

2022/2023 | U.S. 16TH EDITION



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AGRICULTURE & FOOD CAREER GUIDE

FEATURING:

- HOW TO TAILOR YOUR RESUME
- HANDLING YOUR FIRST JOB OFFER
- MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR NETWORK

INSIDE:

**INDUSTRY INSIGHTS
CAREER ADVICE
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WELCOME



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We are excited to bring you AgCareers.com's Agriculture & Food Career Guide. Whether you are completing internships, summer experiences, accepting your first job, or continuing development throughout your professional career, thank you for bringing us along on your career journey; we are here to support & connect you!

Now, more than ever, food has become a central topic of conversation around its importance in local and national economic discussions, reinforcing the nutrition value it provides or shared through social media as people are passionate about food's origins, how it's produced, and the sense of community food provides when shared with family and friends. However, our team at AgCareers.com remains focused on the human aspect of who is involved in bringing this food from the farm to the table.

The human resource landscape continues to evolve in the agriculture and food sector as the population demographics change, paving a way for more diversity in meeting the required skills and expertise across the food system. We are thankful to be part of agriculture and food, an industry essential to feeding the world that perseveres even in challenging times.

We have creatively grown this Ag & Food Career Guide for 16 years, enhancing it each year to remain relevant in the current job market and educational environment. Our annual Career Guide remains focused on being a resource for students and young professionals interested in careers within the agriculture and food industry. What started as a small print publication has developed into a robust magazine and digital flipbook with online enhancements. We fill the guide

with engaging content relevant to the present employment marketplace and job seeker advice.

The Ag & Food Career Guide covers topics, including advice every young professional should know, using your network, navigating career fairs and interviews, job offers, and how to personalize your resume professionally. However, in this edition, we are pleased to highlight elite agricultural and food businesses throughout the magazine; these organizations are actively recruiting students for internships and entry-level positions.

Save this publication throughout the school year and beyond as a resource for your career search. Also check out and bookmark our digital edition at www.AgCareers.com which includes links to employers hiring and bonus content. In addition, sign up for the Career Success Kit, which delivers career content directly to your inbox over the next few months. View the back cover for your invitation to the kit's exclusive videos, graphics, and interactive content to help you thrive in the job market.

Use this advice to put the finishing touches on your resume and then add it to the AgCareers.com Resume Database so employers can find you. You will want to be proactive in your search and apply to opportunities on www.AgCareers.com. Employers post thousands of job openings each month!

We hope that no matter where you are in your career journey, this guide and AgCareers.com's resources can help you along the way. On behalf of our industry partners, thank you for exploring this guide and starting your career in agriculture and food!

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8 Pieces of Advice Every Young Professional Should Know

by Michael Curry & Elizabeth Galbreath, Agriculture Future of America

If you're like us, you have read your fair share of advice and information about how to be successful personally and professionally. We love to learn and seek ways to improve, so we've sought out mentors, joined professional organizations and created development plans. Even though we've tried to be proactive about our learning, some lessons you just need to learn the hard way.

We've learned a lot the hard way, so we compiled a list of our best advice in hopes that sharing these insights with you will prepare you for what's to come in your career journey.

Some of these lessons are harder than others, and this won't be all you need to know as a young professional. We encourage you to use this list as a starting point to get curious, use your resources, and reach out to role models or mentors in your life as tools to reflect and learn more. We're here because talking about your experiences is an important part of processing and bringing others with you as we all develop stronger leaders and professionals.

Here's our 8 pieces of advice every young professional should know:



TAKE NOTES

You will absorb tons of information through conversations and meetings constantly. You may trust your brain to remember it all, but you probably won't. Do your future self a favor, and take notes in important conversations. If you don't want to take notes, see if someone else is willing to do so, and then share. When you're managing lots of tasks and ideas, this will help you remember decisions made and key thoughts.



ASK MEANINGFUL QUESTIONS

When you ask thoughtful and intentional questions, you build deeper relationships. Open-ended and follow-up questions are your best friend.

These are more introspective and allow a person to "open up" more. By asking "how," "why," or "what," you are setting yourself up for success. Asking good questions does not come without being a good listener. Often, we listen to respond, rather than listening to understand. This is where questions can begin to falter. Once you start the conversation, listen, allow it to flow, ask questions and see where the discussion takes you!



WORK IS NOT EVERYTHING; TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

When you're passionate about the work you do, or you just want to do a great job in your professional life, it's easy to let work take over all aspects of your life. Remember that work is just a part of your life. Protect your "off" time, whether that's nights and weekends or something else, and use it to rest, relax and connect with others. Find hobbies to pursue on your time off and meet people to form a community. Give yourself things to look forward to once work is over to encourage yourself to maintain a healthy balance. And if you're asked to take on additional responsibilities that interfere with "you time," say "no" if it will cost you the rest that you need. Sometimes it's best to say "no" to something now in order to feel great about saying "yes" to something later. >>>



LEAVING A JOB IS NEVER EASY

It can be tough navigating early career choices. From limited options to a suffocating job, you should never settle for less than what you deserve. Know that when you are moving on, you are not quitting on yourself. Finding a job that you love and enjoy is essential since you spend most of your time there. Strive to find a role that heavily aligns with your passions and values. There are always learning opportunities, but challenge yourself to find the perfect fit for you.



