

WELCOME



Welcome to the 14th edition of the AgCareers.com Ag & Food Career Guide. We are pleased to offer

this wonderful resource as a way for young professionals to explore and learn more about careers in the agriculture and food industry.

With the recent global COVID-19 pandemic, we have all faced our own sets of new challenges. Many things seem uncertain. However, one thing that is certain is the need for feeding and clothing people. The agriculture and food industry is up for that challenge.

During these times there is a spotlight on the connection to food and its production. Careers in agriculture are necessary and essential. Whether you knew you wanted to work in agriculture and food or have recently found yourself interested in exploring this industry, we have a place for you.

Traditional farming is the backbone of America and our industry, but there are so many career opportunities within agriculture and food that many are unaware of. If you want to be a computer scientist; we have a place for you. If you want to be a brand manager; we have a place for you. If you want to balance books and work in accounting; we have a place for you. If you want to drive a tractor and work with animals; we have a place for you. If you want to develop the next vaccine; we have a place for you. The truth is, no matter your interest we likely have a place for you.

In this publication, we will not only highlight many of the opportunities available but also introduce you to elite employers you might work for. We don't want to send you out unprepared, so the rest of the guide features helpful articles and educational content to prepare you for your job search and success on the job.

Look for articles on productivity, starting a resume, interview responses that resonate with employers, working with a team you don't like, and much more. These timely topic articles will help you stand out among the competition.

If you are interested in continuing education, check out the University Partners featured. These programs offer a variety of online and traditional graduate programs.

Don't let the quality information stop here. Sign up to receive AgCareers.com's Career Success Kit (see page 40). This kit will deliver a variety of content direct to your email over the next few months. We'll deliver videos, graphics, articles and more to continue to remind you of how to get your A-game on!

We know that these times are challenging, but the agriculture and food industry holds promise. Check out AgCareers.com (www.agcareers.com) routinely for new internship and beginning professional careers. Employers post new jobs daily. We wish you good health and the best of luck on your career journey!

Erika Osmundson, Director of Marketing & Communications, AgCareers.com

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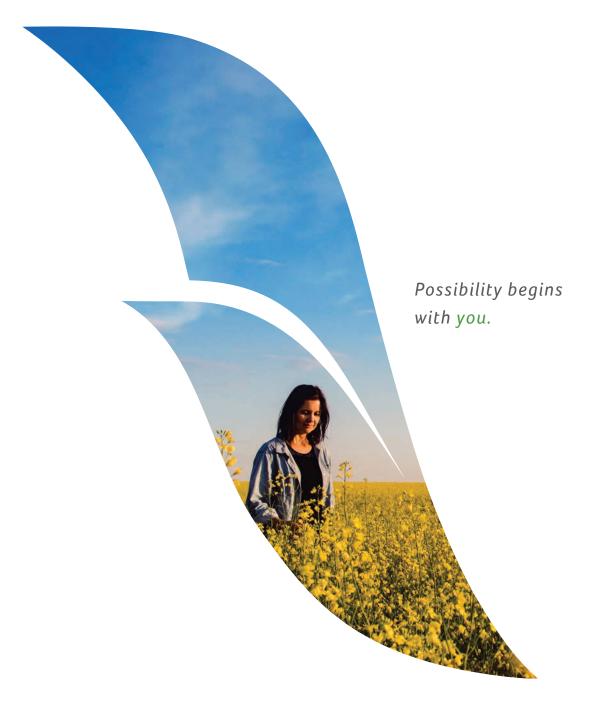
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The Changing Workplace

The Agricultural Workplace in the Post-Pandemic 21st Century

by Kristine Penning, AgCareers.com Creative Marketing Specialist







Kelsey Seidl, Christensen Farms



Chris Long, Syngenta

GIFS. WORKING FROM HOME.

Working in gym shorts. The agricultural workplace is looking different in many ways. And it was even before the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic, which will almost certainly leave a permanent mark on the workplace as we know it. Students being taught to expect one thing may face a workplace a bit different from what they originally pictured. To give a better understanding of what the American agricultural workplace might look like for young people entering the working world, we consulted with human resources and hiring professionals about what long-held expectations are no longer always correct or applicable as well as what changes they expect in the workplace because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

A noticeable change in the American agricultural workplace is traditional communication practices. Younger generations (late Millennials and Generation Z'ers) communicate more visually in pictures and images such as GIFs, memes, emojis, and even TikTok videos. Although long considered inappropriate in the workplace, these informal and often humorous methods of communication have worked their way internally at many companies in email and instant messaging.

"It is always important to communicate clearly and effectively, but the manner in which it is done has evolved over time," said Robin Thomas, Early Talent Acquisition Lead with Syngenta US, who shared that this form of communication is now used in some of their internal messages. "Some of us are more comfortable using emojis, GIFs, and informal language at work, but it is important to use it only when appropriate."

Kelsey Seidl, Talent Acquisition Recruiter with Christensen Farms, noted that there are pros and cons to this shift.

"The pros being it has allowed for more open dialogue and connection within the workplace simply due to a much more relaxed setting with peers, managers and executives," Seidl said. "On the flip side, this shift does come with its challenges. I think with the acceptance of less formality in communication in the workplace, comes a lag in some important, more formal skills required, such as writing, presenting, direct conversation, etcetera."

The underlying message here is that you should still refrain from sending GIFs and emojis to hiring managers, clients, business partners, your company leadership, and other crucial contacts, but when conversing with internal colleagues, this informal, laid back communication may be permissible, depending on your

workplace culture. No matter how you communicate, be sure that your written and spoken communication skills do not suffer because of more informal day-today practices.

WHERE AND HOW WE WORK & WHAT **WE WEAR**

Changes to traditional workplace flexibility and the ability to work remotely had changed even prior to the pandemic, but it is something agricultural professionals see being impacted even more due to COVID-19. Flexibility has long been a sought-after if unwritten benefit in many workplaces, as several roles come with the capability to work in a remote setting. This element is also attractive to employees with young children as it allows them to work around kids home sick or their children's activities.

"Many employers have gone away from the 8 to 5 job and transitioned to a schedule with greater flexibility to allow for individualized needs and a greater work-life balance." Seidl said.

However, there will always be career paths and industries within agriculture that will require employees at work or on-call at all times. "Pigs must be cared for each and every day - something that simply can't be accomplished from home or in a remote setting," Seidl noted.

