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Rev up Your Résumé: Determining Factors in the Race for an Academic Library Position

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WHAT WE LEARNED

1

Experience counts

The majority of survey respondents advised LIS students get practical library experience while in school.

2

Earlier is better

Graduates who found jobs right out of library school had starting applying at least four months before graduation.

3

Involvement is key

Graduates who found jobs right out of library school participated in conferences, associations and workshops.

BACKGROUND

Recent LIS graduates face many challenges finding an academic library job.

- Lack of entry level positions¹
- Competition with experienced candidates²
- High applicant numbers due to consistent LIS enrollment and graduation³
- De-professionalization of library staff⁴

This study set out to determine which factors might be most influential in the job seeking process by examining the library school experiences of recent graduates who obtained academic library positions.

METHODS

Emailed survey to recent graduates from:

- Dominican University
- North Carolina Central University
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- ALA NMRT listserv

Survey questions covered:

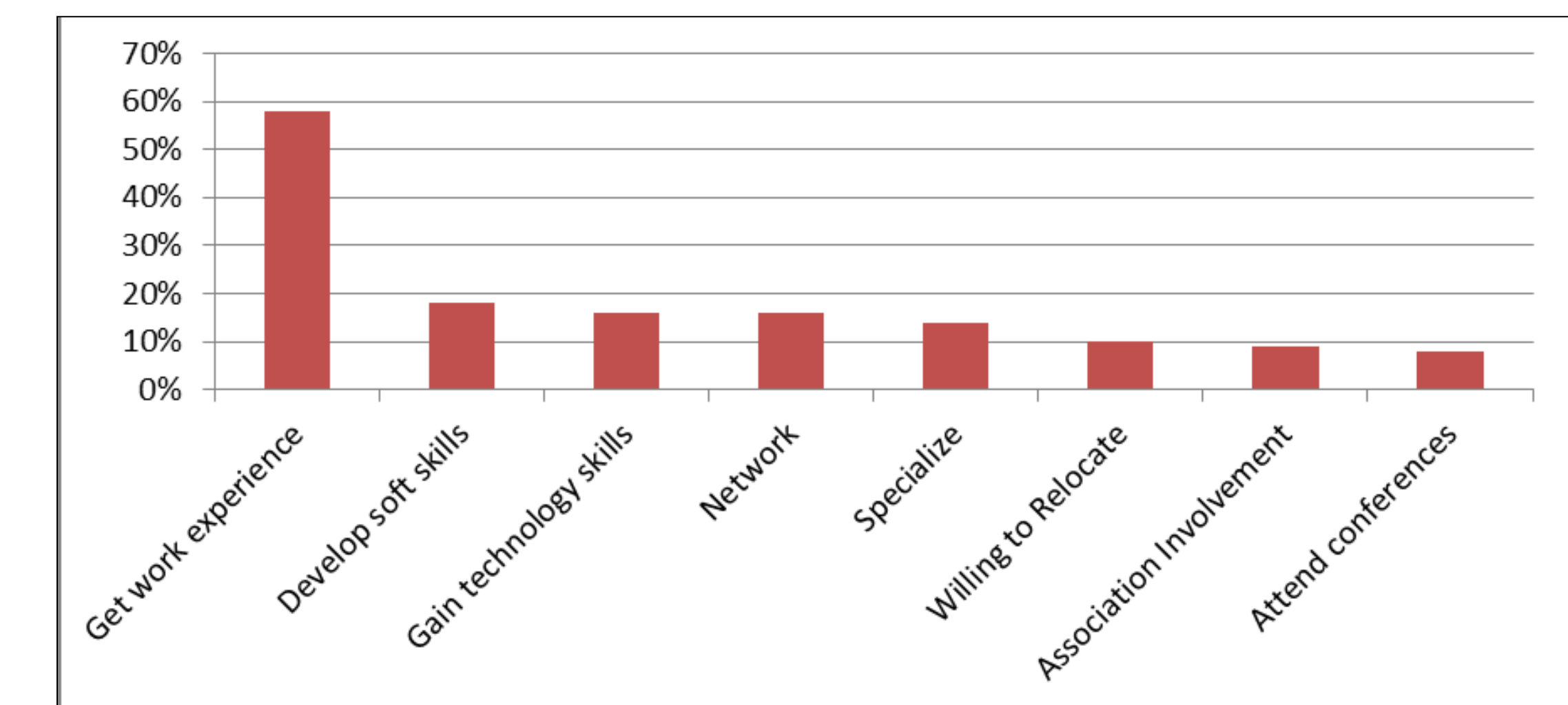
- Professional development
- Technological acumen
- Scholarship
- Service
- Previous careers and work/life experiences

RESULTS

Of the 85 survey respondents who found academic library jobs...



Survey Respondent Advice



“Start looking at job ads early. Figure out what you’re passionate about. Experiment and take risks with your library school projects.”

“...be strategic and don’t wait until the last minute to look for library work – get experience while in school in some capacity.”

“Experience makes all the difference. Hone your tech skills.”

Sources:

1. Holt, R., & Strock, A. (2005). The entry-level gap. *Library Journal*, 130(8), 36-38.
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