feedback is negative, consider it valuable information but get second and third opinions. One person’s word is not gospel. You may not be qualified, but you also may have spoken to a stick-in-the-mud who discourages everyone. Do not let them limit your career options.

Follow up with gratitude, not demands

Thank the person for their time via email or send a handwritten note to express gratitude right after you meet. It will help you be remembered. Your thank-you letter should describe how the person was helpful to you and, ideally, that their guidance led to “a concrete out- come” in your job search.

Play the long game

Do not think of this as one time meetings in which someone gives you 15 minutes of their time. Take the long view and think about ways to cultivate your new professional connection. Forward them a link to a relevant article, for instance, or invite them to an upcoming conference or networking event. In other words, be helpful.

You want to be seen as giving, not constantly taking. It can be tricky when there is a wide age or professional gap between you, but if you focus on keeping the person apprised of your progress— perhaps writing them a note saying you read the book they suggested or that you joined the professional association they recommended, it shows you listened and that their advice mattered.

Decide



IV.A. Finding Opportunities

Now that you have defined your career goals, created your professional documentation, and started to build your brand, it's time to identify specific opportunities that will set you down the path of professional growth within your field. These can range from internships, to full-time jobs, to graduate or certification programs.

Current students, remember that this step doesn't have to wait until after graduation; opportunities are available right now. As for our alumni, you've acquired the foundational knowledge needed for your industry through your degree program. Now, it's time to reflect on the skills and qualifications you possess and determine the types of opportunities that align with your strengths and expertise.

When it comes to identifying opportunities, we primarily rely on the following resources:

Online Job Listings

The internet is a valuable tool for discovering job and internship opportunities. Remember LinkedIn and Handshake? They are not only useful for personal branding but also for finding job and internship openings. Often, you can apply directly through these job aggregator sites or locate a link to the job listing on the organization's website. If there is a particular company you're eager to work for, it's a wise idea to explore their website and access job listings directly from them.

Be sure to carefully review the position descriptions, including position responsibilities, minimum qualifications, and preferred qualifications. These sections provide an initial understanding of the role. Furthermore, it's important that you refer back to this description when crafting customized resumes and cover letters for your application.

Finding Opportunities

Career Fairs

Career fairs are not only great for exploring various careers but also for discovering job opportunities. Many employers who participate in career fairs have open positions and use these events as a recruitment platform. CSU East Bay hosts both in-person and online career fairs, and you can find more details here. Additionally, many cities or counties also host their own career fairs, which you can learn more about on their websites.

Graduate School or Other Post-Back Opportunities

Sometimes, the next opportunity involves continuing our education. In certain fields, pursuing a master's or doctoral degree may be essential to meet career goals, while others may find value in obtaining certifications or vocational training. Once you've determined the right career path for you, you can then assess whether additional education will help propel you along that chosen path.

As you research different programs, don't hesitate to seek advice from family, friends, professors, peers, industry professionals, and career advisors to gain further insights into what might be in your best interest. See page [X] for more information on choosing a program.

Network Connections

It's important to invest time in building your network connections, as they can open doors to exciting future opportunities. People within your network may introduce you to positions they believe you'd excel in or connect you with individuals who have potential opportunities for you. It is also acceptable to inform your network that you're actively seeking new opportunities and would appreciate any support they can offer. In the long run, a strong network will keep you linked to a wide array of opportunities within your industry.

As a student, you are encouraged to start your network by connecting with professors and peers. As you progress in your field, you'll naturally establish connections with professionals within your industry. For more information on effective networking, please refer back to page [6]

Check out events on Handshake!

IV.B. The Interviewing Process

At this stage, you have found an opportunity, applied, and now they want to interview you – hooray! The interview process serves as a means for the employer or organization to learn more about you and, simultaneously, offers you an opportunity to learn more about them. It's a chance for both you and the organization to determine if you'll be a good fit for each other.

Here is some information you should know before heading into an interview:

Interview Formats

Structured vs. Semi-Structured Structured interviews involve a predetermined set of questions and a script that interviewers must follow. In contrast, semi-structured interviews also have a set number of questions but allow for variations based on your responses, including any follow-up questions the interviewer may ask or topics that arise during the conversation. In-person, Online, or Phone Post-pandemic, a significant shift occurred in the interview format, with many transitioning to an online setting. These virtual interviews are commonly conducted through specific platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Conversely, traditional in-person interviews typically take place at the organization's location. Occasionally, some organizations may also opt to do over-the-phone interviews.

Single Interviewer, Panels, and Group Interviews Interviews may be one-on-one, with a single interviewer and the interviewee (you). Alternatively, there are panel interviews, involving multiple interviewers and a single interviewee. Group interviews are another format, featuring multiple interviewees during a single session.

Did you know you have Big Interview Premium?

The Interviewing Process

What to Do Before an Interview:

Research and review...

The company and industry trends. You should know the basic information about a company that can be easily researched online. For example, you should be familiar with their values or mission statement. The job description. Make sure you understand what the qualifications are and the responsibilities of the position.

Prepare...

