

FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE BOARDROOM

Article by Cathy Holloway Hill

College can be both challenging and exciting. For college graduates transitioning into the corporate workplace, the challenges and excitement can turn into outright stress and anxiety. This article will eliminate the anxieties by providing you with the necessary information to ensure a smooth rewarding transition.

Research shows that college does not adequately prepare students for an effective transition from student to professional. College prepares individuals for certain aspects of the corporate workplace. Development and education does not stop after college. A successful career consists of continual learning, effective feedback, and a constant quest to hone your skills. Most industries are in a constant state of change, and you must also change and evolve along with your chosen industry.

Each year thousands of eager college students begin their quest for the ultimate independence – a new career. Many get lucky, find good jobs, and begin their new career with high enthusiasm and energy only to be disappointed soon afterwards. Why? Because most of them will undoubtedly overlook a very critical step in their career quest – **planning!**

According to statistics, 80% of people in the workplace begin their careers with no planning. The number one reason most college grads fall into jobs is to please their parents. The biggest mistakes we make, in choosing our careers, is lack of planning and allowing someone else to write the script for our lives.

There are two specific popular career search types – traditional and life impacting. You leave your career to chance when selecting the traditional search. This search type consists of soliciting the assistance of an internet search engine to provide a pool of jobs to select from. The disadvantages of this search type are that you leave your career to chance, and search engines set you up to receive a tremendous amount of unsolicited junk email.

The life-impacting search is an exploration. This search type requires time, effort, and planning. But the rewards are well worth the effort. You design your career (and your life) according to your skills, attributes, and passions. According to research, this search type is 90% more effective in landing your dream job. Below are six steps necessary for the life-impacting search, and, in turn, enjoy a career of happiness and fulfillment.

1- Self Assessment

Self assessment is the process of gathering information about yourself in order to make an informed career decision. Your values, interests, personality inventories, skill assessments, strengths and weaknesses are all critical components in determining which job and industry would benefit you. A self assessment is first and foremost when

choosing an occupation. Learning about yourself helps you figure out what career to pursue.

2- Emotional Cleansing

We miss great opportunities in life by carrying emotional baggage that we refuse to release. Negative emotions drain our positive energy and prevent us from focusing on good choices for not only our career, but our lives. We live in a constant state of pessimism carrying this baggage. There are many methods to help release these negative emotions. There are many methods for learning to release negative emotions (i.e., prayer, meditation, visualization, etc).

3- Assess the market and industry

Understand the conditions of the market and industry you choose. Many industries undergo changes at any given point in time. Understanding the state of the industry provides you with the knowledge of how to approach that specific market. Ensure the industry you choose aligns with your skills and passions.

4- Set goals

The first step in goal setting is to create your personal vision and mission statement. Your vision statement is “what” you want to accomplish in your career, and your mission statement is “how” you intend to accomplish it. Your list of goals will be your roadmap for accomplishing your mission. SMART goals are the best method for goal setting. Specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and time bound goals have all the necessary components to achieve success. Also be sure to include a backup plan in the event that your initial plan runs into roadblocks.

5- Resume and job portfolio

There are many internet resources and books on the market to assist with creating a powerful resume. Many job seekers do not have a job portfolio. A job portfolio is a document that highlights your accomplishments. You can either create a leather bound portfolio to show, or you can create a “leave behind” document. Your job portfolio can be letters of recommendation, achievements, award certificates, or a couple of pages from an outstanding evaluation. It can be whatever you creatively want it to be. Research shows that a job portfolio is 75% more effective in landing your job.

6- Network of contacts

Your job search will not be effective if you don't know anyone. It is critical to join several networking organizations, and always take business cards. And don't just collect business cards, use them! Stay in touch with your network of contacts because you never know when they may have a critical lead for that dream job you're looking for.

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