BE OPEN TO THE UNEXPECTED AND EMBRACE THE UNCERTAINTY

You may have a plan or a major that you'd like to focus on for the rest of your life. This tip challenges that plan and reminds us that sometimes we don't know everything, and we need to take risks and explore what we never expected. If COVID taught us anything, it proved that we need to embrace uncertainty. Not everyone knows what they're doing, especially as things are changing so quickly, and that's perfectly

okay. Use this time as an opportunity to take chances, ask questions and change your plan.



DON'T COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHERS

This is one of the hardest things not to do. Every single person who you interact with has a completely different trajectory than you do. There is so much pressure to hit milestones at certain times. This can be finding a significant other, buying a house, having children or finding the perfect job. If we don't accomplish those things by a certain time, we can begin to compare ourselves to where others are at in life. You have your own journey, and they have theirs. If you continue to seek out new opportunities and what is best for you, then you are doing everything right.



SEEK FEEDBACK CONSISTENTLY

Feedback gets a bad reputation. When you realize feedback is the only way for you to grow and get better, it becomes your friend rather than your

enemy. Seeking feedback is crucial since many people aren't willing to give it voluntarily, out of fear of hurting someone's feelings or it not being the "right time." Others give feedback at the most inopportune times when you're not prepared for it. If you seek feedback constantly, you are always "ready" to receive feedback and ask others for it, so they know you're willing to receive it. People will respect you and your willingness to continuously look for ways to better yourself.



REFLECT ON YOUR EXPERIENCES

Reflection is an incredibly useful tool in every aspect of your life. It gives your brain a moment to pause amidst your busyness and think through perspectives, conversations and experiences. Self-reflection is crucial to understanding how you learn best and how you handle various situations. Allowing yourself time to process what you have experienced is necessary for knowing where to go from that experience. Taking five minutes a day to reflect is a good starting point and will help you find the method that works best for you!

As one final reminder, all this advice can be great, but only if you do something with it. In putting these tips to action, remember that it can feel overwhelming to be "perfect" or "great." Aim for a realistic goal by simply trying to make progress and get better. Don't incorporate all this advice into

your life at one time; integrate them piece by piece into your life in a way that makes sense for you. We are excited for all that's to come for you on the never-ending journey of lifelong learning – enjoy the ride! **AG**

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Tailoring Your Resume

by Veronica Hislop, Content Creator, FoodGrads

Your resume. The dreaded step between you and the interview. If you could just get through this step, then you know that job can be yours!

However, think about the purpose of a resume from the perspective of a hiring manager or company. They don't have the resources (or time) to interview hundreds of applicants. Hiring managers rely on resumes to provide a snapshot of someone to determine if they would be well-suited for the job.

A well-crafted resume can not only help you get that interview but can also help you stand out amongst the competition. Your resume serves as a quick summary of your experience and demonstrates your writing skills. It shows that you can condense information and

have the employer in mind. It also shows that you understood the assignment.

Overall, a well-crafted resume is one that summarizes who you are professionally, but a tailored resume is one that shows an employer how you would be well-suited for their position. Although tailoring your resume might seem like a waste of time, it will help you in the long run. So before you submit your resume, tweak it to ensure you're giving the hiring manager what they are looking for.

Here are some tips on how you can successfully tailor your resume to any job posting:

Read the job description and take notes

Take a few minutes to print out the job description of the job you are applying for. Slow down and read the description deeply. Not just the title of the job, but actually what the job is about and what the company is looking for. Highlight the points that seem important and stand out.

Differentiate between the specific skills that they are looking for and the more general needs. The key is identifying the points you can speak to with your experience and skills. Be specific and look for things that will be beneficial to include in your resume. For example, if you are applying as an agricultural dealership intern and they are looking for an >>>

individual who can assist with minor repairs of equipment and you have done a shop class in school, then make sure to include that in your resume.

Another benefit of reading deeply into a job description is it allows you the opportunity to think about if this role is something you want to do and are well-suited for.

The first is often the most important

Employers typically format job descriptions in a hierarchy where the more important and relevant duties are closer to the top. When tailoring your resume focus on these requirements and responsibilities to show your aptitude. However, as a student or recent graduate, this isn't always easy to do as you lack work experience. Instead, draw from your course work or any time that you have volunteered. It is likely that during school you have performed skills related to the job.

For example, if you are applying for a research and development assistant position and during school you took a course on data science and analysis, include the specific software that you used. Bonus points if it was one directly mentioned in the job description. Remember, be truthful and only put on your resume what you feel comfortable talking about and competent at using.

Figure out what a company values and incorporate it into your resume

After thoroughly reading the job description of the job you are applying for, dig a little deeper and research the actual company. This phase can serve as double duty, acting not only as a way to tailor your resume but also preparing you for the interview. Explore both a company's website and social media platforms to see what they value and causes that might be important to them. If a company puts a high emphasis on customer service, try to weave this into your resume as something that is also important to you, as well as specific skills and experiences that show you work well with others.