Your professional attire: It is better to have this planned out beforehand and not the day-of. *An updated resume and reference sheet:* It is always good to have extra copies on hand to show that you are prepared in the event that they want to refer back to these documents. Any extras you want to bring to the interview, including mints, water, a pen and pencil, a small notebook, tissues, etc.

Questions to ask the employer (see examples below). Remember that this is your opportunity to learn more about the employer and organization. Ask questions that could not be easily researched online.

Practice...

A series of questions you might be asked (see examples below). Consider scheduling a mock interview with a career advisor, or use Interview Prep to practice virtually. Getting to the interview site (or running the online interview software). Plan your route, parking, and any walking involved. For online interviews, check your lighting, background, and audio settings. For phone interviews, ensure the number is stored with a recognizable ringtone.

The Interviewing Process

During the Interview

Remember to...

Give a firm and confident handshake. First impressions are very important in a professional setting. Believe in yourself and be yourself. You earned the interview and deserve to be there.

When responding to questions...

Frame your responses positively. Do not speak negatively about former employers. When discussing challenges or weaknesses, be sure to address how you have grown or how you are working on improving. Think before you speak. Listen carefully to the questions and ask for clarification if needed. Avoid filler words such as: like, um, uh, eh Use specific examples and quantify numbers Reference industry specific buzzwords or jargon

Types of Questions Employers Ask

Close-Ended Questions

What is your GPA?

What were your responsibilities in your last role?

How does your previous experience relate to this position?

Open-Ended Questions

Tell me about yourself.

Why are you interested in this position and working in this company?

What did you like most/least in your previous jobs?

What are your major strengths and weaknesses?

Behavioral Questions

Recall a time you didn't reach a goal. How did you handle it?

What role do you typically play in a team setting?

Describe a time you did not know how to do an assigned task.

What did you do?

Just like when writing your action statements for your resume, you will want to use the BAR method here. When selecting a story or example, ensure you provide background context, detail the skills you employed, and conclude with the outcome.

The Interviewing Process

During the Interview con't

Other

Technical, industry-specific assessment questions Outside-the-box questions Case study questions

Keep in mind that interview questions can vary across industries. Conduct thorough research and consult with professionals in your field to gain insights into the specific types of questions you should be ready to address.

After the Interview:

Reflect: After taking time to rest after the interview, take some time to reflect on the experience. What questions do you think you answered well? What responses need improvement? Also consider if the answers you received were satisfactory, or if any of them were a deal-breaker.

Preparing for Multiple Rounds: Prepare for subsequent interview rounds as necessary, depending on the job or opportunity

Navigating Job Offers: If you receive an offer, make sure to read it carefully. Along with information specific to your industry, you will want to consider the following: *Hours:* Will you be considered a part-time or full-time employee? Which days of the week are expected to work? Will you be considered a temporary or permanent employee?

Location: Is this an in-person position? Remote? Hybrid? Will the location require you to relocate? If so, do they offer a relocation package? Does the position require you to travel? *Pay:* How much are they offering to pay you? Is it hourly? Salary?

Benefits: What benefits are they offering as a part of this position? Medical, dental, vision? 401k? Signing bonus? Will you be able to accrue Paid Time Off (PTO) or sick leave? When evaluating these factors, determine whether you want to attempt negotiation. Some positions may offer more flexibility than others. If you decide to negotiate, always maintain a professional tone and express your continued interest in the position.

The Interviewing Process

Examples of Questions to Ask an Interviewer:

About the Employer:

Aim to build rapport while also gaining perspective from someone inside the organization.

How long have you worked at [Organization]? What do you like about working at [Organization]? Where would you like to see the organization in 5 years?

About the Organization:

Learn more about the organization beyond what can be easily researched online.

How would you describe the company culture? How does the organization promote a work-life balance? How does the organization support professional development?

About the Position:

Similar to the previous set of questions, these aim to uncover details about the position that may not be readily available through online research.

What would you like to see accomplished by the person who is hired for this position in the first 6 months? If I am offered this position, will I receive training? If so, what does the training involve? What are some challenges someone in this position might face?

Formulate questions that will provide you with the information you need about the organization and information that may influence your decision to pursue the opportunity.

Appendix



Dear Cal State East Bay Students and Alumni,

Congratulations on reaching the end of this comprehensive career handbook designed to guide you through the exciting journey of career development. Whether you are a current student exploring possibilities or an alumnus seeking to enhance your professional path, this handbook is crafted with your needs in mind.

As you turn the last page, remember that your career journey is an ongoing adventure filled with discoveries, challenges, and triumphs. The insights you've gained, from identifying your strengths to acing interviews, are the building blocks of your success. This handbook is not just a guide; it's a companion that empowers you to navigate the complexities of the professional world.

Embrace the diversity of opportunities, for each job interview, networking event, or career fair is a chance to grow and evolve. Reflect on your experiences, learn from them, and adapt your approach. Remember, resilience and adaptability are key attributes in any career. The connections you make, both with peers and professionals, are invaluable. Networking isn't just a tool; it's a lifeline that can lead to exciting opportunities.

