

You Can't Do It All In Your Senior Year

by Bob Roth
The "College & Career Success" Coach

When I talk with students and their parents, I am frequently heard trying to make a critically important point. I try to convince people that the senior year job search actually begins in the freshman year. Many people are surprised when they hear this statement. And yet, I know that it is true. Let me explain.

To prepare for an effective, senior year, job search, there are numerous questions to be answered, pieces of information to be accumulated and steps to be completed. With that in mind, the earlier you get started on these issues, the better. You can't do it all in your senior year.

If you give some thought to the questions that follow, they can help to get you pointed in the right direction.

1. What jobs are of interest to you? Can you name several position titles you expect to seek in your senior year job search?
2. Have you done some research? Which employers offer job opportunities in your field of interest? Which employers interest you the most? Why?
3. What are these employers looking for? What experiences and qualifications do these employers value and expect of the students they will select to be interviewed?
4. Have you identified, spoken with and obtained useful information from alumni who currently work in your field of interest?
5. Are you participating in campus, work and community activities, in order to build your list of accomplishments and make yourself more attractive to employers?
6. Are you prepared to provide examples and tell stories about your accomplishments in a way that will impress interviewers and employers?
7. What are you doing to develop and expand your communication, people and leadership skills?
8. How do you plan to differentiate yourself from other qualified applicants?
9. Are you actively cultivating relationships with the people who will serve as references?
10. How will you make your resume and interview memorable and professional?
11. Have you crafted several statements and questions that will clearly

demonstrate to employers that you are interested in, and capable of, making a positive contribution in their organization?

12. Are you prepared to sell yourself? Every time you communicate with an employer, there is an opportunity to sell your skills, abilities and accomplishments. Sell them the benefits. Show them how they will benefit when they bring you on board. Can you give an employer several powerful reasons why they should hire you? (The most powerful reasons are usually based on examples of your previous accomplishments and contributions.)

If you intend to go after a great job with a respected employer, there are plenty of things you can be working on, during each year of college. As you chip away at the list and improve your knowledge and skills, you will make yourself more attractive to a variety of employers. On the other hand, if you choose to wait until your senior year to begin to think about preparation, you will have put yourself at a serious disadvantage. Effective preparation takes time - a great deal of time.

Job hunting is a competition. That's why smart students do everything they can to prepare. They start in their freshman year, identify a direction, conduct the research, formulate a plan, methodically improve their skills, accumulate accomplishments and take advantage of the help that is available. Importantly, every college student can begin to improve their chances for job hunting success, as soon as they embrace the concept of preparation.

Three important points:

1. Smart students identify, and then go after, the things that are important to their futures. A good job is a worthwhile goal and a great way to start.
2. Preparation is a key ingredient in any form of success. Students who are well prepared have a huge advantage over those who try to wing it.
3. Regarding the job search, nobody can do everything in the senior year. There isn't enough time. That's why it is important for you to recognize that the senior year job search actually begins in the freshman year. Start now!

If it is important for you to increase your chances of landing a great job, at a good salary, with a respected employer, take some time to answer the questions above. Once you have fully explored these questions, as they pertain to you, you can begin to lay out a plan of action that will put you in a better position to achieve your goals. Only you can do the work that is needed.

For more information visit Bob's web site: www.The4Realities.com. Bob Roth is the author of *The 4 Realities Of Success During and After College*. Bob's newest book *The College Student's Guide To Landing A Great Job* is now available.