



Career Planning

Access to Success

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CAREER MANAGEMENT

Chapter – 1

Career Planning

Failing to Plan is planning to Fail

Career planning is an exciting process of finding your ideal career, based upon your intrinsic interests, motivational traits, personal work style, personality, values, skills, and aptitudes. You can easily have years gone by without exploring your potential for success. Surveys typically indicate that a large percentage of people do *not* enjoy their work.

In our society students often decide upon a major without fully exploring the most rewarding options. People who are working in a career that supports their intrinsic interests are happier and more successful and fulfilled.

Whether a first career or a career change, millions of people are using career planning to find their ideal career.

Assessment and Testing:

The first step in an optimal career planning solution involves using *different types* of Career Assessment Inventories, also known as Tests, to understand your career interests, motivational traits, personal work style, personality, values, skills, and aptitudes. Each Inventory is designed to provide you with appropriate information and feedback to help ensure that you will land in your ideal career:

- Discover career-related interests and abilities
- Identify *occupations* that match your *interests*, competencies, and personality
- Identify matching fields of study
- Identify your communications and leadership style
- Determine how you work best to draw out your creativity and productivity
- Understand how you adjust to circumstances, people, and demands in your work environment, and whether these adjustments result in stress or satisfaction
- Clarify and prioritize your career-related values
- Determine transferable skills and accomplishments

Occupational Investigation:

The next step is gathering information about the new occupational options suggested by the results of your Assessment Inventories/Tests including:

- Job Descriptions
- Working Environment and Conditions
- Training and Advancement Opportunities
- Employment Trends
- Future Job Outlook
- Compensation
- Related Occupations

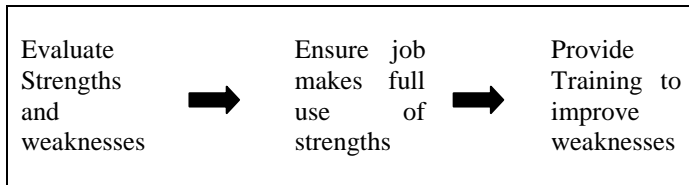
Decision Making:

Decision making is the next step to "fine tune" your list of options based upon the results of your Assessment Inventories/Tests:

- Applying essential decision-making steps and tools
- Asking yourself key decision-making questions
- Developing a plan
- Conducting Informational Interviews or Job Shadowing

Career Path

The ideal career path is smooth and clear of obstacles. Such a path can be highly motivating; encouraging to follow it by offering the support you need to develop the abilities that will ultimately take you on and up.



Career Path

Finding a Job

Finding a job is itself hard work, so it helps to have some techniques to follow. Each method listed below has its advantages and disadvantages, and successful job hunters won't rely on just one.

Networking

Networking is the process of building and broadening a base of contacts who can lead you to jobs. Job hunters who collect, use and follow up on references given by contacts can find "hidden" inside jobs, get their foot in the door, get closer attention paid to their résumés and, ultimately, get the jobs they want. Everyone can be a contact and be part of your "net" -- from family, friends and neighbors to past employers, Teachers and religious advisers.

Temporary Employment Agencies

Job hunters, especially those with meager work history, can get an inside edge with the help of temp agencies. A temporary employee who does a good job for an employer often is the first choice when a full-time permanent job becomes available. Many agencies,

however, have rules regarding where you work, how long you can work there, and if and when you can accept a permanent job at a client company. Some even require fees for job placement (although most of these are paid by the company doing the hiring). Research agencies carefully before applying

Employment Agencies

These agencies typically fill a wide range of jobs, from secretarial to middle management, although some focus on specific industries. Employment agencies, though helpful, work only with client companies and do not handle all job openings, so it's best not to rely solely on them

Executive Recruitment Agencies or "Headhunters"

These agencies are hired by companies to fill very specific, often high-level management and executive positions. They usually seek out job candidates, not the other way around. Executive recruitment agencies often look for people with the exact experience needed for a position, so they work best for job hunters with solid experience who are looking for promotions or location changes. Experienced workers should send résumés and cover letter to show they are interested.

University Resources

Many private universities, trade institutions and education centers offer excellent opportunities for recent graduates seeking new jobs, whether through career

counselors, alumni career days or job fairs. If nothing else, these may provide a chance to network and a way to gain job-hunting advice.