Cherish the relationships you build, and don't hesitate to seek guidance from mentors, professors, and fellow alumni. Your journey doesn't end with the last page of this handbook. It continues with every job application, interview, and career decision you make. Celebrate your achievements, learn from setbacks, and never stop investing in your growth.

On behalf of Cal State East Bay, we wish you tremendous success in your career pursuits. May you find fulfillment and purpose in every step of your professional journey.

Best wishes,

Career Services Team

V.B. **Continuing Your Education Checklist**

There are three primary types of programs you can consider to further your education after earning your bachelor's degree:

Certification Programs are highly specialized to specific skills needed for a given career.

Master's Degree Programs are a way to further your expertise in a given field. They are typically 1-3 years long.

Doctoral/Professional Degree Programs are the highest level of education you can receive for a given field. They typically take 4 to 6 years to complete, but some can take as little as 3 years or as long as 10. It depends on the field and program of choice.

When choosing a program, here are some factors to consider:

Program Reputation: Is the program accredited by a trusted organization? What reputation does it have in your industry?

Professional Goals: How does the program align with your career objectives and professional goals? Does the program offer networking events, connections with industry professionals, or alumni networks? Does the program have a track record of helping graduates secure relevant employment? Does the program support internships, co-op programs, or other work experience opportunities?

Pre-requisites: What are the admission requirements? Do you need to have a certain GPA? What coursework or work experience is required, if any?

Application Materials: Are any entrance exams necessary, such as the CBEST, LSAT, TEAS, or GRE? What documents are needed, such as personal statements, statements of purpose, transcripts, resumes, or CVs? Will you need letters of recommendation, and if so, who would you ask to write one?

Continuing Your Education Checklist

Length: How long does the program last? Is it available on a full-time or part-time basis?

Cost: What are the tuition fees? Are there any other costs you would need to consider, such as housing, transportation, etc? Are there financial aid or employment opportunities to help with any of the associated costs?

Location: Is the program online or in-person? If in-person, do you like the location? What is life like in the area? Will you need to relocate to be closer to the program?

Structure: What are the degree requirements? What types of classes would you take? Does the program include a capstone project, thesis, dissertation, or something similar? Is the program structured around collaborative learning in a cohort, or is it more individually focused?

Department People: Who are the faculty members? Will you have a specific advisor, and if so, who would you want that person to be?

Research and Technology: Are there opportunities for research, if that aligns with your interests? What technologies and tools are used in the program, and how do they align with industry standards?

East Bay Online Catalog: Lists all programs available here at East Bay. Valuable information if you are looking for a major, or need to reference program learning outcomes for resume writing. https://catalog.csueastbay.edu/search_advanced.php?catoid=33

Handshake: For Cal State East Bay students & alum. Connect with employers and find career events on campus. - <https://csueastbay.joinhandshake.com/login>

LinkedIn Learning: Learn new skills to include on your resume and/or LinkedIn profile. - <https://www.csueastbay.edu/ocpd/linkedin-learning.html>

O*net Online: Browse career descriptions, qualifications, and salary information - <https://www.onetonline.org/>

Occupational Online Handbook: Browse career descriptions, qualifications, and salary information - <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

What are some of your strengths?

What are some of your interests?

List three occupations that you looked at on an online career database that interest you:

Write down three questions that you would want to ask someone in a position you are interested in:

Write down three networking goals you have this academic year:

Document Workbook

Experiences Inventory: Use this table to start thinking about the different types of experiences you have had and can include in your professional documentation.

Experience (position, organization, timeframe)	Type of Experience (work, internship, volunteer, student project, research, etc.)	Key responsibilities and tasks	Skills used	Important Outcomes

First and Last Name	Occupation	How you know them	Email

Education Reflection: What classes have you taken that you enjoyed and are related to your field? What were some of the key concepts you learned in those classes? (Hint: refer to Program Learning Outcomes and Course Learning Outcomes)

Accomplishments Reflection: What accomplishments are you proud of? How did you achieve these accomplishments and what skills were needed to earn them?

Documentation Checklist:

Check off any forms of documentation you have or are currently working on:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resume | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate School Application Statements | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing Sample(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reference List | <input type="checkbox"/> Transcripts (official and unofficial) | <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum Vitae (CV) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cover Letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Certification(s) or License(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Portfolio |

Design Workbook

What three words or phrases would you want people to use when describing you professionally?

What values do you demonstrate through your academic work, professional work, and/or online presence?

Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?

LinkedIn, Handshake, Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter)

Circle all online platforms that you have an account with. Once you have identified these, reflect on how you present yourself on them.

Are they public or private? If public, what might a stranger think about you if they only looked at these online spaces?

Jot down your most significant strengths and accomplishments, particularly those that are relevant to the employer. The goal is to pique the listener's interest rather than overwhelm them with details.

Now, use the above to draft out your commercial:

Acknowledgements

We would now like to acknowledge everyone who has contributed to this handbook. They have each played a meaningful role in shaping its content, direction, and purpose. Their insights and dedication have helped bring this handbook to life, ensuring it is both practical and impactful for all who use it.

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