

Cheat Sheet: Job Advice from Recent Graduates

BASIC TIPS:

- Start looking for a job early in your senior year. College recruiters will tell you it takes many students about nine months to find a job. Get a jump on the competition. Start looking by the beginning of your second semester if not sooner. You need time to research companies, send out resumes, and go through the interview process.
- Networking is one of the best ways to find a great job. Tell everyone you know you are in the market. Contact family, friends, coworkers, old bosses, professors, and friends of friends. Keep your contacts organized and keep in touch with them as you continue your job search. Remember to thank them for any help they offer.
- Pick up the phone. You can search job advertisements and the Internet, but calling people you've known or worked with is another great way to let them know that you are looking for a job. You can also try cold calling companies to find job leads. Many of the best jobs are hidden, and this one way to dig them up.
- Informational interviewing is another way to gain exciting job leads. These meetings are often less stressful since the person you meet with does not feel pressured to offer you a job, only information about a career field or company. You should leave an informational interview with the goal of gaining at least a couple more names of people that you can contact to set up future informational interviews.
- Intern for experience. Internships are a great way to build knowledge and skills and expand your circle of contacts. Companies often hire former interns since they know that individual's work ethic and skills. Check with your college career center about finding internships in your field of interest.
- Get involved with student organizations. They enhance your resume and demonstrate initiative to potential employers. You can gain valuable work experience on student committees that translates well in the working world.
- Learn how to sell yourself in an interview. Know what the company is looking for, and then outline how you can fill that need. If you are lacking in a particular area, put a positive spin on the experience you do have. Show interest and enthusiasm and ask relevant questions.

Job Advice from Recent Graduates Cont.d)

- Be professional. Give a firm handshake, dress well, show up on time, deliver a warm greeting, and be respectful.
- Remember, charisma and creativity are also important qualities that will help you land a job.
- Keep an open mind. Your first job may not be your ideal job, but it could provide invaluable experience in your field. Eventually it could lead you where you want to be.
- Put together a portfolio of relevant projects you have completed. This is tangible evidence of your skills and work experience.