With shifts in workplace location >>>

and scheduling, there has also been a shift in workplace attire for some businesses.

"We want to set a professional image by being dressed neatly and appropriate for our work during business hours and whenever we are representing the company," Thomas shared regarding Syngenta's dress code. "At the same time, we have recognized the opportunity to allow employees to dress as they would during their off-hours, including wearing jeans, when not interfacing with clients."

Seidl, however, shared that Christensen Farms still expects their employees to "dress to instill confidence in those you are working with."

"Pending your role, your audience and the end goal, this can range from business casual to business professional dress," Seidl said.

For roles not normally facing the public or clientele, such as animal caretakers with Christensen Farms or scientists at Syngenta, these policies are laxer.

"If you are working on the farm, it's important that those individuals can dress for comfort, safety, and efficiency being a highly labor-intensive role within our company," Seidl shared.

A FOCUS ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

You may have heard your career services representative, or your professor advise you to avoid topics around religion and politics in the workplace. While this may be applicable advice during the hiring and interview process, many agricultural workplaces welcome and embrace diversity of thought just as they have diversity of their workforce itself.

"We have a strong commitment to diversity, inclusion, and belonging that pre-dates recent events," Thomas stated. "Some of the resources we have include dedicated internal web pages, employee training, and multiple Employee Resource Groups (ERG) that are employee-led groups formed around common interests, issues, and/or backgrounds."

Christensen Farms has also developed ERG's into their organization within the last two years open to all employees and not exclusive to the named group.

"Our first ERG group formed back in 2018 and has served as an avenue to give employees a sense of belonging, while building on a culture of inclusion across the broader organization," Seidl shared. "Regardless of what a person's belief system may be, we focus on respecting one another, fostering

"With the acceptance of less formality in communication in the workplace, comes a lag in some important, more formal skills required."

Kelsey Seidl, Christensen Farms

inclusion and doing what needs to be done to achieve our work and ultimately our mission."

THE LASTING EFFECTS OF COVID-19

Besides the many changes the agricultural workplace has experienced in the last five years, it is rapidly having to shift due to the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Most workplaces implemented safety procedures that have made the employee experience significantly different.

Chris Long, North American HR Generalist for Syngenta, shared that it's uncertain whether disease preventative practices like encouraging the usage of face masks and social distancing will forever remain the norm, but "it's definitely long-term at this point."

"We are constantly reevaluating what jobs can allow for greater flexibility to work from home when and where it makes sense," Long added. "We have scaled up our VPN network in order to better support our workforce as we move toward more and more virtual engagement."

Seidl shared that Christensen Farms has implemented "mitigation efforts such as temperature-taking and pre-screening questions" before employees enter their work locations and "mass distribution of necessary PPE such as masks" and sanitizers.

"It is unknown what will remain permanent in the changes we have made and what potentially goes away," Seidl said. "What it has taught us is to be more agile in our work and creative in how we are able to get the work done."

As the pandemic has created challenges regarding employee wellness and adjustment, Syngenta has also created an online portal to provide resources and interaction for their employees.

"Ergonomics are more important than ever as employees learn to work from anywhere that's not their typical office setup, so we provide informational resources to educate our employees on how best to work from home," Long shared.

Still, take seriously what you've been told about the agricultural workplace, as professionalism is vital during the hiring process. But that doesn't mean it's stuffy and uncooperative. Agricultural employers are eager to make their employees feel comfortable, welcome, and empowered to succeed in their roles. AG



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BEGINNER VS. EXPERIENCED RESUMES by Bonnie Johnson, AgCareers.com Marketing Specialist

YOU GOOGLE "resume templates" and find examples full of decades-long work experiences and glowing accomplishments. It's sometimes daunting for students to build their first resume after viewing experienced professionals' resumes. You may ask yourself where to start, or if you can even

Get your confidence in check, because there are a few very striking differences and expectations between beginner and experienced resumes. Students can really stand out with several resume techniques.

Bill Baker, Talent & Culture Programs Lead for J.R. Simplot Company shared a positive aspect about new grads, "They typically don't have bad workplace behaviors engrained yet; oftentimes more experienced workers know how to do one thing very well, but lack breadth." He recommends, "Students showcase the variety of things they've done to learn new technologies and keep their skills sharp."

Whereas professional resumes focus on work experiences and accomplishments, student resumes focus on education and skill development.

LENGTH

Concise, to-the-point, and easily readable are vital characteristics for every resume, no matter your career stage. One-page

resumes are recommended for those building their first resume, entry-level applicants, students, and recent graduates. If your resume spills over onto a second page, immediately think TMI. Cut the fluff, unnecessary filler words, and irrelevant information.

EDUCATION

Education is front and center on the student or new grad resume and appears near the top. "Students and recent graduates should include their GPA if it's above 3.0," said Tom Heady, Leader - Campus Recruiting at Elanco Animal Health. "If a student leaves GPA off their resume, it can be misinterpreted as not good," added Heady.

On the other hand, there's no need to advertise a GPA below 3.0, so keep it off. You may also include your major GPA if it's likely to impress. Required resume data includes expected or actual graduation date, degree(s), and school. You may also add areas of concentration and special recognition.

Traditional students may not possess extensive work histories, but classes also provide experience. Baker recommends that students, "Show projects and topics learned, not just your degree."

"Relevant coursework or projects that align to the role you're applying for are crucial for students," added Baker.

Feature key courses and upper-level major-related classes that relate to the desired career pathway.

In contrast, experienced professionals shift their education section toward the bottom of their resume and omit GPA. specific classes, and maybe even the graduation year.

EXPERIENCE

After you've been in the work world for a few years, the experience section really takes over most of the resume. Experienced professionals feature their experiences in reverse chronological order (most recent first) and typically omit high school or college jobs.

However, part-time or summer jobs are often the bulk of experiences students can share. How do young professionals illustrate their valuable experiences in a resume? Filling in this section of the resume can be the most intimidating part for students.

Certainly, highlight any work and internships related to your field of study and/or the potential job. All work experiences, no matter how inconsequential they seemed at the time, help you build valuable employability soft skills transferable to full-time work after college. "There are two ways to describe these jobs; sticking to the basics by minimizing the experience, or going >>>

beyond to expand on what value you added to the organization," noted Heady.

Those high school work and part-time jobs in college such as babysitting, food service, family farm, retail, or pet sitting illustrate your work ethic, flexibility, attention to detail, willingness to learn, prioritization, customer service, communication, and time management skills.

