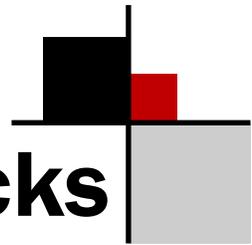


Three Building Blocks Towards Your Next Goal



Recruiting Athletes For Corporate America

NEXGOAL[®]



Introduction

The most recent edition of the NCAA’s “Estimated Probability of Competing in Athletics Beyond of the High School Interscholastic Level” calculated the number of athletes who went on to play collegiately from high school, but also calculated how many athletes from high school “made it” to the professional level.

Supplying statistics for men’s basketball, women’s basketball, football, baseball, men’s ice hockey, and men’s soccer (representing the major professional leagues in the United States: NBA, WNBA, NFL, MLB, NHL, and MLS), the numbers reflect just how much the cliché’ “one in a million” may not be that far off.

	Men's Basketball	Women's Basketball	Football	Baseball	Men's Hockey	Men's Soccer
High School Senior Student Athletes	152,940	124,539	313,141	135,491	10,209	117,645
NCAA Student Athletes	17,890	16,134	69,643	31,999	3,891	22,987
NCAA Senior Student Athletes	3,976	3,585	15,476	7,111	865	5,108
NCAA Drafted Student Athletes	51	31	253	693	10	37
Percent: High School to NCAA	3.3%	3.7%	6.4%	6.7%	10.9%	5.6%
Percent: NCAA to Professional	1.3%	0.9%	1.6%	9.7%	1.2%	0.7%

Last updated: September 17, 2012

The average professional athletic career hovers around ten years, and can be as short as 3.5 years for a player in the NFL, or 5.6 years for a MLB player.

At NexGoal, we’ve made the transition from athletics to the working world. Specializing in placing former athletes with our corporate clients, we find the perfect match by identifying, attracting, qualifying, and placing the “best of the best” athlete-candidates with our corporate clients. Our team of experienced search consultants (former athletes themselves) find the perfect fit for both parties.

Whether you are a student-athlete heading out into the workforce, or an athlete who is nearing the end of a professional career, this paper aims to provide some helpful tips or reminders as you begin the search for your next career. These basic building blocks will help you organize and actively begin seeking your next goal.



Gain Experience

Athletes face a lot of time management challenges: as student-athletes, life is full of balancing your athletic responsibilities, classroom commitments, and being a human being. Things don't get that much easier if you play professionally, either.

As a student-athlete, you have the opportunity to develop your soft skills, or as we at NexGoal call them "biodata." The inherent skills that you possess (attitude, work ethic, passion, leadership, communication, and focus) are sharpened in the day-to-day grind as an athlete.

Actively participating in your SAAC (Student-Athlete Advisory Committee) will offer many opportunities. Volunteer to lead projects, such as food drives, talent shows, networking events with local business leaders, etc. These are great "bullet points on the resume" and give future employers a glimpse of your actual and potential skills.

For example, organizing a food drive may involve

- advertising and planning the event
- connecting and working with a local charity
- arranging the logistics of transporting the donated items
- scheduling the personnel to work the event

Serving as the project manager, keep track of the results. Statistics are a great way to illustrate your success ("Largest food drive event for Anytown's local food bank in 2013, collecting 3,000 lbs.")

Joining student chapters of professional organizations offer exposure to your future colleagues and profession. Try to make the time to participate in these groups, whether it is attending a job fair or network with your classmates, asking their advice on events to attend or just staying in the loop.

For athletes at the professional level, the community relations department is always looking for volunteers for hospital visits, camps, and appearances. Those opportunities, as well as those by teammates who host their own charity events, offer the chance to build your network with local business leaders and build your personal brand.

Externship (job shadowing) aren't as formal as an internship or co-op, but the flexibility of time is on your side, either as a student-athlete or professional. Reach out to academic advisors, coaches, mentors, professors or team personnel for suggestions and contacts. Conduct some research on the industries in your area — even local team sponsors.

