**The Career Plan/ Taking the Next Step**

As a junior college student who is about to graduate, seeking a job and start my career is one of the most important things for me. However, since I've never worked as a paid employee before, nor I had tried to seek a job by my own, preparing for my future career is still a brand-new area for me to get in.

In order to collect more information so that I can be more prepared, I consulted some of my friends who is more experienced and successful and find that there are several things that are benefit to my career development, especially to the start of it -- finding the first job. First of all, as a computer science major who is going to become a software engineer after graduation, it is very important to cumulate experience in real world practice other than theoretical knowledge points.

For example, using free time getting involved in some extracurricular software development project is one of the best ways to show the recruiters that if I was hired, I could really contribute to the profit of the company. Besides, open source software development also allows employers to get to know my ability in this area. Clean coding style, well-designed architecture and high-performance algorithm can all be demonstrations of the candidate's worth. As a result, I have been working on my personal extracurricular project since I was a freshman in college, and as the years I learn in this field, my projects become more and more complicated and pragmatic.

Internship experience is another important way for an entry level software engineer to start one's career, since by working in real company in the global market with other talented team members, people are able to make use of much more opportunities and experience to further develop the career. And that's exactly what my plan for this summer. For now, I will be formally employed as a data analyst intern by Bank of America, Chicago.

In order to get a chance for internship, I employed the following strategies. First of all, I spent several hours reviewing my past experience and reorganized the skills I have. Then in order to persuade the recruiters that I deserve a chance to display my ability to work in a technical interview, I carefully crafted my resume based on the information mentioned above and asked experts including one of my friends to give suggestions so that I can further improve it before submission to the recruiters.

During the process, I got much help from multiple recourses that helped me to get my first job successfully. I asked one of my friends who is now a PhD student to look through my resume to see which components are more important and should be listed above. I also looked for a staff in career center to look into the format and our details.

After got my resumes ready, I tried to attend every career fair our university provided since I entered U of I. Since career fairs are one of the few chances that students can directly meet the recruiters, speaking with them and persuading them by communications and actions is far more powerful than just sending some documents by email. So in the career fairs, I tried my best to display my value to the recruiters and share my experience of my projects. But since I was just a freshman with only little experience in this field, recruiters didn't seem to appreciate my experience and never offered further chances. After suffering from several ignorance and failure, I consistently improve my skill set and added some more project and research experiences and finally got chances this year from Bank of America and Amazon, and finally got offers from both companies.

Intern position is just the start of my career as a software developer, I will have to be more hardworking in my employment and learn from those who have more knowledge and experienced than me to become a qualified employee, or start my own business in the future.