Computers

Online services, the Internet and the World Wide Web all offer excellent and growing job-hunting resources to applicants, including career advice, job listings, résumés, placement, research and networking opportunities. Since online services are relatively new, not all employers or industries use them as a hiring tool, but this new medium is gaining popularity.

Other Options

You might also want to check into employment agencies and newspaper and magazine want ads. These are easy ways to find out what's out there, but they also have the liability of being very public, and sometimes may not include the career you're looking to enter. Be patient. The nature, and benefit, of job listings is that they change every day

About Résumés

Résumé writing is a simple way to tell potential employers about yourself in a minimum of space. What works for one person may not work for another and what worked to get you your last job may not work for a new one. A résumé is a marketing tool that helps you sell yourself. An effective résumé offers an organized

snapshot of your employment, educational history and skills. A single job opening can generate 5000 résumés. Yours has to stand out.

All résumés share similar characteristics, but the four most common résumé formats organize content differently. The four formats:

Basic Forms of Resume

- **The chronological or basic résumé.** Employment history is listed in reverse chronological order.
- **The functional or skills résumé.** Describes skills and talents and puts little emphasis on dates of employment or job titles.
- **The educational résumé.** A listing of educational courses and experiences relevant to employment.
- **The combination platter** Includes some or all of the above elements.

Try all these styles to see which best represents you. Get feedback from school or career counselors, business professionals and anyone with experience you value. Keep the résumé short and concise; one page is preferable. Avoid the use of "I" and use action verbs, wherever appropriate.

First job seekers

Many people consider a résumé to be an overview of employment history. The dilemma for first-time job seekers, then, is to create a résumé that represents their skills and abilities well and downplays a lack of work experience.

Promotion seekers

A chronological skills résumé may be most appropriate when seeking a promotion. You can emphasize years of service and titles held, especially if your promotion is within the same company. A functional résumé, however, may work best if the promotion means different responsibilities or requires different skills from your present job.

Relocation seekers

Emphasize your past employment record in a basic résumé when seeking to change companies. Focus on your stability as a worker and highlight job titles and responsibilities. You may want to use a functional résumé that focuses on your skills and experience if some time has passed since you last held a similar job, or if you have held less relevant interim positions.

Career changers

You have work history -- and a fine résumé that represents it. But you've decided your future lies in a new and different field. The dilemma, then, is creating a

résumé that reflects your experience but ties it to a new profession. If you're changing careers, a skills-based résumé is often best. On the other hand, if you went back to school and would like to showcase some new course work, a combination résumé might work better.

Always attach a cover letter specific to the position and company when submitting a résumé. The presentation of the résumé and cover letter is very important. These pieces give potential employers a first impression of you. Make that impression a good one by using the same kind of paper for both -- the higher quality, the better -- in either a white, ivory or pale gray color. Select a professional-looking font in a 10- or 12-point size, and always use black ink. Avoid colors, images and fonts on résumés -- not all employers will find the effort helpful.

First Job

It takes hard work to get work -- whether you're a recent high school or college graduate looking for your first job, or a mature person entering the labor market for the first time. Be prepared to put a lot of effort into landing your first job. You've got at least one thing in your favour. Employers are letting go experienced workers and are hiring entry-level ones, although at much lower salaries. Still, no one is going to offer you the job of your dreams -- or any job at all -- unless you conduct a job search.

Start Looking Early

If you're a college student or university graduate, get ready to job hunt while you're still in study. Check out your college/university's placement center and follow these tips for college students. If you're a mature job seeker, begin at least six months before you start pounding the pavement. Try to get some experience. Ironically, even though employers know you haven't held a job, they still expect you to hit the ground running. Any relevant work experience, whether it be volunteer or college-related, is better than nothing.

Beef up your résumé

If you're in college, sign up for cooperative education, a college-work program or an internship. Do well in it. Hold responsible positions in college activities. Get references from bosses, advisers or mentors and make sure they address your strengths and abilities. If you're a mature worker, do volunteer, temporary or part-time work, or create an internship in your field of interest. Make connections with important executives and use them for job leads and references. Join professional organizations in your field. Most of them have job banks and all of them have members who know about job openings before they're ever advertised

Your Résumé

After getting experience and making contacts in your field, prepare your résumé. A résumé won't get you a job, but if it's properly done, it will get you that coveted job interview. The functional résumé, in which you detail

your areas of expertise, is the best bet for first-time employees. Employers want chronological résumés only from experienced workers, and they are too busy these days to read informal, conversational résumés from anyone.