If externships don't fit your schedule, contact companies that you are interested in and ask for an informational interview. Contact the human resources department, or if you have a contact with that company, and see if they suggest a specific team member to speak with about a particular area. Not only is it a way to start building your network of contacts, but when the time is right, it may lead to an opportunity to create an externship/internship with that company that works within the confines of your schedule or after you are done competing.

If you are a student-athlete, be sure to set the externship up with your academic advisor and make sure that everything is in place so as not to violate your amateur status.



Networking

Networking is a lifelong skill: it is something you will do for the remainder of your career. You have to be proactive and get out there: it is more than just trading business cards or sending a generic LinkedIn invitation.

Simply defined, networking is “the process of developing mutually gratifying /advantageous relationships with like-minded people and businesses.” It is a resource of advice, business referrals and investors, and can help advance your career. It is a mutually beneficial relationships: not a lead generation process. While you may not have the roster of connections in the beginning, share information like networking events or interesting blogs or websites.

Some quick tips to get started networking:

- **Have Business Cards:** Vistaprint, Staples, Office Max, Office Depot and a host of other office supply companies offer business cards, some as inexpensive as 500 for \$10.00. All offer templates to design your card (walk the line between ‘memorable’ and ‘busy’). The following information should be on your card:
 - Name
 - Contact information: use your personal e-mail address and your cell phone number and/or your home number. Don’t use your work e-mail or work phone number unless you are networking on behalf of your company—then use your company card.
 - Link to your LinkedIn profile (you can personalize this as well on your profile)
 - **Don’t just collect business cards: if they invite you to call them, call them.**
- **Prepare An Elevator Pitch:** originally meant to last the length of an elevator ride, this is a quick summary that introduces you, your profession, product, service, organization, or event and its value to the person you’re talking with. It’s a great way to break the ice.
- **Have Your LinkedIn Profile Activated:** a great trigger for follow-up, you can send out an invitation to the people you’ve met, but don’t use the generic invitation. Send an original message: *“I enjoyed meeting you last night at the 20/30 Networking event and learning more about your company.”* Mention something specific about your conversation and keep the invitation quick. If your new contact doesn’t have a LinkedIn account, send a quick e-mail.
- **Make It A Date:** networking events are on listed in local business magazines and on their websites, in LinkedIn groups and Facebook, on websites for professional organizations and alumni associations. You can network at recreational events, such as your adult kickball league or a golf outing.
- **Listen And Ask Questions:** people like to talk about themselves, so be ready to ask questions, but be sure to listen so you can ask a great question. Keep the conversation going and share a little about yourself.
- **Use Names:** if they make the first move and introduce themselves, follow it up: *“Hi Dan, nice to meet you, I’m Anna Greene, I’m a sales associate at Market Square.”*
- **Be Your Best Self:** professional, respectful, inquisitive, a great listener, polite – someone your grandmother would be proud of. Many networking events are centralized around after work cocktails, be mindful of your alcohol intake. (Check to see if your employer has a policy, too.)



Your Personal Brand Online

Social media enables us to connect with more people and catalog our lives in pictures, posts, and shares. It also may set us up for elimination in the job search process.

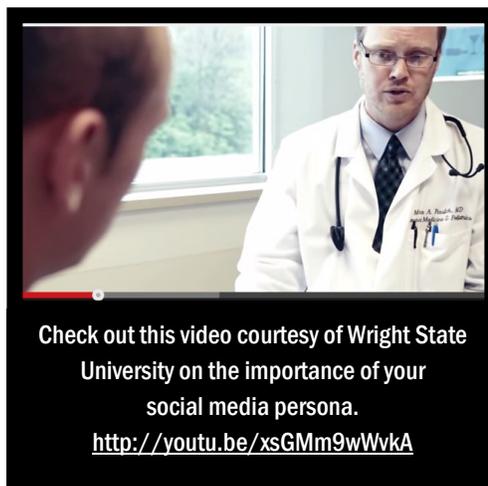
In a post on The Undercover Recruiter (www.theundercoverrecruiter) only 27% of hiring managers don't check out a candidate's social media accounts. Be mindful of what you post and who can see your content: checking social media accounts has become a part of the background check process.