Students can also emphasize language fluency and certifications.
Reference certifications you've obtained that are above and beyond requirements for your field of study, such as an occupational safety certificate, CDL, A+ certification, or project management certificate.

Students shouldn't perceive their limited experiences as a lack of skills; many students could teach master classes in balancing multiple commitments between the classroom, homework and projects, extracurricular activities, volunteering, and family commitments, plus searching for an internship or job.

Collegiate study abroad opportunities also build students' experience section, illustrating the understanding of global and diverse issues, language, and willingness to explore.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Employers expect experienced professionals to go beyond listing duties on a resume and focus on accomplishments with quantifiable results. Students don't have years of on-the-job achievements to promote in their resume. However, students may weave recent and timely involvement with organizations and associations into their resume experience and skills sections. Heady advises students that, "Most recent is most relevant." Baker agrees that students should only list high

school achievements if they're relevant.

"One of the most important characteristics we look for in a student resume is leadership potential," said Heady. This is illustrated by students that have had leadership roles in school, specifically elected roles. "If students will practice their leadership skills on campus, we believe that they will more likely tackle a leadership role at our company," added Heady. Baker echoed the importance of conveying leadership skills on a resume, "Holding roles in student organizations where they've demonstrated leadership capabilities makes a student's resume stand out."

Accomplishments from volunteer involvement (especially measurable achievements) are ideal student

"One of the most important characteristics we look for in a student resume is leadership potential."

Tom Heady, Elanco

resume builders. Students can enhance their resume with extracurricular and leadership work. Go beyond club membership and volunteerism to highlight the leadership roles you've taken on for these organizations. This involvement showcases your passions and how you give back.

The student or new graduate resume is often one of your last chances to brag about scholarships, honor societies and programs, and student awards. Take advantage of the opportunity to emphasize your student achievements as resume builders; get a few years under your belt and these student awards are no longer applicable, nor appropriate. AG

STUDENT RESUME BASICS

Required:

- 1. Contact Information
- 2. Education
- 3. Experience

Optional (select up to 3):

- Skills
- Profile or Summary
- Awards & Honors
- Volunteer Experience
- Extracurricular Activities
- Certifications/Training
- Languages

Limit optional sections to 3 max; try to group several under the same sub-head if possible, for example: 1) "activities" may encompass volunteerism & extracurricular or 2) incorporate "languages" into education or experience.





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CAREER DECISIONS can be daunting. Whether you're picking a major, looking for an internship or your first job, or moving to a new job, we all know how we choose to spend our working life impacts everything else.

With all the options available, it's easy to start feeling overwhelmed. If you have no idea what you want to do or you don't know how to get where you want to go, you are not alone. The competency of career management – using exploration, feedback and reflection to manage career paths—is something you learn over time. Developing this skill in young leaders is integral to our work at Agriculture Future of America.

YOU'RE NOT JUST WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

Perhaps the best news is that while your career will be important, it doesn't have to define you.

"I think many high-performing students and professionals need to be reminded to breathe and take some pressure off when it comes to their career success," says

Whitney Kinne, who is a career coach and AFA alumna. "Work is important, but our lives exist beyond work, too."

Whitney graduated from the University of Missouri in 2010 and began working for the Missouri Beef Industry Council in a public relations role. After three years, Whitney took a role with Career Services back at the University

of Missouri. Now she is a career coach, working with individuals and companies.

Listening to career stories, you may have noticed your first career decision definitely won't be your last. We make many career changes throughout our lives, often

starting with major changes.

YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR PATH

According to a 2017 analysis done by the U.S.

Department of Education, one-third of students
enrolled in bachelor's degree programs had changed

their major once and 9% had changed their major more than once. Career and job changes are also common, especially in the beginning of our working years.

Looking at job changes over a lifetime, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found individuals born between 1957 and 1964 had held 12.3 jobs on average by the time they were 52. In September of 2018, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the median tenure of employees with their current employer was 4.2 years. For those who were between the ages of 25 and 34, the median was only 2.8 years.

There are many reasons for major and career changes. We continually learn more about ourselves. The world continues to change. What is most important to us and what we want from our careers change throughout life as well.

DECIDING IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE

AFA alum Ben Conner has had multiple career transitions since graduating from the University of Kentucky in 2016. His first semester of his senior year, he accepted a sales role with Dow AgriSciences. He says this role was important in many areas of his development as a young professional, but there was someone back in Kentucky who was important, too.

"When I accepted Dow's offer, I said send me wherever you please. Within two months of my offer, I started dating my now wife, and so that was not in the decision-making process when I took the job," he says.

Before long, Ben moved back to Kentucky to work for the Kentucky legislature and then the Kentucky Department of Agriculture before starting his current role as an extension agent in Scott County, Kentucky.

Another AFA alumna, Ellen >>>

Zimmerman says she also has found the decisions on her career journey difficult.

"Every time I have made a move, I have been running to something and not away from something," she says. "The fact that I have had excellent coworkers and really cool jobs that allow me to do really cool things has made it always a hard decision to leave."

Since graduating from The Ohio State in 2014, Ellen has worked as a marketing manager for RFD-TV, a project manager for Ohio Corn & Wheat, in member communications for the American Postal Workers Union, and she now serves as the director of internal communications and member engagement for the American Seed Trade Association. She says most of these transitions were made harder because she didn't stay as long as she wanted to.

Ben says he certainly didn't expect to make so many changes so quickly either, but they've been important to his development.

"Your happiness and your worth go a long way, and making moves is part of having a career," he says.

TAKING STOCK OF YOUR INTERESTS

Whitney says it's common for career transitions to be brought about by life changes that cause us to stop and reflect. As Ben has reflected on his career transitions, he says the main unifying factor in all of his roles was a focus on helping farmers. As his career progressed, that has intensified.

Ellen says she had a similar experience. After a couple of roles, she realized she loved working with associations and in member engagement specifically. As her career has progressed, she also has more clarity about what is important to her when choosing an organization.

"As I go along in my career, I am discovering more and more how important it is that I feel strongly about the mission of the organization," Ellen says.

If you're struggling to combine your skills and interests into a meaningful career, Whitney suggests writing every skill, interest, and idea on a Post-It note or document where you can see and sort them until you start to see patterns emerge. She also recommends keeping notes of each experience you have and noting in detail what you liked, what you didn't, and what you learned.

