Transitioning from College to Career

Courtesy of the College Placement Office

A picture containing person, indoor, suit, dressed

Description automatically generatedMost seniors, although excited about graduation, are seriously concerned about finding and starting that first post college job. The reality of leaving the collegiate environment and role of student to enter the business world and becoming a productive employee can be stressful. There are several issues that are key to making a successful transition:

1. **Time Management**
2. **Job versus Career**
3. **Professionalism on the Job**
4. **A Current and Accurate Resume**
5. **Recognize that Grads get Entry Level Jobs**

Understanding these key issues and trying to face them before leaving college will make your post college expectations more realistic.

# Time Management

The scheduling of classes after noon or only in the evening might not have prepared you for the eight to five (or later) hours of the business world. You can’t hit the snooze on your alarm and show up to work forty-five minutes late. Additionally the long weekends and college breaks don’t exist in most work environments. Vacation is accumulated and not a given for every holiday or snow day that occurs. In addition to your longer hours at work you will have to manage a social life. The days of staying up till three in the morning won’t work when you have to be at work by eight. If you are employed and several of your friends are still in college you might have to learn to say no to events that could be considered unprofessional or prevent you from performing your job in a professional manner the next day. Understanding these time management issues and considering them before their encounter will help in the transition. Time management suggestions include:

* Getting sufficient sleep
* Arriving to work early
* Avoid taking unnecessary time off

# Professionalism on the Job

In college a certain amount of irresponsibility is the right of passage. The result might be a lecture from a professor or a bad grade. In the business world irresponsibility often results in being fired. You need to be dependable and a self-starter to succeed in most careers. As a team member, you need to be able to be relied upon to contribute, meet deadlines, and accurately assess the contributions of other team members. In most business environments missing a deadline is unacceptable.

# Job versus Career

Your first job might not be the dream job that you envisioned obtaining after four long years of college. Many first-year grads will change their job in the first two years. What is important is that you use this first job to figure what you really want to do. Some degrees are more flexible allowing a wider range of possible career paths. Others, like engineering, are very specific. Look for a position that you feel will match your academic and personal skills.

# A Current and Accurate Resume

Looking for a job can be a full-time job in itself. All resources need to be used and all leads followed. A resume for a current graduate should not be more than one page. Often the student tries to oversell his/her qualifications and leave the employer unimpressed. Your skills listed in your resume should be edited for each job that you are applying for and should indicate how this skill will contribute to the employer’s benefit. Stating that you were captain of the debate team is simply not enough to impress a future employer. Stating that the skills obtained as captain, such as organizing practices, selecting debate issues, and being a liaison between the faculty advisor, college administration, and other collegiate debate captains, says a lot more. Remember these five resume tips:

* Keep your resume to one page
* Edit your skills for each application
* Use an easy to read font
* Spell and grammar check
* Make sure that your address and phone number are accurate

# Recognize that Grads get Entry Level Jobs

Be realistic in your job expectations. In a bad economy, many jobs for college graduates are entry level and require long hours, lower than expected pay, and hard work. Don’t walk away from a job offer because one part of the job description does not appeal to you. Consider the entire package and the potential to move beyond this entry level position.

Let the College Placement Office Help You!