

It's All About Your Future

by Bob Roth

The "College & Career Success" Coach

A college education is one of the ways that young adults get prepared to enter the world of work. In fact, nearly everything that young people do between the ages of fifteen and twenty-three will influence the job that they obtain and the start they get in life. This is a critical time. It's the time when students map out the route they will take to the future and perform the activities that can take them there.

Unfortunately, some students don't think very much about their futures. They don't think about who they are, where they want to be after college and how they are going to get there. That's a mistake. When you don't have any idea of where you would like to be when you graduate from college, the likelihood of you preparing properly is very slim.

"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today." -- Abraham Lincoln

How can you maximize your future? Here are five things that can help to ensure that your future is bright:

Preparation - Great preparation is the key to any success. Students who know the futures that they want for themselves should lay out a plan to accomplish the steps and goals. By thinking things through, identifying what is needed to achieve the goals and obtaining the skills and resources, students can greatly improve their chances for success. Since few people are truly successful by winging it, great preparation makes much more sense.

Education - A quality education will open doors, while a poor education will work against degreed but undereducated graduates. The best employers hire people who are already well educated. They are not willing to hire students who must be reeducated to get them up to speed. That's why wise students do everything in their power to learn as much as they can, do their best work and are ready to prove that they are fully qualified.

Sir Francis Bacon said "Knowledge is power." And so, the opposite would be "Ignorance is weakness." In this information age, students who chose not to do their best in their field of interest may very well have condemned themselves to a life of missed opportunities and disappointments.

Don't become an undereducated graduate with no future. Instead, starting right now, rededicate yourself to obtaining the best education that your capabilities allow.

Experience - There is no substitute for firsthand experience. Students who want to obtain a good job at graduation should find ways to get some practical, job-related

experience, as they go through college. That experience can come while working with a Professor on a project, in a part-time job, in a co-op assignment, a work-study program or a summer job.

Interviewers love to meet with students who can talk about their on-the-job successes and experiences. They look for students who will accept responsibility for the quantity, quality and timeliness of their work. Therefore, students should find ways to obtain the work experience that will impress employers.

Determination - This is one of the best indicators of how much you care about your future. Determined students make things happen, get things done, solve problems and won't let anything stop them.

Students with a strong inner drive will always have an advantage over students who see little reason to move forward, do more or do better. They have a little voice that tells them to give it one more try, keep going and find another way. Determined students have important reasons for being successful, reasons that make them want to achieve results that are better than expected.

If you want to improve your chances for a successful future, make a list of the reasons that are important to you. Keep them where you will see them every day. Then, use those reasons to increase your determination to do the best you can.

Results - Just like employers and interviewers, you too should be concerned about the results you achieve. Your results are critical to your future. That's because you will be judged on your results. Employees who can get things done, overcome obstacles and make things better are almost certainly guaranteed success.

"The opportunity for achievement is available to everyone." -- Bob Roth

You are more likely to take control of your future when you pay close attention to these five elements of success. When you focus on preparation, your education, experience, determination and results, you are doing the things that will lead to the future that you desire. However, if you fail to emphasize these elements, you will find that you end up with a future that is quite different from the one that you have dreamed about.