How to prepare a functional résumé

Do your homework to find out where to send your résumé. Read the classified ads in newspapers, magazines and online; research firms that interest you at the library; attend job fairs; visit the career placement center at your school or college; and network, network, network with family and friends. Design your résumé to answer the needs of the particular job you want or of the company you want to join. List the skills you've acquired that will be most relevant to that employer. Be specific. If you're applying for a job at a hospital, play up your volunteer efforts at the local clinic. List your educational background, internships, volunteer work and life experience -- such as speaking another. Add any other skills or interests that have relevance to the job you're seeking.

Keep your résumé to one page

Use keywords, such as "accounting" or "communications," to describe your skills. Many firms put résumés in their computers and call them up with keywords to fill current needs. Put your résumé online wherever you can. Add a one-paragraph cover letter stating your interest in the company, explaining what you can add to the company

and requesting an interview. Follow up within one week with a phone call.

Scannable Résumés

Résumé scanning, a relatively new approach, is becoming a common practice for large businesses. Companies that receive a large number of résumés scan the text into a giant database. When they are looking to fill a position, rather than page through hundreds of résumés, they go to the database and search for key words or job titles. Here are some hints for creating a scannable résumé:

- Include a "keyword summary" at the top of the résumé. The summary should list job titles, degrees, job descriptions and other relevant nouns for which an employer might search. The words should correspond to your experience and appear within your résumé.
- Make sure your name and address appears clearly at the top of the page, above all other information. Use simple, easy-to-read fonts and no graphics. This eliminates any technical problems in scanning your résumé.
- Make certain the spacing between words and letters is adequate for garble-free scanning.

Finding a Job Online

With just a computer and modem, a job hunter can research an industry, learn about businesses and their staffs, network, follow trends and find job openings. You can use the Internet to help your job search in several ways:

Networking and Research

Meeting people through chat rooms, bulletin boards and newsgroups can greatly expand your personal network and knowledge of job openings. All major online service providers offer chat rooms, although you'll have to dig a little to find chats on your profession. Many communities maintain bulletin boards and Web sites that offer job information. In addition, Internet newsgroups cover almost any topic, so look for a newsgroup that covers your area of expertise. Ask your Internet provider which groups are available for your profession.

In addition, the Internet and online services are helpful when researching companies. Many businesses have pages on the World Wide Web, where they offer information about the company and, in some cases, job listings and application information. Governmental agencies, libraries, trade journals and other publishers also place job-hunting resources online. These listings can be found on national online services, bulletin boards that charge for access and free sites available using the World Wide Web and Gopher. To find online resources,

use one of the numerous search engines available. On the World Wide Web, try searching using Yahoo (<http://www.yahoo.com>), Lycos (<http://www.lycos.com>), and Google (<http://www.google.com>) specific companies on the World Wide Web.

Finally, many public and university libraries are putting electronic catalogs and information retrieval services on networks. This provides easy access to books, articles and statistical information -- and most often (unlike much of the above) it's free with a library card.

E-mailing Résumés

More and more businesses are welcoming résumés sent via e-mail. Although this is convenient, pay close attention to the employer's instructions. Employers often are specific about formatting, since sending résumés electronically can result in technical problems. Here are a few tips for making electronic delivery successful:

- Don't send your résumé as an encoded file. You can't assume the reader will take the time to decipher it, or that the file will work when the reader tries.
- Write your **résumé in ASCII text** (ASCII, the American Standard Code for Information Interchange, is the common raw text of the Internet). If you use ASCII, a company won't need

a specialized program to read your résumé. Most word processing programs will generate letters in ASCII text -- consult your manual if you're unsure how. If your résumé is forwarded (as you hope it will be) and extra characters are added to the lines, you won't have to worry about your text flowing over to the next line.

- Send your résumé to a friend. It's always good to try sending your résumé to a buddy before you pass it along to a potential employer. You risk being viewed as incompetent if you send an electronic résumé that arrives all jumbled. Prepare a print résumé, too. Employers may ask for a hard-copy résumé if they like your e-mail version. Since ASCII text doesn't look great printed out, you can make a better impression when your résumé is smartly appeared and passed around in print.
- As always, watch spelling and grammar. Many people who would otherwise be very cautious about these elements get sloppy online.