While all of this self-reflection will be valuable, don't stop there. There are many opportunities, especially for students, to explore different career paths and grow your industry network. One example of these opportunities is the AFA Leader Institute series which takes an in-depth look at five different industries-food, policy, crop science, animal science and technology.

REFLECTING WITH OTHERS

As you have different realizations about yourself and desired career path, discussing those insights with a trusted friend or family member can bring additional clarity.

"I have probably five to eight people that I can talk to candidly and have those conversations - to weigh out pros and cons," Ben says. "That's really important because without those probing questions from somebody else you may not see the whole picture."

Whitney says she always starts talking through things with family but admits that they are going to be biased because of the ways they will be impacted by decisions.

"Any time that you feel like you can't get an unbiased opinion from somebody who's close to you, hiring a coach can be

really helpful, not to give you the decision, but to help you wade through some of the factors," she says.

If you're a college student, you probably have access to a career coach right on campus through your career services center. Whitney says you're probably already paying for their services through your semester fees and you should definitely take advantage of that.

KEEPING THE FUTURE IN MIND

One of the things that a career coach can help you think through is the impact the choices you make now will have in the future as well as what makes sense right now.

Whitney says, "Students are either prone to making decisions about their career based on where they want to be in five to ten years; or they don't consider five to ten years from now."

She says the first way of thinking leads some students to limit themselves because they make assumptions about their personal life in 5 to 10 years. The second way of thinking means students might not gain the transferable skills they need to make their desired career transitions.

In the end, she says it's okay not to know exactly what you want to do, but it is important to make your decisions based on both your current stage of life and where you think you might want to be.

While their career paths might not have looked guite like they expected along the way, Whitney, Ellen and Ben all agreed that each part of their career journeys has been important.

"I don't necessarily look back and say there's something that I would do differently," Ben says. "I think they're all great experiences, and I think they all prepared me to be where I'm at today." AG



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STAND OUT

ANSWERS TO EVERYDAY INTERVIEW OUESTIONS

by Jessica Bartow, AgCareers.com Talent Solutions Specialist

YOU MADE IT to the interview—congratulations! Have you ever wondered how to make yourself stand out among other interviewers? We asked some of our employers for their advice on common interview questions. Check out their recommendations to gain some inside tips from an employer's perspective.



DEBRA DEFREECE DIRECTOR - ENTERPRISE RECRUITMENT I TALENT ACQUISITION, WILBUR-ELLIS

Interviewers often ask this question to evaluate how your career goals fit into the role today and long-term. It's always nice to find employees who will remain motivated and enthusiastic for more than a few months. I recommend that you are honest and sincere yet fairly general. Especially if you're not sure about a five-year goal. Stress your interest in a long-term career. The interviewer wants to know that you want to settle in and grow so they see you as a good investment. Also, show enthusiasm in the job and the company. The interviewer wants to know that it's an opportunity that is exciting to you and you'll be as invested in the company as the company is in you!

Whether you have interviewed with one person in the organization or eight, always say "yes" and be prepared to ask a question. It shows that you are interested and engaged. If you don't ask a question you are missing out on an opportunity to find out more about the company. You might ask what the greatest challenges are in the role; you might ask what the average day looks like. The best answers to this question come from listening to what the interviewer is asking you and then exploring that further with the interviewer. Such as, "From what you've asked, I get the sense that inventory control accuracy is a focus right now. Can you tell me what the challenges are in this area?" Be prepared for this question and be thoughtful. I am looking to see how curious you are and if you've paid attention during the interview.

JENNIFER STRUCK TALENT ACQUISITION PROGRAMS & OPERATIONS LEAD, CORTEVA

This question is an example of a behavioral-based question and when responding, if the candidate can, in brevity, answer this "in-full," that sets a candidate apart from the rest. When answering this question, use the STAR method: provide a situation, task, action, and result. To start, provide the interviewers a glimpse of what the situation was and what tasks are needed to overcome the situation. From there, detail the action you specifically took followed by the end result. Most candidates are good at detailing out the first three, but forget to relay the results. If you briefly detail all four, you will set yourself apart.

Many interviewers will ask this at the very beginning of the interview. This is done on purpose to help the candidate relax and become more comfortable. This is a great way for the candidate to set the tone of the overall process. The key to answering this question effectively is brevity. Before an interview, take the time to think about what you may want to say. Ensure that the information is work-related. Be succinct and thoughtful in your response. A candidate who states they are a hard-working, organized, detail-oriented, team player will stand out more so than one that rambles on about a variety of non-work/position-related information. AG





DURING THE COVID-19 GLOBAL

PANDEMIC, the normalcy of your daily life was more than likely altered in some way. For many, this means working from home, schooling from home, staying at home. As much as you always loved coming home at the end of a long day, having no choice but to be home creates some less pleasant feelings. It has proven hard for many people to feel motivated, to separate life from work, and to see the level of productivity you would see in the office. Employees with AgCareers.com and Texas Tech University Career Center offered their advice for combating these issues and rocking your remote work.

HAVE A DESIGNATED WORKSPACE

Separating your work area from the rest of your living area will help to simulate the idea that you are going to work.

Tori Coleman, Program Coordinator for the Texas Tech University Career Center, said having a designated work area has proven very helpful. "If you designate a space, you aren't constantly clearing away or sharing the space for other purposes and can be fully focused when you are 'at work."

She said it will also provide some much-needed distance from the bed you'd rather be sleeping in and the couch that keeps calling your name. Coleman said the best-designated workspace is one that is out of the bedroom, away from the clutter, and in a well-lit area.

TAKE BREAKS

Donna Srader, Assistant Director of Texas Tech University Career Center, said working from home requires extra discipline she never considered before.

"I have to force myself to stop and take breaks each morning and afternoon," Srader said. "A short walk or 15 minutes spent outside reading can make a positive difference in my level of energy and enthusiasm."

ACT LIKE YOU'RE IN THE OFFICE

Jessica Bartow, Talent Solutions Specialist with AgCareers.com, said it is important to act like you are going to go into the office. She said she wakes up early, does a workout, enjoys some quiet time, and dresses like she is going to work even though she works from a home office.

"If I were to roll out of bed right before 8:00, I wouldn't be physically or mentally ready to tackle the day," Bartow said.

STAY CONNECTED TO COWORKERS

"Be intentional," Bartow said. "Catching up about daily life can be more challenging when your coworker isn't right next to you, physically."

It may be more important than ever to check in on people. She said reaching out to coworkers gives them a chance to talk about how things are going outside of work.

