



American Translators Association

*The Voice of Interpreters and Translators*

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## ATA Client Outreach Kit

### Skills Module

### Academic degrees

#### Why you shouldn't list your academic degrees

Why shouldn't I mention my alma mater when speaking to business people? I'm very proud of my degree.

You have every right to be proud of your degree and your university, but when speaking to potential direct clients, you need to recognize the following realities:

- The business community tends to be skeptical of “academic theory” and often bemoans the lack of practical abilities in college graduates. As a consequence, your audience may not see your academic qualifications in the same light as you do. They're far more interested in **what you can do for them today**—your practical experience and current skills—than in your past studies.
- If you graduated from a foreign university, no matter how well known it may be in your native country, chances are your US audience won't be familiar with it—and this holds true even for many lesser-known colleges and universities in the US. So it's futile to mention your alma mater as part of your branding efforts.
- You won't get new business by striking a superior attitude and implying that you know more than your audience. It's far more productive to **listen to their concerns and respond with practical solutions**.