

JOB SHADOW PROGRAM

What Career Exploration Should Be!!

WHAT IS JOB SHADOWING?

Job Shadowing is an opportunity for you to connect or “shadow” with a business professional (job shadowing mentor) who has specific knowledge about an occupation or career in which you are interested. You observe responsibilities and tasks associated with the mentor’s career and have the opportunity to ask questions about the knowledge, skills, talents, and level of education required for the job. While the purpose of job shadowing is to gather career related information and expand your networking contacts, it also allows you to build interviewing skills, become aware of trends in the field and see workforce technologies in action. Multiple job shadowing experiences may be arranged to allow you to explore a variety of career paths.

DOES JOB SHADOWING REALLY WORK?

Yes! Job Shadowing works because most people:

- Enjoy talking about their jobs and career fields.
- Are flattered that you ask their advice to assist with your career and future.
- Are empathetic about career transitions because they have experienced them.
- Like to assist others because it makes them feel good.

WHY SHOULD I PARTICIPATE IN A JOB SHADOWING PROGRAM?

A job shadowing experience may:

- Present up-to-date facts about an occupation that can assist in your decision making.
- Inform you about the skills required for certain jobs so you can match them with your skills.
- Provide valuable networking contacts to utilize when conducting your actual job search.
- Assist in developing communication skills and self-confidence in talking with professional people in a more relaxed work environment.
- Expose you to occupational “buzzwords” unique to the career field of your choice.
- Give you an edge in future interviews by providing inside knowledge not known by

your competition.

- Develop basic skills similar to a targeted job search.

HOW CAN I GET STARTED?

First you must build a potential contact list or contact the Career Center or faculty.

Determine who has the information you are seeking. Identify those people who:

- Share a common interest, enthusiasm, or involvement in some activity that appeals to you.
- Work in a career setting you enjoy.
- Work in career areas that interest you.
- Work in specific jobs or in a specific organization which interests you.

ONCE I CREATE MY LIST, HOW DO I FIND THESE POTENTIAL CONTACTS?

Ask the Career Center staff about Tri-State area employers who have volunteered to be contacted by students to show and discuss job and career related information.

- Review “UW-Platteville Connection” Program (Alumni and Friends of the University).
- Contact the area Chamber of Commerce's and Economic Development agencies.
- Use the Internet! - you might even make your first contact by email.
- Refer to Reference USA (Electronic directory of 12 million businesses).
- Check the Yellow pages of the geographical areas of interest.

HOW WOULD I CONTACT THESE PEOPLE?

There are three ways to establish a job shadowing experience. You may want to use all three:

- Referral - Visit the Resource Center in the Career Center and look over the Tri-State display information and visit the Tri-State Internet page on our website.
- Telephone - Contact area business professionals and explain that you are a student conducting career research and wish to gather information to assist in making career decisions. Your goals for the call are to connect with your shadowing mentor and schedule the time and date for the shadowing experience.
- Write a letter - If you have the name of a potential contact, you may wish to write a letter or email before making the telephone call. Make sure your letter clearly states your purpose and desire to schedule a job shadowing experience. Indicate that you will follow up by a telephone call in hopes of scheduling a specific date and time.

HELPFUL TIPS TO FOLLOW

- Know what you want to accomplish - The primary objective of job shadowing is to

investigate a specific career field so you can make a more informed career decision.

- Identify your potential contacts - When you know what you want to accomplish, ask yourself, “Who has the information I need?”
- Arrange for the job shadowing experience - You will want to discuss this with your job shadowing mentor. Your experience could be arranged for a half hour to a day or a week. It will typically start with questions related to the job or specific career field.
- Prepare for your job shadowing experience - Plan what you want to discuss with your job shadowing mentor. Come prepared with specific questions. Even though you are looking for information rather than a job, this same organization might have an opening in the future in which you would be interested. Being prepared will assist making a good first impression.
- Day of job shadowing - Remember that this is a professional experience. You do not need to wear “interview apparel” however, you should dress appropriately; “business casual.”
- Try to obtain additional contact names - Before you conclude the job shadowing experience, ask your mentor if they can think of other individuals that might be helpful to contact for additional job shadowing and career related information. By doing this you will gradually build your professional network.
- Follow up - Write your mentor a thank you letter as soon as possible. Mention some items that you found particularly interesting or helpful. Some contacts may ask you to stay in touch so they can monitor your career path.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- To contact the job shadowing mentor selected by telephone, email, or letter, and to arrange a meeting date. This meeting will be at the mentor’s place of work.
- To become familiar with the job shadowing process and prepare in advance the questions that will be asked during the meeting.
- To arrive at the agreed upon time and dressed appropriately.
- To follow up the interview with a thank you note.
- To complete and submit a Job Shadowing Program Evaluation Form to the Career Center.

QUESTIONS ABOUT A SPECIFIC CAREER FIELD

1. What are the main responsibilities associated with work in your field?
2. Please describe a typical day, week, month.
3. What interests and skills are needed for successful employment in this field?
4. What are the advantages of working in this field? Disadvantages?
5. What salary and benefits can I expect?

6. What education and experiences will I need to break into the field?
7. What type of work schedule does this field require?
8. Have standards or licensing requirements been established for this field by national professional organizations?
9. Are jobs in this field limited to any particular geographic area(s)?
10. How do people find out about openings in your occupation?
11. What opportunities exist for advancement and/or lateral movement?
12. What are the emerging jobs in this field?
13. What is the current outlook for new college graduates in this field?
14. Are you satisfied with the career field you have chosen?
15. What do you see happening to your profession in the next five to ten years?

QUESTIONS ABOUT A SPECIFIC ORGANIZATION

1. Please tell me more about your organization and its purpose.
2. Is your organization growing, diminishing, or maintaining its size?
3. How does your organization compete or cooperate with other organizations within this field?
4. How do you think your job would be different if you were working in a larger or smaller organization?
5. How is your organization funded?
6. What is unique about your organization?
7. In the future, do you think your organization will be needing more employees in this field?
8. What is your job security within this organization?

QUESTIONS ABOUT PERSONAL INSIGHTS AND EXPERIENCES

1. What field did you prepare for and expect to enter originally?
2. How did you get where you are in your field?
3. If you needed to leave your present job, to what other jobs could you apply your skills?
4. Would you advise someone to enter your career field?
5. What would you have done differently in your career?
6. What do you like most about your job?
7. What would you identify as the top two personal rewards from the work you do?

THANK YOU LETTER

Emily Smart
412 Dobson Hall
1200 Greenwood Avenue
Platteville, WI 53818-3099

January 20, 2004

Mr. Eric Bradley
217 Grace Street
Dodgeville, WI 53533

Dear Mr. Bradley,

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy work schedule to provide me the job shadowing experience on January 18, 2004.

I found the tour of the facility and the career related information you shared to be extremely valuable. Being able to talk to other accountants helped me realize my career goals and the kind of company I would like to work for someday. I specifically enjoyed attending a staff meeting to experience some of the every day issues that can arise in an office setting. Thank you for answering all of my questions; the information was very educational.

I thank you again for your generosity and patience in helping me explore my career path.

Sincerely,
Emily Smart

For more information, please contact:

UW-Platteville Career Center

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342-1183

www.uwplatt.edu/careercenter