CLARIFY WORK EXPECTATIONS

It can be especially difficult to navigate work hours when working from home. Every resource you need is at your fingertips 24/7. Does this mean you are expected to utilize those resources at every waking moment?

Bartow said she would recommend talking with your boss about remote workplace expectations. If your normal workday is from 8 to 5 but your office phone is at home, do you answer it outside those hours?

Communication has always been important, but when working remotely, it is vital. Don't be afraid to ask hard guestions. Make sure you and your employer stay on the same page.

Working from home presents unique challenges that you must recognize and work to solve. It sounds nice to be able to stay at home every day until you must separate work from life in the confines of one building. Having your office just feet away from your bed can make "let me lay down really quick" a constant thought.

Adjusting to stepping away from work when it means literally step, not get in your car and drive, can be hard. Finding the motivation to get ready is inherently difficult. Rocking your remote workplace means finding what is best for you and sticking to it. AG

















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building your PRODUCTIVITY IQ

by Erika Osmundson, AgCareers.com Director of Marketing & Communications

YOU ARE ASSIGNED A TASK and you complete it. That's productivity, right? Sure, that is the very basic sense of productivity, but like many things, being a productive employee means so much more!

Last year we explored ambiguity IQ (visit Career Guide under Resources on AgCareers.com). In this edition, let's continue to build and get comfortable with another key employability skill that employers sometimes feel young professionals lack. Your Productivity IQ!

WHAT IS PRODUCTIVITY?

In its truest definition, it is the state or quality of producing something measured in terms of the rate of output per unit of input. Blah! What a completely boring definition unrelated to people and the workplace. When we look at productivity as it relates to the workforce it is huge for managers and leaders in business.

Yes, you are a bit of an investment to the organization and they are measuring what they get out of you compared to what they put into you. It is important to remember that. But this isn't to say you are just a cog in the wheel. Most employers understand productivity of employees directly results from the environment and culture of the organization.

In this article, we'll focus on ways that you can gain productivity experience, demonstrate your productivity standards to employers, and continue to build your productivity.

PRODUCTIVITY MINDSET

Productivity and accountability go hand in hand. To be highly accountable, you must ask yourself what more can I do or offer. The same can be said about a highly productive employee. It isn't just getting a list of assignments and working down the list in a literal manner.

Employers say that productive employees work through each task exploring ways to complete the task and find efficiencies. Thinking about how their actions could help or hinder others within the business.

Then once they finish, it isn't "I'm done, I'll go home." It is seeking additional opportunities to learn, grow, and assist. Productivity is truly a mindset and you can be a highly productive employee if you choose to be!

PRODUCTIVITY EXPERIENCE

Internships are the best way to gain and show your productivity prowess. This setting provides many opportunities to take on unique projects and work. You will have the opportunity to work through and develop strategies on how best to complete things. Watch others around

you and your boss to see how >>>



they approach project work. What are tips and tools they utilize to be productive? How can you adapt those for your own personal use?

Ask questions! Employers don't expect you to know everything or how to do everything as an intern. By asking questions you gain insight into how to most effectively ask for help and input, which is a way to heighten your productivity for the future.

Once you complete a project, give a rundown of how you tackled the project to those you are sharing the outcomes with. Listen for feedback through this process. You'll hear things like, "I hadn't thought about doing it that way," or "Did you consider doing it this way?" You might also hear "You should have done this." Don't let that squash your spirit. Hopefully, you run into the later scenario less than the earlier, more positive scenarios.

Ask for more to do. In our experience at AgCareers.com, interns complete projects much faster than we typically expect. If this is the case for you, and you've done a thorough job and not just rushed through, ask if there is something else you can help with. Your employer may not have something right that minute, but they'll find it impressive and find more to give you in the future.

While internships provide a great opportunity for productivity experience and growth, you can apply this mindset to many other places to help you sharpen those skills, such as school projects, part-time work, academics, and lifelong learning. If you put in the effort and strive to be a highly productive person doors in many aspects of your life will open.

DEMONSTRATING PRODUCTIVITY

As we've mentioned, productivity is big for employers and they'll go to

extraordinary lengths to try to assess your productivity and work ethic in an interview.

Questions that typically are used to gain this insight go something like: "Tell me about a time when you had a big project. What steps did you follow to accomplish the objective? What was the outcome?" Those behavioral-based questions that ask you to reflect on a situation and walk the person through the process ending with the outcome really can shed light.

Remember from above, that part about a cliff notes rundown-that is the practice for answering these types of questions. An important part of nailing these types of questions is to be thorough but concise in your response. Don't be too short that you don't provide enough detail. Don't be too long that you include a bunch of unimportant details. Knowing the question assesses productivity and work ethic, as you practice for this type of question, think like the interviewer. What is it about this experience that I'm sharing with them that will help them understand my level of work ethic, productivity and problem-solving?

In your resume you can also demonstrate productivity. Use measurables to quantify your work. How many projects did you complete? How many marketing campaigns did you run? The more you can put a quantity on things, the more you make it easy for the reader to understand your output.

Your productivity IQ is less about IQ and more about your mindset. You get to control how an employer sees your productivity level. It will be measured in the effort that you put forward! There are lots of exceptional career opportunities and career success for employees that put productivity excellence at the top of their list! AG

productivity TIPS

Here are some productivity tips from the pros at AgCareers.com!

- PRIORITIZE: What's due first?
 Urgent? Ask your supervisor for help prioritizing if needed.
- DON'T WAIT until the last day before a project is due—it's not like cramming for a test the night before.
- Find ways to MOTIVATE yourself through the mundane tasks.
- TAKE NOTES during meetings real pen and paper, handwritten notes!
- MAKE LISTS.
- Utilize ONLINE CALENDAR SYSTEMS, like Outlook. Setup reminders for project due dates and follow-ups.
- CLEAN your workspace—this can jumpstart your productivity. You'll feel less distracted and more focused on getting work done.
- BLOCK TIMES for specific projects or tasks and stick to those commitments. Set a timer if needed.
- A good PLAYLIST always helps!
- Work on BIG PROJECTS that take focus when you are naturally at your best!
- LEARN from those around you talk to people to gain insight and ideas.
- PAUSE TO MEASURE progress, re-evaluate, realign to the goal.
- Set your PHONE ON DND (put the cell phone down) when you need to hunker down and focus.
- Force yourself to TAKE BREAKS throughout the day to clear your head.



