Where Do I Go From Here?

How Does my Education Relate?

Am I Really Prepared?

I. Where do I go from here?

- a. Do I consider vocational/part-time/full-time work?
 - i. Consider job market and availability of the desired position(s).
 - ii. Is your resume current (content, as well as format)?
 - iii. If you were the employer doing the interviewing, do you have the experience and knowledge base be considered qualified for the position?
- b. Should I consider Graduate School?
 - i. Let the motivation for obtaining the degree be consistent with your agenda/goals (considering location, costs, and return on investment).
 - ii. Understand the diversification of graduate programs out there and what the desired job is actually asking for. This can save you money and time in the long run.
 - iii. Don't go by hearsay. Do the research of the firm, and/or the industry you're pursuing. Learn the lingo of the field and/or the firm. Remember the slang (SOL)? In a law firm, this can stand for Statutes of Limitations in shorthand. How about (GAS)? It's not just for a car, but it also stands for Government Auditing Standards otherwise known as the "Yellow Book."
 - iv. To bring something unique to the bargaining table, not only have the academics for the application, but have the knowledge base obtained both through experience and keeping up with current related events.
 - 1. Remember, experience has its limitations to the specific job duties you held while under the previous employer.
 - 2. Even if your position is very specialized, learn about the market effects of your industry (e.g., bank loan processor = mortgage crisis; accounts payable clerk = economic stimulus package, dependent care = health care reform).
- c. The idea here is, don't limit your knowledge base strictly to the job duties you previously held, nor just to your academic experience in the classroom. Your academic experience strictly gets you started thinking about the direction you would like to go. It will be up to you to be cognizant enough to pursue the subject matter further.
- d. Are there any licenses or certifications I can earn that will make me more marketable?

- i. Ask yourself—can I become a subject matter expert? Employers look for this mentality in their prospective applicants.
- ii. Know the steps necessary to get the credential. This may mean getting a graduate degree, taking specialized exams (i.e., the CPA exam), obtaining so many hours or years of related work experience in the field.
- iii. Be aware of any substitutes to the experience requirements that might apply to you. Otherwise, you'll miss out on opportunities that are staring right in your face.
- iv. If you're relocating, be aware of licensure requirements that may differ for other states.

II. How does my education relate?

- a. Too often we get caught up in climbing the trees, that we don't see the rest of the forest. Eventually we tend to give up. Each class you take contributes either directly or indirectly to your knowledge base. The subject can either be foundational or specialized to your desired field of work.
- b. Tests not only allow the instructor to gauge whether you're grasping the subject matter or not, but it also establishes the competitor in you.
- c. Working in groups gives you an opportunity to network, make friends, and understand different personalities (as you will have to do in the real world).
- d. The competition is getting those answers right, doing the best you can with your assignments, and moving on to the next set of classes.
- e. Employers look at what schools you've attended, what you accomplished while attending—academic as well as extracurricular (so clubs do count).
 - i. Everyone has to have a balance in their coursework and daily lives. Keep this in mind during your tenure in school. Too heavy a course-load can actually hurt you in the long-run rather than help you.
 - ii. Allow yourself the opportunity to budget your courses (financially, and time-wise). Just remember, for most fields of study, the courses still are being taught (whether at MC or at another institution).
- f. Obtaining a good GPA and an exceptional transcript simply gets you started in your field. You won't stop there. Even students fortunate enough to get the good grades and walk right into the job of their dreams, still have to contend with working well with other coworkers, developing problem resolution skills, quick analytical thinking, and to be an visionary (thinking outside the box).
- g. Keep your textbooks for review, refresher, and sometimes just for memorabilia. You've paid for them. Make those books work for you.
- h. Immediately start linking your classes directly with the dream job. Again, don't go by hearsay. Simply research the job requirements and model your class schedules toward fulfilling the requirements. Otherwise, you'll waste time and

- money on classes that might be impressive, but unrelated, or just simply not required for your field.
- If graduate school is in your future go to Graduate Management Admissions Council website: http://www.gmac.com/gmac and learn about the GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test). Most graduate schools prefer a GMAT score of 550 or better in congruency with your resume which provides evidence of your work experience.
- j. Keep your essays. Some graduate schools and employers request a writing sample. Make sure that your essay is revised for grammar and spelling errors, has current applicable content, and applicable to the reviewer's requirements. You may have to condense the subject matter to meet the "so many words or less..." requirement.
- k. Network with your professors. Traditionally students view their instructors as separate from their career goals. There are some professors who can help you in locating a job, learn more about your industry, or simply can provide you a "lessons learned" perspective on the job market.
- If your school has a career resource center, utilize all aspects of it. Do not take this opportunity for granted. Please don't assume that the services available may not apply to you. Through your career resource center, even if your desired job is "in the bag", you can expand your network base beyond your locality. The career services center can also enable you to consider other career avenues you hadn't previously considered.
 - i. As a result, you just might change your course program. And you'll no longer waste time and money in a field that doesn't fit your needs.

III. Am I really prepared?

- a. Often we don't stop climbing the trees of our class work, and ask ourselves this important question.
 - i. Real preparation happens outside of the classroom. Only you can go and research what skills, networks, credentials, etc. needed to meet the job market demands. As time continues, those demands may change dramatically, or slightly. Have you kept up with the changes?
 - ii. Consider this particular website: http://www.resumelines.com/career-resources/career-articles/job-search.html
- b. You may have taken the specialized exams, and met licensure requirements. Do you personally know your area of expertise? This is the subject matter expert mentality I spoke of earlier. An employer wants to know what you can deliver to their organization that makes them look good. Is your area of expertise (i.e., subject matter you're most knowledgeable about and comfortable with) what they need right now? Never take this expectation for granted!

What's it all about?

- c. If the pursuit is entrepreneurial, do you have your network of resources (labor, raw materials, location, finances and capital, etc.) in place to make that decision?
 - i. Make sure to be aware of the legalities of your business.
 - ii. Ensure that finances (grants, private donations, general revenue, etc.) are in place and will be consistent before start-up.
 - iii. Will you be happy with the challenges of what you're doing on regular basis?
 - iv. Do you have a support system (family, friends, etc.) for encouragement throughout the process?
 - v. If you have any constraints that can be released regarding your dream business, then release them and accept the risk.

IV. Things to ponder...

- a. Having done a self-assessment, can I truthfully answer the questions above?
- b. Am I willing to go a step further than the class assignments to make the dream happen?
- c. If the dream is already at my doorstep, am I really prepared to take it?

V. Class Discussion (Show and Tell).

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