Reppler (www.reppler.com) conducted a survey and found that of the social media accounts that hiring managers and recruiters screen:

- 76% check FaceBook
- 53% check Twitter
- 48% check LinkedIn
- 69% rejected a candidate based on what they saw
- 68% hired a candidate based on what they saw

Adjust the privacy settings on your social media accounts to keep the content you want kept private. Keep in mind these five tips when it comes to your social media accounts and what you keep public:

- Post About Your Interests
- Keep It Light And Positive
- Not What You Say, But How You Say It
- Base Your Content On Things That Make You Different
- Keep It Legal



One of the basic means of connectivity — e-mail — is another point of contact to review. Regardless of your experience as a job seeker, active or passive, your e-mail address can leave a first impression on a hiring manager of gatekeeper that might not play in your favor.

First and foremost, it's OK to have multiple e-mail addresses. Having an e-mail account dedicated strictly to your job search or professional efforts is a good bet and will enable you to keep those activities separate from the rest of everyday life.

You can create a free e-mail address account through Google, Hotmail, Yahoo, and others. (You could also create your own domain name to drive home your personal brand.) Keep in mind that while you maybe using your school account, you will probably want to move away from that shortly after graduation: an .edu account may give the impression that you are still a student.

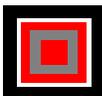
Some quick tips to create your professional e-mail account:

- **Use Your Name:** it is professional, it helps in your personal branding, and it is memorable. Hiring managers need to be able to easily connect you the candidate, your e-mail address, and your resume. Trying to connect HoopsByMike@hotmail.com or SoccerPhenom@aol.com with a particular candidate takes a couple extra steps.
- **Be Careful Of Using Numbers:** try not to use more than two numbers in your e-mail address if you must. As athletes, we understand wanting to keep your jersey number as part of your identity, but any more than two numbers and it can be read into: is that your birthday? The

year you were born? Additionally, some spam filters in place read numbers, underscores, etc. and direct those messages directly to the spam filter. If you include a number in your address, place it at the end of your name.

- **Don't Use Your Current Employer E-Mail Address:** as a sign of professionalism and basic respect, don't use your work e-mail to conduct a job search. Besides, your employer more than likely is monitoring your e-mails and they could be used against you if there is a non-compete clause, etc. as part of your current employment agreement.
- **Don't Share An E-Mail Address With Someone:** keep the personal e-mails addresses, like those shared with a spouse, out of the job search. If a hiring manager is responding to an e-mail from SpencerNHeidi@yahoo.com, who is opening the e-mail?
- **Don't Use An Alternate Spelling:** these if you have a longer name, think about just using initials and either your first or last name (*LTLattimore@gmail.com; DanielleW@yahoo.com*) instead of foregoing vowels in the spelling. Using alternate spellings can leave your e-mail vulnerable to spam filters.

Once you've established this e-mail account, set up a signature line to all outgoing messages, including your full name, the contact number and e-mail address you prefer to be and can be reached at any time (ie: your cell number), and your LinkedIn profile link. Include your e-mail address in the footer of your resume if it runs more than one page.



LinkedIn

LinkedIn is used by human resource personnel, as well as recruiters like NexGoal who are seeking candidates for the roles we need to fill for our corporate clients. Unlike a stagnant online resume, like on Monster, CareerBuilder, or Indeed, it is a vehicle to connect with other professionals, to research potential employers and careers, and a source of tips in the form of blog posts, groups, and updates.

The biggest tip we can offer about LinkedIn: its not Facebook. A lot of LinkedIn members treat this medium like the Holy Grail. Be respectful to the other members and behave professionally.

- Save the pictures, math teasers, and inspirational photos for your other social media accounts.
- Don't "spam" groups with blanket pleas: LinkedIn is another form of networking (a mutually beneficial relationship) so carefully craft your messages and comments. Compose the message specifically for that audience.
- When you extend invitations to connect with people on LinkedIn, take the time to write a message as to why you want to connect with a person. A LinkedIn invitation is just 300 characters long, frame the message like:
 - A reminder where you met: *"I enjoyed meeting you at the 20/30 Networking event last night and I'd like to connect with you on LinkedIn."*
 - A shared background: *"I am also a former collegiate athlete and I'd like to connect with you on LinkedIn."*

When your invitation is accepted, send a quick follow-up, thanking them for connecting.