Résumés on the World Wide Web

Many applicants choose to put their résumé on the World Wide Web, incorporating graphics, sound and video to portray their experience. Web résumés are not confined to one page, since they can link to detailed biographical

information, examples of your work and Web sites of your past employers. Web résumés are also an example of your work if you are selling yourself as an online expert. Here are some guidelines for résumé Web sites:

- Don't get carried away with extras, such as sound samples, downloadable video and large graphics. Special effects are fun but can be time consuming -- and they may not work on a potential employer's computer.
- Be sensitive to different software and browsers.
- Keep your text as concise as you would in a print résumé.
- Prepare an ASCII text and a print résumé. If an employer asks for your online résumé, e-mail your URL along with an ASCII text résumé. This gives the employer a chance to scan your résumé, and then connect to your Web site for more information.

Publicize your Web résumé

Unlike traditional résumés that you can send to people, a résumé on the World Wide Web is static, and employers have to make an effort to view it. Add the URL to your print and ASCII résumés, and make business cards with your site's URL printed on them to give to people you

meet. The URL, or Uniform Resource Locator, is your Web address.

In networking situations, you'll feel much more comfortable handing over your card to potential employers (while cautiously mentioning that your résumé is on the Web) than pressing your print résumé into the hands of anyone who might be interested.

To create a Web résumé, check with your Internet provider. Not all services provide space for user Web pages.

Electronic Job Banks

A growing number of electronic job banks offer many services to both job hunters and employers. Like placement agencies, job banks vary in their capabilities and services. Most electronic job banks are divided between online and off-line, and within them you will find permanent and temporary work that's either general or specific to a single industry. Each bank works differently. Some sell pages to companies, which then list job openings online. Some offer space for a job seeker to post an ASCII text résumé or accept information that goes into an online database. Others ask for print résumés to be mailed to them and then scan them into a database. Still others provide links to job hunters with résumés on the World Wide Web.

Picking the job bank that's best for you means investigating what each job bank has to offer. Don't randomly post your résumé without first learning as much as possible about a particular job bank (especially if money is involved). Also, check out the job bank's privacy policy, particularly if you are already employed. Check with your service provider to find out which job bank is available to you online.

On the World Wide Web, Yahoo and other Internet search engines have hundreds of listings, and all the major online services dedicate areas to job hunters. Like any method, online job hunting has its faults. Not every business is online, and many others still put a priority on filling jobs in traditional ways. So it's important not to confine a job search to the computer -- but it's just as important to realize the growing role computers play.

Cover Letters

A cover letter should interest an employer in you and your résumé. Your networking contacts, knowledge about the company and personality should show through. Send a cover letter along with your résumé, unless requested not to. Be clear, concise and brief. You can expand on your résumé and go into greater detail about yourself and your experience in the cover letter. But don't go overboard -- avoid big blocks of text and extraneous information. And beware of overly clever attention

grabbers, which may irritate the reader you're trying to impress. A cover letter should be personally addressed to the reader. Send an original printout (preferably produced on a laser printer) on the same type of paper as the résumé. Never send a photocopied cover letter, and make sure to double-check spelling. Always write a cover letter in business format, personalized for the job opening. Standard format includes an introduction, two or three paragraphs of detail, a summary of qualifications and a brief conclusion.

Introduction:

State who you are and how you learned of the company and job opening. Say that you read about the opening in an advertisement, if that's the case, since employers often chart this information. If you are applying through a contact, mention the contact's name in the first few sentences.

Show Interest

Express your interest in both the company and the job. Highlight the research you've done into the company; discuss recent news events, hiring or acquisitions that are relevant to the job opening and/or your experience.

Summary

Cite your skills, and include information that wasn't appropriate for your résumé but further illustrates your abilities. This includes work-related accomplishments, anecdotes, experiences and awards.

Trouble-shoot

Tailor your letter to handle concerns that might arise from your résumé. Use the cover letter to explain and nullify any negative effects that might be created by chronological gaps, a lack of experience or a long absence from work. Mention outside work, volunteer experience or other marketable skills that show you spent your time out of the workplace productively.

Conclusion

End the letter by initiating the next step. Conclude with a sentence such as "I look forward to speaking with you further and will contact you later next week." Make sure you follow through with a phone call. Your résumé might be scanned into a computer database, in which case your cover letter will be scanned, too. Stick to basic font styles that are easy for the computer to read. Some employers discourage electronic cover letters because they take up too much computer space. However, a cover letter helps employers after they've called up your skills in a data search. Find out beforehand, if possible, what the employer prefers. You'll want to list the key words prominently in your scannable cover letter, either with a separate key word listing or by mixing them into the first few sentences.

