

CAREER BOUND????

GETTING STARTED: FROM GRADUATION TO. . .YOUR FUTURE



After you've gotten your diploma. . .what then? Some of your friends will go on to college or technical schools. Some will join the United States Armed Services, and some may be thinking that they would like to join the work force full time.

One BIG QUESTION that students who are considering full-time work need to ask themselves is. . .DO I POSSESS THE ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS TO SECURE A JOB? If the answer is no, read on.

The general high school diploma will not stand alone in today's job market. High school graduates need entry level technical skill training or other post-secondary training. Without proper preparation, employment opportunities will be limited at best and will certainly go only to the most well prepared applicants.

As a learner, you will need to be adaptable to change, think analytically, and have the ability to transfer learning skills from one job to another.

Are you ready for these challenges? Will your high school diploma prepare you for the world of work? If not, re-think going directly to "work". . .Do you need additional training? If the answer is "YES", see your counselor to get information on post-secondary training.

If you are still convinced that "work" after high school may be for you. . .consider other questions a student might ask: Should I continue my current job? Should I look for a new and exciting job that will be the beginning of a career? How do I decide what to look for? How do I begin a job search?

If the answers to these questions perplex you, I invite you to explore this section of "College Bound. . .Career Bound: Great Expectations" in more detail. And—I invite you to take the opportunity to use the RHS Counseling Department's career resources.

The following pages will give you information on:

- JOB SEEKING SKILLS
- RESUME WRITING
- APPLICATION PROCEDURES
- INTERVIEWING SKILLS

CAREER DECISION MAKING ... WHERE SHOULD YOU BEGIN? "DON'T WAIT FOR YOUR SHIP TO COME IN, SWIM OUT TO IT."



You may or may not have some idea of what type of job or career you want. Choosing and preparing for a career begins with understanding yourself—your **INTERESTS**, your **ABILITIES**, your **GOALS**, and your **VALUES**. Considering the following will help you to decide what to look for.

1. Identify your **INTERESTS**. Compare your interests to a wide variety of occupations. Use an online interest inventory or see your counselor for assistance.
2. Reflect upon your **ABILITIES**. These can be determined by reviewing your grades in school, achievement test scores or by identifying specific skills such as mechanical, artistic, clerical, verbal, physical coordination or manual dexterity. What types of occupations will put your skills and abilities to work?
3. Consider your **PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**. Think about your personality, determination, and capabilities. Do you enjoy working alone or with a group of people? Are you a leader or a follower? Do your personal characteristics "match-up" with the career path you wish to follow? Do future rewards make the pursuit worthwhile?
4. Review your **CAREER GOALS** and **EXPECTATIONS**. What are your dreams for the future? What will your "lifestyle" be? What about the "working environment?" What do you want to be doing five years from now? Can you get there with your current training?
5. Explore job **OPTIONS**. Which jobs are in demand? Which are predicted to be the fastest growing occupations? What are the needs of employers in this area?

BEGINNING THE JOB SEARCH ... WHERE TO LOOK!

According to the UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, the following are among the best places to begin your job search:

- **EMPLOYERS**. . .Submit resumes directly to potential employers.
- **NEWSPAPER ADS**. . .Check the "help wanted" ads regularly.
- **FRIENDS AND RELATIVES**. . .Network
- **PLACEMENT SERVICES**. . .State Bureau of Employment Service.

GETTING THE JOB ... PREPARING YOUR RESUMÉ

Everyone should have a resum  in the event a potential employer asks for one. A resum  gives the employer information about you. . .your experiences, your qualifications, and the type of job you are looking for. As a general rule, a resum  should be no more than one page in length. If you plan to mail your resum  to prospective employers, you will need a cover letter. The cover letter should introduce you, state your

employment objective, refer to your enclosed resumé, and request an interview.

PLEASE NOTE: You must always ASK THE PERMISSION of your references before you list them.

For sample resúmes, you may wish to consult with your counselor. The Kansas Career Pipeline also has a resumé builder that can be very helpful in preparing your resumé.

THE JOB APPLICATION: BE ACCURATE. . .BE HONEST.

An accurate and clear job application is one of the most important requirements in successfully getting a job. Your application should stand out in a positive way. Remember, employers have many applicants to "screen" and many resumes to read. Employers do not have time for sloppy or poorly written applications.

Your application and resume give the "first impression" of you. If it has errors or is sloppy, employers may think of you in this way before they even meet you.