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AND THE AGRICULTURAL WORKPLACE

by Erika Osmundson, AgCareers.com Director of Marketing & Communications

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, but I'm tired of the "new normal"! There is very little normal about what has taken place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From virtual learning and events to face masks and social distancing, this pandemic has thrown normal right out the window.

Now, not that it has been all bad. If we look for the good, we're bound to find some. AgCareers.com recently held our Ag & Food HR Roundtable, and yes, it was virtual this year! Throughout the sessions, which covered high interest issues in recruitment and retention within the industry, presenters shared many positives. Positives that shed light on why the agriculture and food industry is where you want to work, even during the unprecedented times of a pandemic!

THE COVID IMPACT ON THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE

There has been and continues to be a talent gap between the number of jobs available within the agriculture and food industry and the number of students coming out of colleges and universities that can fill these roles. Even with increased unemployment, the agriculture industry still has demand. For those that have technical skills or trade experience, the need is even greater.

The pandemic highlighted the industry's status of "essential." We need few other professions as much as the one that feeds, clothes and fuels the

world. In this time of uncertainty, we found the general public stopping and noting their food and where/how it is produced. Clearly, the pandemic shed light on some supply chain bottlenecks, but from an opportunistic perspective; sizable areas for growth and change.

EMPLOYER PREPAREDNESS

Agribusinesses held steady. According to a recent AgCareers.com poll conducted as the pandemic hit, 94% of participating agricultural employers felt the organization had an above-average plan in place to deal with COVID-19. Employees that responded ranked their employers high in this category as well (73%).

While other industries such as travel/ leisure and retail services were taking tremendous hits to staff management, the agribusiness industry weathered the storm much better. Only 22% of participating employers in the above-mentioned poll stated that they needed to take action to manage their staff such as furloughs, layoffs, or reduction in hours.

We also saw recruitment and hiring maintain balanced levels. Seventy-six percent of employer respondents to a May poll said that they planned to continue with hiring as projected. Through the AgCareers.com network of clients we saw this trend play out. While we saw a slight dip of activity on the

AgCareers.com job board at the onset of the pandemic, employers quickly settled and actioned on plans to move forward. Realizing that quality talent was available, and the needs of the organizations and operations couldn't wait for the pandemic to pass.

INTERNSHIPS - WHAT WE LEARNED

While we know there were the unfortunate few who could not continue with their internship as planned, many agricultural employers were able to keep their programs going. From the poll, 59% of employers responding could proceed with their internship programs as planned this past summer. Another 10% had to make some alterations, like delaying start dates or reducing hours.

But one of the biggest changes was notably that many interns found their program to be virtual! There were skeptics all-around-students unsure if a virtual internship would be meaningful and employers wondering if they could trust students to take on the accountability of a virtual internship.

What did we learn? The worry was for not. The employers and students that AgCareers.com talked with disproved the skeptics. Students could get value out of a virtual internship. Employers saw student's step-up to the plate and prove they were up for the challenge.

We don't know vet what next summer will look like, but this summer has >>>

proven that companies and students can make virtual internships work. If we remain virtual next summer, expect to see even better virtual experiences.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT ON CAMPUS THIS FALL

At the Roundtable, several university career services professionals joined in a panel to discuss what they think student recruitment will look like on campus this fall and perhaps the remainder of the year. You guessed it, virtually!

For many companies that weren't on board with virtual or remote before the pandemic have learned that their businesses and employees can be just as successful, if not more in a remote setting. Organizations are finding cost savings in the forced lack of travel while maintaining targets. We'll see some of these virtual and remote aspects hold on even after the pandemic is gone.

Getting comfortable with virtual recruitment and a virtual workspace is one way to set yourself apart from your other candidate competition. Explore

virtual career fairs, virtual interviewing and virtual networking. Reach out to alumni through LinkedIn and engage in events through online portals. This is a bit of the new reality and showing you are an early adopter will take you far.

WHAT DOES GOING TO THE OFFICE LOOK LIKE THESE DAYS

We are talking about more than just being in a square building. It is what you'll encounter as you go to an office, whether an internship or new graduate opportunity. You may have heard of a shift in the employment market and that it is now an employer's market; meaning that employers have the upper hand because there are plenty of candidates on the market. Well, that isn't entirely true for the agriculture industry. Plus, this industry is humble and prides themselves on quality - that means for talent too.

You may have more competition through the recruitment process but demonstrate the key employability skills, like communication, reliability, work ethic, and resiliency. Support those with your technical expertise. Your industry-specific expertise will get you in the door, but it is likely your employability skills that will win the interviewer over!

Let's just talk about resiliency briefly. As a student or young professional that has lived through the pandemic, if you've managed through these challenging times you are resilient. This is something that employers stereotypically feel that young professionals and students lack, but the pandemic has just opened your examples for interview questions on this topic wide open!

Agricultural employers, or at least the good ones, still focus on their employees and providing a culture that is safe, compassionate, and fun. Look for these things (or those things you are passionate about) in future employers. The pandemic has not created an employment crisis within the agriculture industry as of now. Don't panic and take the first job offer just because. Instead, take a job that you can see yourself enjoying and excelling in! AG



STANDING OUT IN A VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

Cynthia Cole, Recruitment Manager for De Lacy Executive Recruitment, shared some valuable tips on how students can stand out in a virtual interview.

- Be mindful of new processes—virtual is the new normal
- Dress appropriately
- Test technology—practice with a friend if possible
- Set the scene—avoid background noise and cluttered spaces
- Convey enthusiasm—let the employer know you are excited
- Address the pandemic—yes, you can ask about how their company has dealt
- Give a compliment—if you've experienced something good in their process, tell them

A video interview is still a great way for you to assess the company! Look for ways that the employer steps up in the virtual setting to help you recognize why you should work for their organization.



FIRST-TIME JOB SEEKER MISTAKES TO AVOID

by Kristine Penning, AgCareers.com Creative Marketing Specialist

I REMEMBER FEELING very

apprehensive about the job search process my senior year of college. While I had a few internships under my belt, looking for a full-time, salaried job felt like a different ball game. Here are a few things I've learned as an AgCareers.com employee about first-time job seeking.

Creating a Generic Resume: While it's okay to have a resume template ready to go, be sure to customize it to each role you apply to. Adjust your work experience to include only relevant roles with transferable skills and duties listed. Add in keywords from the job description to your resume where possible for each customization you create.