Interviews

Interviewing can be an enjoyable part of the job search process. The trick is to prepare ahead of time, go in with confidence and relax. The purpose of an interview is twofold:

- A company is trying to determine if you are right for the job, and you are trying to find out if the job is right for you.
- You can make a good impression and take advantage of the time you have with the interviewer by doing a little homework.

Research the Company

The more you know about the company; the better you will appear in the interview. Find out as much as you can about the company and its products. If possible, talk to people who work at the company. They can give you information about the atmosphere and office politics, even if they don't work in the same department. Don't despair if you don't know people at the company. There are many other sources of information, especially if the company is publicly traded.

Get Ready, Get Set

Most interviews follow a pattern: First you answer questions about your experience and qualifications, then you ask questions about the job. Rehearse answers to

common interview questions, and prepare a list of questions you can ask. Make sure all your interview materials are up-to-date before you leave for the interview. Bring several copies of your résumé, a list of references, work samples, pens and paper. Dress professionally and comfortably.

On Interview Day

Arrive early on the day of the interview to fill out application materials. It would be helpful to bring at least two pieces of identification, like a social security card or driver's license. Try to make a strong first impression with everyone you meet at the company, not just the interviewer, since several people could have a say in filling the job. Experts generally agree that within 30 seconds your interviewer has already formed an impression about you, so make that time count. Arrive on time, give a firm handshake, look the interviewer in the eye, smile and introduce yourself.

Types of Interviews

Screening Interview A member of the personnel department, commonly lately known as “Human Resources Management” usually conducts the screening interview, which is meant to weed out unqualified candidates. Providing facts about your skills is more important than establishing rapport. Interviewers will work from an outline of points they want to cover,

looking for inconsistencies in your résumé and challenging your qualifications. Provide answers to their questions, and never volunteer any additional information. That information could work against you.

One-On-One Interview

It has been established that you have the skills and education necessary for the position. The interviewer wants to see if you will fit in with the company, and how your skills will complement the rest of the department. Your goal in a one-on-one interview is to establish rapport with the interviewer and show him or her that your qualifications will benefit the company.

Stress Interviews usually are a deliberate attempt to see how you handle yourself. The interviewer may be sarcastic or argumentative, or may keep you waiting. Expect this to happen, and when it does, don't take it personally. Calmly answer each question as it comes. Ask for clarification if you need it, and never rush into an answer. The interviewer also may lapse into silence at some point during the questioning. Recognize this as an attempt to unnerve you. Sit silently until the interviewer resumes the questions. If a minute goes by, ask if he needs clarification of your last comments.

Lunch Interview

The same rules apply in lunch interviews as in those held at the office. The setting may be more casual, but remember it is a business lunch and you are being

watched carefully. Use the lunch interview to develop common ground with your interviewer. Follow his or her lead in both selection of food and in etiquette.

Committee Interview

Committee interviews are a common practice. You will face several members of the company who have a say in whether you are hired. Speak directly to the person asking the questions when answering questions from several people. It is not necessary to answer to the group. In some committee interviews, you may be asked to demonstrate your problem-solving skills. The committee will outline a situation and ask you to formulate a plan that deals with the problem. You don't have to come up with the ultimate solution. The interviewers are looking for how you apply your knowledge and skills to a real-life situation.

Group Interview

A group interview is usually designed to uncover the leadership potential of prospective managers and employees who will be dealing with the public. The front-runner candidates are gathered together in an informal, discussion-type interview. A subject is introduced and the interviewer will start off the discussion. The goal of the group interview is to see how you interact with others and how you use your knowledge and reasoning powers to win others over. If you do well in the group interview, you can expect to be asked back for a more extensive interview

How to Ace the Interview

If you're persistent, you'll get the job interview you seek. Here's how to handle it:

- Dress in business clothes. Don't show up in a T-shirt and jeans, even if you will be dressing that way on the job. Arrive early and remain calm.
- Be friendly with the interviewer. Try to find some common interests.
- Answer the questions fully, but don't run on. Be prepared for trick questions such as, "What book would you take with you on a desert island?"
- As the interview ends, ask any questions that haven't been answered. What are the characteristics of a successful employee at that company? Would you get a written job description? To whom would you report? When can you expect to hear back from the firm? You may be called back for more interviews, but when the job offer is made, be prepared to negotiate.