Listed below are some of the most common errors found on job applications. Be sure to avoid:

- Spelling errors - Check and re-check your application.
- Incomplete responses - Include all information requested.
- Leaving answers blank - Make sure that all questions are answered. Write "no", "not applicable" or "N/A."
- Not following all instructions - For example, if a question reads "List your last two employers with the most recent one first," do exactly that.
- Dishonesty - Honesty is essential especially when listing the "reason for leaving" your last job, for example. As a rule, employers will check with your former employer. Don't get caught in a lie. . .it will cost you a job.
- Stating a salary - Always answer the money question as "open."
- Incomplete addresses and phone numbers - Always have this information ready. Be sure that you also have the addresses and phone numbers of your references. Employers will request references and will check them.
- E-mail address - Would you be willing to share your current e-mail address with your grandma? If your current e-mail address is inappropriate, create an account for work-related e-mails.
- Voicemail message - Make sure this is appropriate if the employer may call your cell phone.

HOW TO GET THE JOB. . .THE INTERVIEW

1. **WHAT EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR:** The job interview is the most important aspect of the successful job search. Employers are looking for individuals who:
 - Can articulate specific ambitions and goals.
 - Have the ability to get along with others.
 - Possess previous experience or specialized training.
 - Have a specific interest in the job.
 - Demonstrate a positive attitude toward learning.

2. **ERRORS TO AVOID DURING AN INTERVIEW:** The most common "errors" that individuals make during a job interview include:

- Poor personal appearance
- Gum chewing during the interview
- Low level of interest or lack of enthusiasm
- Failure to look at the interviewer when speaking
- Lateness to an interview
- Failure to ask questions about the job and company
- Poor listening skills

3. **QUESTIONS THAT YOU MIGHT EXPECT:** Individuals being interviewed should expect to be able to clearly communicate the answers to an interviewer's questions. Among the questions that may be asked are:

- What can you tell me about yourself?
- Why should we hire you over someone else?
- What makes you a good worker?
- What are your career goals?
- Where do you see yourself five years from now?
- What are your hobbies?
- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- What can you do for this company?
- Tell me about your previous work experience?
- What do you know about this company?
- Why do you want to work for our company?
- How would you handle a conflict arising between you and a co-worker?
- Why did you leave your previous job?
- What were your best subjects in school?
- What was your discipline/attendance record in school?

4. **QUESTIONS THAT YOU MIGHT CONSIDER ASKING:** Individuals being interviewed are expected to ask questions. To avoid being caught with nothing to say, consider asking one or more of the following questions:

- What responsibilities and duties would I have?
- What are the working hours for this job?
- Would I be expected to work full-time or part-time?
- Does your company offer a benefit package?
- What opportunities for advancement will the job provide?
- Are additional training opportunities offered?

5. **FINAL TIPS ON LANDING THE JOB:** The job interview is stressful! Being fully prepared will give you a "leg up" on the competition. Remember, you only get one chance to make a good first impression.

- Dress appropriately. . .conservatively and neatly
- Use proper English. . .avoid using slang
- Be enthusiastic and alert

- Have a firm handshake and a confident greeting
- Arrive at the interview alone. . .Don't bring a friend
- Provide a copy of your resume. . .Be well prepared!
- Thank the interviewer, receptionist, or secretary personally
- Write a thank you letter. . .Demonstrate good manners

6. **WHAT IF YOU DON'T GET THE JOB?** If you are not successful on your first attempt to secure a job, don't give up! A person who knows how to conduct a job search will eventually be successful. Experts agree that as a general rule, it takes approximately five solid job interviews for every good job offer.

If you are unsuccessful in obtaining a job, ask your interviewer what you could have done to make the interview better or what skills you will need to be successful on your next attempt. Use the information that you gain to enhance your chances for success during your next interview. If the answer is you lack job skills. . .**GO BACK TO SCHOOL!**

7. **WHAT IF YOU GET THE JOB BUT IT DOESN'T MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?** Job satisfaction is important. There are times that employees discover that a job is not as rewarding or challenging as they had anticipated. If this occurs, it is critical to maintain a positive attitude—you will still want the recommendation of your boss if you move on! Use the opportunity to gain additional experience, learn new skills, and/or enhance current skills. If necessary, consider additional education to learn skills that will enable you to secure a job that will meet your expectations. When appropriate, begin a new job search.

"THE PERSON WHO BELIEVES SHE CAN DO SOMETHING IS PROBABLY RIGHT, AND SO IS THE PERSON WHO BELIEVES SHE CAN'T."

KEEPING THE JOB!

Getting a job is just the first step—keeping the job is the real test. The importance of getting started on the right foot cannot be over emphasized. It is important for an employee to learn what the employer expects. It is vital that an employee know and follow company policies. The following are several tips on "keeping the job."

- Be cooperative and supportive of your co-workers
- Get assigned jobs done promptly
- Be willing to compromise
- Learn from others. . .Be open to suggestions
- Do your share of work. . .Pitch in where needed
- Be on time. . .Limit absences to true emergencies
- Good manners cost nothing. . .They earn respect!
- Be flexible as expectations change
- Be honest, admit mistakes, make corrections.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to others. . .Avoid gossip.
- Make yourself valuable. . .Get additional training.
- Create a safe work environment.