

Education, experience benefits explained

With college tuition costs climbing at a record pace, many high school students must decide whether to invest in a college degree or dive right into an entry-level job. Whether driven by economics or personal preference, this decision can have a major impact on the course of your professional career as well as your personal life.

Benefits of a College Degree:

Throughout most of the 20th century, a high school diploma was usually enough to assure American employers that job applicants could handle most basic tasks. In fact, many large companies operated their own internal training and development programs for recent high school graduates. As a result, many Americans enjoyed long, successful careers, usually working for the same companies their entire lives.

Recent changes in the global job market have

put an end to those traditions. Very few people experience the stability of working for only one or two employers throughout their careers. In fact, most workers entering their first job today will change career paths at least seven times before they reach retirement age!

With workers jumping ship more frequently, few companies can afford to invest heavily in employee development. Therefore, more employers rely on job seekers to develop their own skills in advance of joining a company. As a result, the demand for workers with college degrees has skyrocketed over the past few decades.

Getting the Career Training You Need:

As you pursue more specific career opportunities, the requirements for entry-level positions become more complex. Many trade and technical fields require new workers to

earn an associate's degree before applying for a position. These two-year degree programs provide job seekers with critical skills in areas like nursing, technology or business.

Some jobs that require more interaction with customers and clients will require a bachelor's degree. Many hiring officers like to recruit recent graduates of bachelor degree programs since they possess the specific skills to perform detailed tasks and the broad cultural knowledge to relate to clients and colleagues.

Advantages of Gaining Work Experience:

Of course, not everyone can afford to invest in a full-time, traditional degree program right after high school. Lacking a college degree does not have to restrict your career choices. Many professionals start their careers in retail sales, customer service or other positions that offer on-the-job training.

Although a college degree program builds critical skills, few colleges and universities can fully prepare students for real world challenges. Despite the substantial pressure to make good grades and to complete assignments on time, few college experiences can match the demands of a regular, full-time job.

In some cases, students who don't do well in high school can find real satisfaction in the work force. Without the tedium of the classroom, these individuals can find the environments that inspire them to succeed on their own terms. Despite the prevalence of MBA graduates in the work force, many successful entrepreneurs and business leaders have achieved success with little more than a high school diploma.

For more helpful career and education information, please visit www.worldwidelearn.com.

Preparation, performance count for interviews

Whether you're a recent college grad or a grizzled veteran of big business, interviewing for a job can be a nerve-wracking experience. More than a few people have experienced a sleepless night on the eve of a job interview, underscoring the stress many people associate with interviews.

While you may not be able to eliminate stress completely, there are ways to boost your confidence about the interview process. And the more confident you are entering an interview, the less likely you are to be a bundle of nerves before and during the interview. The following tips should help boost your confidence for your next interview and might help you land that dream job.

Preparation

Much of the stress that comes with a job interview is the fear of the unknown. That's why recent college grads are typically more stressed out for a job interview than professionals who have been there, done that in the past. Whereas the veteran pro knows what to expect, the recent

grad has no idea. However, proper preparation can help you know what to expect.

- Research the company. Extend your knowledge beyond just the job for which you're interviewing. The more you know about the company, the more informed your answers will seem to the interviewer and the more you can tailor those answers to the company's goals.

- Ask yourself what questions you would ask. Interview questions, particularly for entry level positions, are often predictable. After an interview is scheduled, think of the questions you're likely to be asked, and then think of thoughtful answers to those questions. While it's good to think of answers ahead of time, make sure your answers focus on ideas instead of actual answers, as you won't want your responses to seem rehearsed.

- Write down what you bring to the table. Regardless of the position you're almost certain to be asked how your past experience applies to it. Your response to this question should be a home run, as there must be a reason you mailed

in your resume, feeling as if you and the job were a good match. Be prepared to confidently explain why you are the right fit for the job.

- Bring your own set of questions. You should be prepared to do some interviewing yourself. Have an extensive list of questions available, and if they are answered during the course of the interview, simply check them off your list. If you don't have a list of thoughtful questions, it will give the impression you're indifferent about the position.

Performance

While there's no way of knowing the success rate of the most qualified candidate, it's certainly not a 100 percent guarantee he or she will get the job. That's because a job interview isn't just about your resume, but about you as well. Even the most prepared person might not land the job if that preparation doesn't translate to how well he performs in the interview. Be sure to do the following at your next interview:

- Arrive at least 10 minutes early.
- Have your own pen in case you're required

to fill out an application.

- Make eye contact with the hiring manager when both of you are speaking.
- Don't sit until you're offered a chair.
- Project energy and don't slouch.
- Ask for an extensive job description early on in the interview.
- Answer with more than just a "yes" or "no."
- Leave salary, benefit and vacation inquiries for the follow-up interview, not the initial interview.
- Don't make negative comments about current employers or co-workers.

*Be prepared
for your
next interview*

*Honoring the
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Phone: 785-877-3087



Connie Chandler
Not Pictured: Jenda Jones and Kerry Ray

**Saluting the
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Working
Women**

Tamme Johnson

Smoky Hill Foundation 213 South Kansas, Suite 1, Norton, KS
For Chemical Dependency, Inc. Phone: 785-877-3068