Not Preparing for the Interview:

There are a lot of ways to prepare for

the interview, but be sure that you do at least something to prepare. Research the company, practice example interview questions (they are in endless supply on the internet), and prepare some questions to ask your interviewer about the role or company.

Oversharing: Don't sabotage yourself by talking too much or sharing information better left unsaid. Try to keep political views out of the interview—you don't want to clash. And you don't have to let them know you received disciplinary action at your last job—trust me, this won't help.

Inappropriate Dress: Because we live in an increasingly informal world, interview dress has followed suit (no pun intended). If you show up in a

sweater and khaki pants against a fellow candidate in a suit, who do you think will make a better impression on the interviewer?

Entitlement: This advice is coming from a Millennial: you aren't owed anything. You are not owed a job, and you are not owed a CEO-level salary as a new graduate. Humility will make you stand out while entitlement will make employers think twice about hiring you. AG



TOP OF MIND, TOP OF RESUME

by Bonnie Johnson, AgCareers.com Marketing Specialist

YOUR RESUME IS THE REAL first

impression with a potential employer. The top of your resume can make or break your chance to get an interview.

There's much debate about how to begin a resume. One component that's not debatable is your contact information—the obvious place to start. Who can mess this up, right? Well, there are a few caveats that may inhibit your ability to become a top candidate.

Start with a simple, straight-forward full name, email, and phone number.

Address is becoming optional! Let's look at the 'address' section a little more indepth as there are just a few options.

Since most employer communication is electronic, you have the option to omit a specific mailing address altogether

(this is helpful if you are in transition or looking to relocate, or for safety/ privacy reasons). You may also simplify your address to show just your city/state. Some employers will look for local candidates, so keep this in mind when deciding the specificity of your address on a resume. It can be beneficial if you're in the area, or questionable if you're not local; it all depends on your location and the preferences of the employer. The other option for students is including both a college and permanent address.

Your email address should be professional (nothing like teenagedreamZZ@ or stupidgoose20@). If your email address is through your college, make sure you'll have continued access to the account post-graduation.

You may also include links to your social media profiles (especially LinkedIn), your personal website, blog, or online portfolio.

When you're applying online do NOT put your contact information in headers or tables. Data in this format may be accidentally omitted when information is transferred electronically. Either the computer system doesn't read the table/header data, or you copy/paste your resume without those all-important contact details—oops! Imagine all the hard work you've put into your resume; the employer gets your education, skills and work experience and then wonders who is the exceptionally qualified candidate? Where's their contact information? AG

REAL CONSEQUENCES OF Chasting EMPLOYERS

by Kristine Penning, AgCareers.com Creative Marketing Specialist

"GHOSTING," ORIGINALLY A TERM

used to describe the lack of response from someone via text or a messaging app, has spilled over into the working world with employers and employees "ghosting" each other during the hiring process. Though ghosting certainly goes both ways and some employers unfortunately never respond to candidates, ghosting can be one of the worst things you can do professionally.

When You Don't Get the Job: When you get word that you did not get the job you interviewed for, you're likely to experience an array of negative emotions including disappointment and even anger. Your gut reaction may be to just blow off the employer. However, if they have taken the time to interview and consider you as a candidate, the least you can

do is to reply with, "Thank you for the opportunity." It will reflect poorly on you to not respond at all, and employers will remember that.

When You Get the Job: It is mindboggling to employers when they send the exciting news that you have gotten the job you interviewed for, and then you suddenly fall off the face of the earth. It's likely the employer will feel angry and bewildered, as you would if you never heard back after an interview. This feeling won't soon be forgotten, and employers will certainly remember you as the candidate who ghosted them and put them in a difficult position.

You might have "reasonable" intentions for ghosting such as waiting to see if you got another job you applied to. But respond regardless of the situation.

It's okay to graciously decline a job offer, and it's definitely preferable over not responding at all. If you need some time to think, just ask for it.

How Ghosting Can Hurt Your Career: The agricultural industry is tight-knit. What are the chances that you attend a conference and cross paths with the employer you ghosted? Furthermore, employers in agriculture regularly network with colleagues across the industry. What if your name comes up in conversation as someone a fellow employer is considering?

Ultimately, ghosting is never a good idea and will label you as unprofessional and immature. Respond in a graceful way that does not burn bridges or damage your professional reputation. AG

MENTAL HEALTH AMID A PANDEMIC

by Erika Osmundson, AgCareers.com Director of Marketing & Communications

SINCE THE PANDEMIC, mental health has taken on a new perspective to businesses, and agriculture and food employers are stepping up. In a recent survey conducted by AgCareers.com, over 50% of the employees participating said that their employers have specifically addressed mental health in the workplace during the times of the pandemic. This realization that maybe more of us are experiencing these negative impacts because of the uncertain times has made the conversations around mental health easier.

Addressing Mental Health:

Whether you are a student or a young professional, how you show up and address your own mental health will set an example for those around you.

In a recent article from Inc. they talked about "COVID Brain." While it isn't exactly a mental health condition, it is an outcome of additional stress, sleep deprivation due to worry, anxiety, or other mental health triggers. COVID Brain is really about focus or lack thereof caused by the pandemic.

This article provided some practical tips that are so relevant for wherever you find yourself in this pandemic journey.

1. Rethink your stress. Focus on thinking with a positive mindset. Almost like we will our body's response to stress based on how we think about it. The author, Jessica Stillman, mentioned that time and self-compassion are key.

2. Chill out with the right tunes.

Research shows that music can influence a person's mood. Calm or upbeat music might be what you need to regain that focus.

3. Mindfulness. Seems like a "buzzword" but again research proves that things like meditation, intentional breathing, and taking breaks work.

