

Why Job Search Reminds Me of Freshman Year of College

Going through stacks of papers, asking for recommendations and avoiding inquiries from nosy friends; is this freshman year all over again or the start of your job search? It turns out the two have more in common than you might initially believe. While freshman year might not have been for everyone, the first year of college is the perfect training ground for any job seeker.

Network, Network, Network

So, you've finally stepped foot on campus, only for the horrible truth to finally set in: you don't know anyone here. Of course, over time you quickly develop bonds with the people in your dorm, in your classes, and maybe even that guy that's always by the convenience store asking for your change.

At the time you may not realize it, but the same skills you used to find friends in a new setting are actually incredibly vital to your success in the "real world." Everyone's heard the term "networking," but how many people really understand what it entails? Simply put, just like striking up a conversation about the mystery meatloaf, networking is all about finding common ground with someone who's in a position to help you.

Do Your Research

So you've made some friends and you think freshman year is going to be a breeze. That is, until you realize your classes are across campus and the shuttles always a minute too early. What do you do? Students come into college well aware of the late nights of studying ahead of them, but few ever think to research their own college campus.

The truth is, research is a necessary part of finding out where classes are, where the best food on campus is and where everyone goes for great entertainment in their downtime. After all, you wouldn't want to get stuck with that cafeteria meatloaf, would you?

While you might not think meatloaf is a problem now, it is if you imagine that meatloaf is actually a job that appears too good to be true. Proper research before you go into an interview is vital to not only appearing

knowledgeable about the role, but you want to make sure you're interviewing for a position that matches your skills and interests.

Focus On Your Talents and Don't Settle

It's not uncommon for freshman to open themselves to new experiences. After all, it's the first time many of us are no longer living under our parent's roof. New experiences can be great, but it's important to separate experimentation from compromise. No one wants to be stuck taking classes or participating in a club simply because that's what their friends are doing.

Graduates fresh out of college often want to follow in their friend's footsteps when it comes to choosing a career path. This can be especially true if your friends share a similar major, but it's a temptation that should be avoided at all costs. Don't worry, no one's going to bring up bridges and whether or not you'd follow your friends off them, but it's still a point worth addressing. When searching for a job, worry less about the company you keep and focus on your unique talents and opportunities they present.

Realize That Hard Work Pays Off In the End

Everyone that has ever gone to college has that one story of a missed opportunity in their freshman year. It's that time when it feels like all of your friends are going off to a big party and you choose to stay behind and study. It's not an exciting story, but it has a great moral center: because everyone else went partying you end up doing the best on the big test (hopefully).

Going for a job is no different; it requires dedication and hard work. Nothing will ever fall in your lap despite how much you wish it would. Remaining vigilant for new opportunities and doing your best to leverage today is the only way you'll succeed. Believe it or not, there is no job waiting for you at the bottom of a beer.

Find a Mentor

So, you've already made friends, you've done your research, you've put your mind to the task at hand and you know exactly the kind of company you want to work for, what's next? While it might sound similar to finding a friend, it's important to surround yourself with qualified mentors.

Ideally, a mentor is where you want to be and is willing to guide you there. They've had your job and settled into your dream career, and now they're ready to pass their wisdom and knowledge to you. They're the Obi-Wan Kenobi to your Luke Skywalker (sorry, I had to take it there).

Finding potential mentors is more than just networking; it's about establishing a mutually beneficial long-term relationship.

Even though finding a job can seem impossible in today's economic climate, so too did that first day in college. Take your time and by all means try to avoid regaining the dreaded freshman fifteen.

Your Next Step

Google is like the all seeing and all-knowing great and powerful Wizard of Oz. Hard to detect and impossible to comprehend, there's a lot that happens behind the scenes. There's algorithms, bots and crawlers (oh my), but there's also a human element.

At a time when so many are unemployed and looking for work, Google can connect you to the people, insights and resources to get you hired. Join us as we explore Google Search, Alerts, G+ and a host of other services that can help you land your dream job.