- Don't endorse members for skills unless you can personally vouch for that particular skill. (This isn't a 'like' button.)
- If you are asked to endorse someone on LinkedIn, treat it like a letter of recommendation—because hiring managers and recruiters view these endorsements that way.
- Spellcheck, spellcheck, and spellcheck. Ask someone to proofread your profile for any red flags or for items that aren't clear.
- Don't abbreviate (you're not texting) and if you do use an abbreviation in your profile, please spell it out the first time. *ex: Certified Public Accountant (CPA)*

A complete profile is the first step to making the most of your LinkedIn profile. This is your chance to make a great first impression. The following is a quick breakdown of creating a complete and optimal profile.

The Top Quarter Of Your Profile

- **Name:** use your first and last name. And only your first and last name: adding keywords, job titles, etc. clog up searches.
- **Title:** use your job title. Use the industry-recognized title in your summary and keywords in a brief description if your company is creative with job titles. A simple online search will provide a list of keywords specific to your industry. (*see sidebar*)
- **The Industry You Want To Work In:** if you are working in a field that you don't want to be in, don't list that as the industry in your title
- **Your Photo:** select a professional photo — or take one. This is your chance to make a first impression.
- **Contact information:** include your e-mail address and contact phone number both in the Contact Info, your Summary, and in the 'Advice For Contacting' areas of your profile.
- **LinkedIn Profile Link:** personalize your LinkedIn profile link by editing out the random letters and numbers and use your name (*ex: www.linkedin.com/in/ThomasDFranklin*) You may need to include middle initials or numbers if you have a common name.

Fun With Keywords

Most searches are conducted using keywords, and there are a host of sources with lists of keywords that are specific to your profession. But there are also those keywords that are overused, listed below.

Keep in mind the “put up or shut up” theory: if you list a skill or success in your resume or LinkedIn profile, you will need to be able to prove it.

Remember, there are words that you shouldn't have to use to describe yourself: does anyone say they are “unmotivated,” “ineffective”? Then there is no need to describe yourself as “motivated” or “effective.” In addition, try to avoid using:

- ◆ Creative
- ◆ Organizational
- ◆ Extensive Experience
- ◆ Track Record
- ◆ Innovative
- ◆ Responsible
- ◆ Analytical
- ◆ Problem Solving

Great places to find keywords pertaining to your career are:

- ◆ Job postings for the roles you are interested in
- ◆ Occupation lists on the U.S. Dept. of Labor website (www.dol.gov)
- ◆ Trade magazines and their websites, social media accounts
- ◆ Websites, annual reports by the companies
- ◆ Industry event announcements

The Summary

You have 2000 words to tell your story, but we suggest keeping it around 250. Your summary is a quick overview of:

- Who you are
- What you do
- What you are looking for
- What you can do for someone (remember: mutually beneficial relationships)
- Why people would want to engage and connect with you

Be sure that you use the summary to:

- Tell your story
- In first person
- Use keywords conversationally, this isn't a word cloud (same throughout the profile)
- Outline your goals
- End with a call to action (ex: *"please send me an invitation to connect on LinkedIn or send me an e-mail at ..."*) and your contact information.

Your summary is a version of your elevator pitch. Make sure that you are targeting it towards the audience you want to reach.

Your Experience

Yes, you can copy and paste your resume into this section, but many experts encourage LinkedIn members to "tell their story": the experience that describes key accomplishments and the impact these actions had on the organization.

- **Headline For The Position:** this is the job title. As in the top quarter of your profile, use industry-recognized keywords to explain your role in the body. (ex: *as a project coordinator, I recruited candidates by sourcing our existing pipelines and various social media platforms.*)
- **Brief Description Of The Company:** even if you worked for a worldwide recognized company, describe the company in the first sentence of the body. Check the company website for some "bragging rights" to include as well, but don't plagiarize. (ex: *"Third-largest independent telecommunications company in the Midwest, specializing in corporate sales."*)
- **Promotions:** List your current or most recent title for that company in the headline, but use the body to list other positions. Sometimes on a quick view of a LinkedIn profile, it will appear that you've jumped jobs and some hiring managers and recruiters may be worried about so many entries, even though you've been with the same company for six years and you've been promoted twice.
- **Work Samples:** Upload work samples (pdfs, jpgs, etc.) to your profile. Don't add everything, but a selection that paints a picture of your skill set. Be sure that you have permission to share items if they contain "trade secrets" or intellectual property.