People struggling with mental health are all around-at school, at work, in your community. Maybe you yourself are struggling, whether because of COVID or some other underlying challenge. Being able to speak up and communicate without stigma is a continual road. Perhaps the heightened awareness and conversation due to the pandemic is one good thing COVID can do for us! AG



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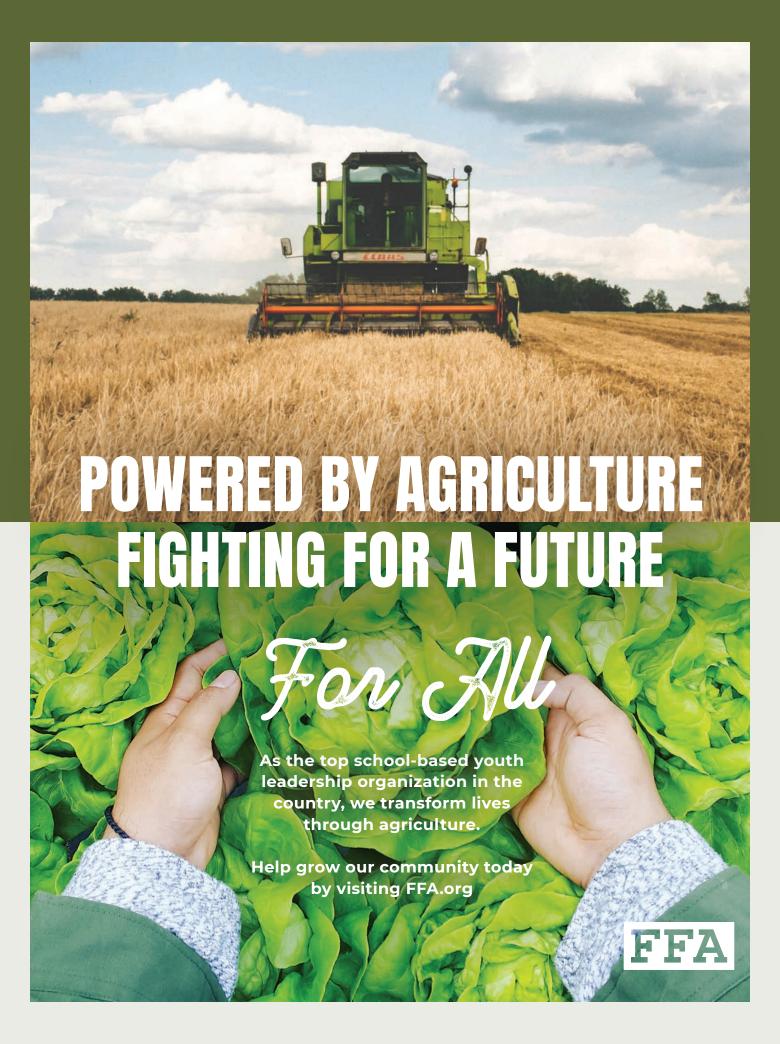


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A diverse listing of degrees and certificate programs can be found on the Online Degrees page on AgCareers.com. The following pages advertise participating schools and programs.



COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS on pursuing additional education

by Deborah Kohl, Kansas State University

YOU'VE LIKELY SEEN a great deal in the press and on social media about the mad-scramble some universities experienced putting all of their programs online. You may have also spent some time thinking over the last few months about your job security, professional advancement, or the skills you will need to make a difference for the future. In light of COVID-19, here are some questions to ask the staff of any graduate program you are considering:

1. How accomplished are the faculty with teaching online? Teaching online requires a unique skill set that many faculty members have not taken the time to develop. Look for a program that is

proven to have effective and engaging online delivery models and does not just rely on message board posting.

2. How is the program creating opportunities for student networking and interaction, whether that be face-to-face or by distance? Networking with others in the field where you serve (or where you want to go) is one of the best parts about professional education. If you are looking at an online program make sure you are asking about these opportunities.

Additionally, a good program will be able to connect you with students and alumni who are willing to share their experiences and how the degree helped them advance in their careers.

3. Are the faculty in your program flexible and willing to work with students who are pursuing education? What about the administrative staff helping with the program? The heightened restrictions of COVID-19 created a situation where almost everyone has been called to balance family, professional and personal challenges. You don't need the added stress of inflexible faculty or a program that cannot adjust to the situation at hand. You also want to make sure that the program support staff is knowledgeable, responsive, and helpful-this can make all of the difference in your experience. AG



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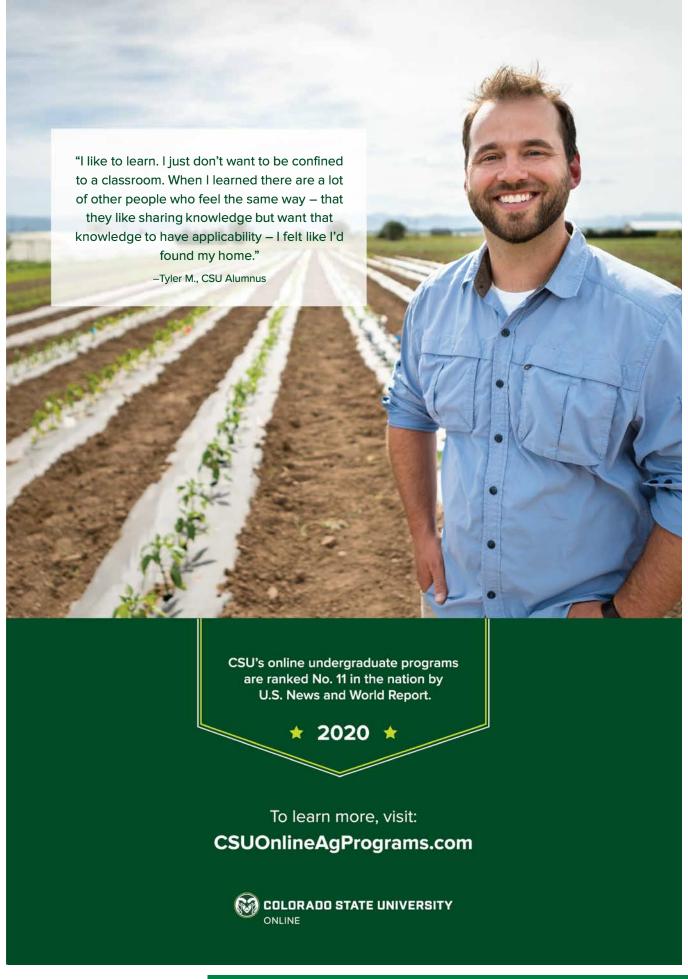
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- You can update or add resumes any time by clicking on "Manage Resumes."









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- Approaching the Job Offer with Personal Finance in Mind
- Workplace Dress Codes 101
- What a Performance Review is Really Like
- Transitioning from College to Career
- Six Competencies Young Professionals Need to Be Successful

Access the Career Success Kit now at https://bit.ly/agcsk2020

The first five students to sign up will be eligible for a virtual mock interview with an AgCareers.com staff member!

The next 20 students to sign up will receive a resume critique from AgCareers.com.

