Communicating with Employers

Networking & Informational Interviews

Career Services at Middle Georgia State University

www.mga.edu/career-services

2015
Networking & You

- Making business contacts while in school can create opportunities:
  - Internships
  - Part-time jobs
  - Summer work
  - Capstone Project
  - On-the-job Training
How do you start?

- Do research on careers in your field.
- Network with people who have jobs in fields that interest you.
- Set up informational interviews to collect information and show your interest.
- Participate in career fairs.
- Pursue internships.
Company Research
Why do research?

- Helps you in your job search.
  - Find companies that match your goals.
  - Locate companies that need your skills.
  - Look at hiring trends and salaries.
- Helps you prepare for interviews.
  - Know what the company does.
  - Know where the company is located.
  - How do they compare to nearest competitor?
  - History and forecasts.
Research Tools

- MGACareerLinks
- Company web sites
- Hoovers.com
- Glassdoor.com
- Library
- Related industry publications
- Search engines
Networking
Networking

- Based on practicing good communication skills at every opportunity, even those you create.
  - For introverts, this may be more difficult.

- Can provide a rich source of job leads.
  - “Invisible” job market.

- Purpose
  - Meet people working in your field.
  - Establish connections, develop relationships.
  - Collect names of contacts.
  - Hear what others say about jobs in your field.
Networking = Contacts

- Your own circle of friends, acquaintances.
  - Professors, friends, relatives, professionals, former employers, church, family.
- Members of professional organizations.
- People with access to information.
- HR and PR contacts.
- Community service agencies.
- College alumni, mentoring networks.
Informational Interviews

Informational Interviews
Informational Interviews

- Help you gather information from professionals in your fields of interest.
- Can be face-to-face or phone interviews.
- Why would anyone do this for you?
  - You’ve been referred.
  - Helps keep them informed.
  - Experts like to share their expertise.
  - Like to help others; find it rewarding.
Why Do This?

- **Informational interviews help you:**
  - Investigate, gain insight into specific career fields.
  - Get advice about where you might fit.
  - Learn industry/company jargon.
  - Talk about important issues in the field.
  - Broaden your network of contacts.
Initial Contacts

- By phone:
  - Introduce yourself.
  - Ask for 20- to 30-minute appointment.
  - Tell why you want an appointment.
  - Arrange a mutually convenient time.

- Identify the person who referred you.
- Ask for a personal interview.
Make Contacts

- By letter:
  - Give a brief personal introduction.
  - Tell why you want an appointment.
  - Identify the person who referred you.
  - Type letter using business format.
  - State that you will call in a week to arrange a time to meet, and then do that.
  - Keep a well organized file of contacts, dates.
Do Your Homework

- Learn about the organization.
  - Major customers and competitors.
  - Current projects, products.
  - Subsidiaries, locations, reputation.

- Know who you will meet.
  - Name, title, area of responsibility.

- Perfect your résumé.
  - Tailor it to fit industry, field, etc.
  - Take a copy to the interview.

- Dress professionally.

- Take paper and pen for notes.
Ask Good Questions

- Prepare questions about job field.
  - Necessary skills.
  - Coursework, training.
  - Typical entry-level positions.
  - Career outlook.
  - Alternate paths to career positions.
  - Future for workers in this field.
  - Advice for students.
  - How the interviewer got started with the company.
Be Prepared

- Prepare questions about the organization.
  - Its mission.
  - Short and long-term goals.
    - Expansion, diversification, re-tooling?
  - Position in marketplace.
  - Management philosophy.
  - Descriptions of various positions.
  - Description of the job of the person you see.
Interview Day

- This is a fact-finding mission, not necessarily a job interview.
  - Arrive 10-15 minutes before appointment.
  - Be polite to everyone you meet.
  - Re-state your purpose for being there.
  - Be ready to initiate conversation.
  - Keep conversation within time scheduled.
  - Ask for referrals to others in career field.
After the Interview

- **Send a thank you note within 24 hours.**
  - Be specific about information you received.
  - Respond to any unanswered questions.
  - Keep the door open to future contacts.

- **Reflect on the interview.**
  - Were you overly anxious, nervous?
  - Did you ask good questions?
  - Did you get the information you needed?
Career Fairs
Career Fairs

- **Employers expect from you:**
  - Initiative, enthusiasm, interest.
    - Do research before the event.
  - Firm hand shake, good eye contact.
  - Résumé.
  - Professional appearance.

- **Employers want to learn about your:**
  - Career objectives.
  - Abilities, strengths, weaknesses.
  - Contributions you can make to their firm.
Make the Most of It

- Review list of employers beforehand.
- Have pen and paper for notes.
- Bring copies of you résumé(s).
- Bring a folder for materials you collect.
- Start conversations by introducing yourself.
- Be polite, open to small talk.
- Ask questions, but don’t monopolize time.
  - Be prepared to talk about your career goals.
  - Ask for business cards.
Internships
Internships

- Provide students interesting, useful career-related work experience.
  - Get valuable work experience.
  - Develop work-related skills.
  - Evaluate your career goals.
  - Develop new professional contacts.
  - Gain confidence in your abilities.
  - Link course work with job functions.
  - Build strong résumé.
Your Internship

- Contact employers early about possibilities.
- May or may not be paid, but will provide valuable experience.
- Register with school, get academic credit.
  - Set learning objectives and goals.
- Tailor your résumé for industry, position.
- Be prepared for interviews.
  - Have questions ready to ask.
  - Be ready to answer questions about yourself.
    - Strengths, weakness, skills, experiences, etc.
Your Internship

- Internship must be well defined.
  - Must be under guidance of qualified supervisor.
  - Check where the internship will be done.
  - Employer’s expectations.
  - Start and stop dates.
  - Salary/hourly wage.
    - Ask your financial aid advisor how this may change your eligibility for grants and/or subsidized loans.
- Special requirements: Citizenship, medical evaluation, overtime, travel, physical abilities, etc.
- Reports required for employer and/or school.
Career Services
Career Services & You

- Self-assessments.
- Workshops.
- Help preparing to conduct an effective job search.
  - Résumé and cover letter development and review
  - Seminars
  - Individual appointments
  - Career fairs
MGACareerLinks
The MGA way to search for jobs!

- MGA’s web-based system for finding jobs.
  - Your access to career-related information.
  - Schedule interviews with employers.
  - Employers use to screen applicants.

- www.mga.edu/career-services
  - Choose Job Postings, then register, and build your profile.
  - Check web site often.
  - Keep personal profile current.
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