What if you don't have any working experience outside of athletics? Everyone starts somewhere, so don't worry. You've made the effort to become a LinkedIn member, which illustrates your ambition to take the next step. (see the sidebar on the next page)



Note: once you've added some work experience, move some of these items to the other areas on a LinkedIn profile (Volunteer, Organizations, Honors & Awards). Once you've added some work experience, you can also move your activity as a student-athlete to the Education area.

Unlike an athletic resume, hiring managers and recruiters won't be interested in individual stats like a scout or coach. Mention awards, honors received due to academics and service, or those voted on by the media or conference members. If you were in a club, list your membership and any honors or projects you were involved with. And be sure to spell out your conference name the first time you mention it in your profile (ex: *Mid-American Conference (MAC), then MAC each time after*).

The same formatting holds true for Olympic or professional athletes. As a courtesy to your fellow LinkedIn member, spell out the name of your leagues and the major league team if you are playing for an affiliate. For example:

- Burlington Bees (Class A affiliate of the Los Angeles Angels– MLB)
- Bridgeport Sound Tigers (AHL affiliate of the New York Islanders— NHL)
- Member of the U.S. Bobsled and Skeleton Federation (USBSF)

Other items to share in your profile as an Olympian or professional athlete:

- A regular participant in autograph signing sessions and personal appearances, don't list each one. Instead *“Represented the Whitecaps at several team functions, including personal appearances and fan meet-and-greet events”* or *“Served as team chair and spokesperson for the organization's annual Toys For Tots campaign.”*
- Participant in a teammate's charity event, say *“Supported the Cooley's Golf Outing, hosted by former college teammate Warren Coolidge.”*
- Serve as your team representative with the league union or any other advisory committee: *“Served as team representative for the National Hockey League Players Association (NHLPA)”*

Student-Athlete: Basketball **University of Whatsamatta** **August 2008-June 2012**

Member of the Ward Conference, Division III

- Four-year letterwinner; starter as a junior (2010-11) and senior (2011-12)
- Whatsamatta U Scholar-Athlete of the Year (2011)
- Academic All-Ward Conference (2010, 2011, 2012)
- Voted to the Ward Conference All-Tournament team in 2011
- Member of SAAC (Student-Athlete Advisory Committee) 2008-2012; served as president 2011-12 academic year
- Co-chaired annual Whatsamatta U Thanksgiving Food Drive (2010, 2011) benefitting the Frostbite Falls Food Bank; single-largest food drive each year, collecting almost 6,000 lbs both years
- Member of PRSSA (2010-2012)
- Graduated in four years as a student-athlete carrying a full course load

Additional Resources:

The Undercover Recruiter (<http://theundercoverrecruiter.com/>)
The NCAA (<http://www.ncaa.org>)
CIO.com (<http://www.cio.com>)
Forbers.com (<http://www.forbes.com>)

As you gain more work experience, you can move the majority of the information you've listed in your profile underneath your athletic stints to these following areas of a LinkedIn profile as you gain professional experience.

Volunteer Experiences & Causes: charity events

Organizations: SAAC, unions, alumni associations

Skills & Endorsements: you can list things like public speaking, and coaching here, but you can also include your biodata here as well (time management, organizational skills, etc.)

Education: list your college and your major. If you didn't complete your degree, list it as "Majored in Accounting & Finance"

Additional Info: a field for "Interests" is here, as well as an opportunity to list "Advice For Contacting." Take this opportunity to leave a comment like *"Please contact me via e-mail at VictoriaDonnelly@yahoo.com" or "To get in touch, send me an LinkedIn invitation to connect" or "You can reach my cell phone at 555-444-3331 and leave a message. I will be in touch as soon as I can."*

Groups, Companies, Influencers

Another way to grow your network is to join groups on LinkedIn. On the LinkedIn home page, the search engine allows you to look for a variety of items. Select "Groups" from the drop down menu and type in any keywords that you have interest in. To get you started, this sidebar has a list of athlete-based groups. (This is not the complete list.)