You're Not Finished Yet

The interview is done, but there is still more you can do to make a good impression. Always follow up an interview with a thank-you letter. Refer back to the interview, and emphasize how your skills fit the position. Now comes the hardest part: waiting for an offer or another interview. Call the interviewer for an update if you haven't heard anything in a week. Persistence counts when looking for a job.

Regardless of the type of interview, remember that the interviewer is wondering how you can help the company. Your answers to his or her questions should illustrate how you can help the company achieve its goals. Find out about the job and the company when it's your turn to ask questions. Ask the questions you prepared in advance. Feel free to ask for specifics about who you would report to and the duties involved, but save questions about salary and benefits for negotiations after a job offer has been made. At the end of the interview, reiterate how your skills will benefit the company and thank the interviewer.

The Offer

An employer offers you a job. You think the job search is over. It's not. Employers expect to negotiate a salary and benefits. You should be prepared. You probably have some idea about salaries in your field. But before you

reach the negotiating stage, do a little more research, talk with college career counselors, read a book or call employers in your field. Know exactly what you're willing to settle for before the offer comes in, and what perks or benefits may substitute for a lower salary. Keep in mind that it's crucial to be flexible. Once an offer does come in, ask yourself a few key questions before deciding whether to accept: Is the offer solid? Sometimes it's easy to look at any phone call as a positive sign. Be sure the offer you're getting is real and that the person is not just saying, "You're still in the running." Get the offer in writing. Does the job fit into your long-term career plans? You may not want to accept something completely unrelated to the field that interests you most. Where's the company headed? You may want to make sure the company is stable. You don't want to get caught in a massive downsizing soon after you are hired. Is the office atmosphere casual or extremely corporate, and what are the people at the office like? You want to find a place where you'll be comfortable. If you appreciate a small (or large) amount of light-heartedness, you may not want to enter a job situation where everyone's very serious.

Some employers offer an advance to pay for such pre job expenses. This money also could be used toward relocation. What is the growth potential for you in this job? Another promotion should be visible within the next few years. What about perks or benefits? A company's benefits package can sometimes make a less-than-

satisfactory salary offer look better. A company car, an expense account or a great dental policy could outweigh a seemingly low salary. Some companies will offer profit-sharing which also could compensate for a lower wage. Some companies may offer more comprehensive health and insurance policies. When are you eligible for a raise? The money you want may not be there initially, but you could be eligible for a raise after three to six months. What about overtime pay? This is a concept that varies at every workplace. Some employers pay time-and-a-half for time worked over 40 hours per week. If you'll be a salaried employee, overtime work may be considered part of the job. Does the company offer tuition reimbursement? Learning new skills is important at any job, and sometimes there's not time to learn these skills in the office.

Companies often pay for classes you take at a nearby college to enhance your working knowledge. Is the company up-to-date? Even in this age of e-mail and Internet technology, some companies still use manual typewriters. This is indicative of where a company is headed. You don't want to work for a place that's stuck in the Industrial Revolution.

After you've wrestled with these questions, you can expect background checks before your first day on the job. Don't be scared by these prospects. It's common for an offer to be contingent on these final checks. Reference and background checks ensure your personal

responsibility and verify your resume. Expect an employer to call all the references you give. Make sure you call the references to let them know they can expect a call.

How to negotiate salary?

In today's job market, starting salaries usually are fixed for entry-level personnel. You can't do much about it. Take what's offered, and if you think it's not enough, ask for a six-month salary review to discuss it again. Negotiation is not limited to salary. You can also:

- Discuss the possibility of bonuses and commissions.
- Ask if the company offers free parking or other perks. Sometimes the perks can be worth more than any extra salary you could negotiate.
- Ask if you will get on-the-job training or reimbursement for college courses that would help you on the job.
- If the salary offered is too low, ask for an extra week of vacation.
- Accept the job offer -- it's better to be on the inside than on the outside, looking in.

Tips for College Students

Here's an important question to ask when you're selecting a college / university: How good is the job-placement office? One day, the answer could determine whether you have a job. Students who use their college career-counseling department from their first day on campus have an advantage over those who don't.

You can get advice at the placement center on which courses will make you marketable -- and when they tell you to take all the computer courses you can, believe them! The center's staff also will help you get coveted internships, which will give you work experience, something for your résumé, networking contacts and, hopefully, some extra cash. The center also will help place you in a job with a future upon graduation.

College career counselors with a commitment to helping students find jobs will help you write a résumé, set up informational interviews, target future employers and role-play what to say in a job interview. They'll steer you to information about salaries in your field and show you how to negotiate a good job package. This kind of information is almost as important as the degree itself and the services of career counselors, if provided, are "pre-paid" with your tuition.

Here's what you can do while you're in college to prepare for a career:

- Make sure you're going into a field with a future.
- Be active in your school and community. Employers like to hire people with proven leadership skills.
- If you can't get a part-time job in your field, get any part-time job. Employers like to see that you've made an effort to support yourself.
- Serve an unpaid internship if you can't get a paid one. And devise your own internship if you're not offered one you like.
- Join professional organizations.
- Make helpful contacts in the business community.
- Be flexible about what kind of job you are working toward.

How to Getting Noticed

Just how important is it to a top executive career to get your name in print and your ideas noticed? Here are a few possibilities:

Get out of your office

Go to conferences, speak up in discussions, have people notice your ideas. Choose your meetings and conventions wisely, where you'll be likely to meet people from different levels in your industry. Don't view the time as a play day away from the office, but rather as a time to showcase your own competence and style.

Get quoted

Find friends of friends or family members who write articles about business in general or about your field. Come up with some fresh ideas and get yourself introduced to somebody who is writing relevant articles and might quote you.

Speak up!

Volunteer to give talks anywhere there are people to listen -- in your company, work-place, at your college or in your industry. Have something novel to say -- you can't tell who might be around to quote you.

Study your favorite trade magazines. Consider how you might get mentioned by someone else, or consider writing something yourself for one of those publications. Chances are you could find 20 or more likely publications. Some will pay well and some will pay in reprints, but money is not the issue here --what counts is

just getting your name out there for some headhunter to stumble across and want you on their prospect list.

Go to events

Whenever something's happening in your community or in your industry, go -- whether you want to or not. Being seen and heard from often can give you the visibility you need to be perceived as a leader, someone to watch.

Open Up Your Social Circle

Many of us get so busy that we look around one day and realize that we have not been in touch with some of our best friends for days, weeks, or months. For folks who find themselves isolated or without much of a social circle, here are some suggestions:

Check old phone lists, holiday lists, address books

Many of the people with whom you are no longer in contact have probably lost touch because of 'drift' by both of you, not by intention. It is not too late. Many of them will be delighted to hear from you. Drop them a note, card, or e-mail to briefly update on your news and, more importantly, ask them about theirs. Sagging fences can take time to mend.

Take time, make time, for friends

Don't wait for them to initiate a lunch, coffee, or movie. You can be the mover and shaker in your circle, even if

you do not feel like one. Even if you are busy, you do take time to eat lunch. Don't you? Why do it alone?

Listen to people, and respond to what they say, not just what you think

Follow their thoughts; consider what they want from you right now, not just what you think they should want. Let them know that they are important to you.

Learn to accept that just being with someone is enough

You can enjoy their company and whatever activity, if any, you are participating in without needing to have an agenda for the future. Now is enough.

Schedule time for you

Discover what you want in your life, and go for it. If you are content with yourself, you will become far more attractive to others than if you see yourself as insufficient except when accompanied by others.

Be willing to check out new activities

Just because you've never done something before doesn't mean you wouldn't enjoy it. This, of course, needs to be applied in combination with common sense and an awareness of your personal values.

Join more groups that are of interest to you, not just for business contacts

You are more likely to meet people who have something in common with you if you are in places, and involved in activities, that truly interests you. However, remember that business contacts can also become friends.

Don't be afraid to go places alone

Although this should be applied with common sense, many people hesitate to even go to a restaurant or a movie by themselves. While it may be fun to share the experience, this does not mean that you cannot enjoy the food, or the movie, by yourself. Not only does this give you more conversation possibilities when you are in company, but... chance encounters can happen.

Slow down and be interested when people talk to you, even in casual encounters

Make eye contact, smile, and respond with a question that shows interest and a desire to know more. Your sincere interest may well lead to your discovering that you have more in common than you expected.

Always follow up

When you meet people, always follow up (preferably within 24 hours) with a phone call, note, or e-mail message that acknowledges them. If possible, include a comment related to something they said or that is in some other way personal.