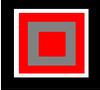
Some groups are open, and some are closed. If you've sent a request to join a group and haven't been accepted, send a quick e-mail to the group leader and double-check on your request.

Group membership is a great way to close the gap. Fellow group members are a second degree connection automatically, so you have access to their full name, whereas sometimes third degree connections have partially hidden names.

In addition to joining groups, follow companies on LinkedIn. Many companies use "status updates" to make job announcements, etc. Recently, LinkedIn started Spotlight Pages. This content is crafted to target specific companies. For example, NexGoal's three spotlight pages are geared towards athlete-candidates, corporate clients, and those interested in franchising.

Sample of Athlete-Centric Groups On LinkedIn

- **NexGoal-Athlete Career Services**
- **Access Athletes**
- **Athlete Alliance**
- **Athlete Network**
- **Athletes & Executives**
- **Athletic Network**
- **Baseball Industry Network**
- **Career Athletes Network**
- **NCAA/NAIA Alumni**
- **Collegiate Athletes In The Workplace**
- **Executive Athletes**
- **Former Minor League Baseball Players**
- **Minor League Baseball Alumni Association**
- **NCAA Athletes In The Workplace**
- **NFL Alumni Job Seekers**
- **Olympians In Business**
- **Sports Business Journal**
- **Motorsports Professionals**
- **The USA Olympic Committee Network**
- **Women Athletes Business Network, powered by EY**
- **Wrestlers in Business**
- **Women In Sports and Events (WISE)**



Conclusion

By gaining experience, networking, and completing a LinkedIn profile, you will have a great foundation as you set out to reach your next goal after athletics.

As former athletes, we at NexGoal have made the transition from the competitive field of sport to the competitive field of business. We works with the athletes by offering a menu of services, including developing job hunting and networking skills, writing effective resumes, sharpening interview skills and etiquette, and preparing them to leave a positive impression on the interviewer, confident that they are the candidate that will fulfill their needs.

We work with companies to fill positions with former athletes. Our process is to work with the company to find them what they need. These are not positions posted on job boards, but actual careers where the candidate and clients are brought together based on the client’s needs and the candidate’s abilities. Our focused and personal strategy takes the stress out of a job search for both sides.

In addition to the tips in this paper, we also invite you to:

- **Upload Your Resume To Our Job Bank:** Whether you are actively searching for a new position on our job board, or you would like to be considered for current or future opportunities, this database enables our recruiting team to focus on identifying, attracting, qualifying, and placing the best former athletes in positions with our corporate clients. (www.nexgoal.com/candidates/athlete-career-application/) You will be added to our pipeline of candidates and it’s **FREE**.
- **Connect With NexGoal on LinkedIn, Social Media:** Join our LinkedIn group (NexGoal-Athlete Career Services) and be sure to follow our company and Athlete-Candidate spotlight page for the latest news, tips, and job announcements from NexGoal and industry experts. We are also on Twitter (@NexGoal), FaceBook, and Google+.

Preparation for the next stage of your life is no different than athletics: it’s a competitive job market. We know how to tap into those skills we honed on the field, in the classroom as student-athletes, and throughout our professional careers and utilize them as part of a different kind of “professional” team. We’ve made the transition – let us assist you in finding your next goal.

Checklist

Gain Experience

- Involved with SAAC, Clubs, Events**
- Involved with charity events**
- Internships / Co-Ops**
- Externships / Informational Interviews**
- Involved with Community Relations department**

Networking

- E-mail address for job search/ professional efforts**
- Business cards**
- LinkedIn Profile**
- Elevator Pitch**
- Calendar of Networking Events**
- Join Student or Professional Groups**
- Recreational Events or Clubs**

LinkedIn

- Professional Photo**
- Contact Information**
- Summary**
- Experience**
- Join Groups**
- Follow Companies**



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