Use other job postings to supplement information

It's likely that the job you are applying

for is similar (or even identical) to the one offered at a different company. Unfortunately, some job descriptions are incomplete and don't include every responsibility which the actual job would entail. Therefore, when tailoring your resume, it is beneficial to take it a step further and search other similar job postings, like those on AgCareers.com. Find five relevant job listings and look for common qualifications among them. Using this information, you can tailor your resume even further by inserting the keywords used in their job ads.

Mimic the language in the job posting and use keywords

Hiring managers can receive hundreds of applications for a single job posting. That's why many of them turn to automated tracking systems which search over resumes for keywords. Keywords or phrases are easily identifiable phrases/words which relate to a job such as tools used or skills. If a resume doesn't include these phrases, it might not even make its way to the hiring manager. Examples of agricultural related keywords might include dairy, irrigation, cattle, horticulture. Always keep keywords in mind as they can help you get past the software that analyzes resumes. Use job descriptions to identify keywords and mimic that language in your resume.

Don't forget to emphasize your soft skills

Soft skills are just as important as technical skills. As a student, lean heavily on your soft skills as they are transferable between positions. On the surface, a tutoring job might not seem like it has anything related to a customer service job, but there are connections if you think about it. Being able to take care of children is a big responsibility and you can highlight that ability. After all, customer service is about taking on responsibility and taking care of a customer. Check out of AgCareers.com Career Success Library for more ideas on how you can spin your bullets to emphasize a certain soft skill.

Use numbers and metrics

Measurable achievements are those

you can include that involve a metric or number. For example, the number of people you supervised on a soccer team or how many events you helped to organize during your time in student council. Adding metrics to your resume allows you to create a more compelling story about yourself and background. Look through your resume and make a list of all your measurable accomplishments for each role. You could even include that you came in first place during a college competition.

Correctly save your resume in an easy-to-follow format

Tailoring your resume also includes tailoring the name of the file you submit online. If you are applying for multiple positions, then keep a consistent job file system that is easy to find and professional. Did you know that hiring managers can see what you saved your resume document as? Make it clear and simple by always having your first and last name included in the filename. Always start editing on a new file because that can add to the confusion. Writing multiple resumes also gives you the benefit of taking the best parts of different tailored resumes. Work smarter, not harder!

Tailor your cover-letter

Although not covered in-depth here, a well-tailored cover letter can be just as important as a resume. For many students lacking experience, a cover letter acts as an opportunity to add personality to your application and demonstrate why, even with your lack of experience, you are well-suited for a position. A cover-letter should compliment your resume and further prove to employers that you read the job description.

Proofread, proofread, proofread

Although it doesn't explicitly apply to tailoring your resume, it is always a good idea to proofread, and triple check your resume. Ask a friend or a family member to help and get their opinion on how well you tailored resume to the job description. A fresh pair of eyes is a great way to combat missing mistakes which might have arisen from fatigue. **AG**



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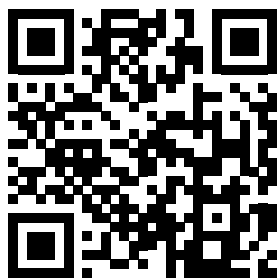
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LISTEN & LEARN

Do you know it all yet?

by Bonnie Johnson, AgCareers.com Marketing & Communications Manager

Classes, team projects and coursework are invaluable. When you set out on an internship or in your first full-time job, you may be eager to share everything you've learned with your new employer. You want to showcase your knowledge and prove your worth. Convincing your employer that they made the right choice in hiring you is at the top of your mind. You want to shout from the rooftops everything you know!

An important part of starting any new job, however, is taking the time to learn about the organization, the business and your teammates. Learn the culture, flow and processes specific to your new employer. No matter your grade point average or years of education, there are many nuances you can only learn on the job.

How do my skills really measure up?

All the knowledge that you built up in class included important hard skills, or technical skills and the ability to perform specific tasks. These are teachable abilities that are easily defined, measured, or quantified. You've probably outlined some big personal goals already and you want to get there fast—such as earning money, making the world a better place, or gaining influence.

AgCareers.com asked employers to rank their preferred skills for students and recent graduates; technical knowledge came in last place. What was first? Teamwork.

Beyond the hard skills, your education does not just teach you “what to learn,” but “how to learn,” skills essential for your entire career.

It's said – and proven – hard skills can get you an interview, but you need soft skills to get the job offer, and then to keep the job!

I often realize that education's reach is way beyond what they teach in the classroom because it teaches us **HOW** to learn. These how-to-learn skills, like problem-solving and decision-making, are transferrable to many different situations and environments and are what make us employable. These transferable skills are **ESSENTIAL** at work, especially when beginning a first job, starting a new career or moving to a different department or business unit. Being a student or recent grad regularly equates to limited work experience. However, you still have transferable skills that allow you to interact effectively with others, a key skill employers are looking for.

This is **NOT** what they taught me in school.

There's a popular mantra in recruiting, “Hire for attitude, train for skills.” Many employers will teach new hires technical, product or company-specific skills on the job. While it's extremely important for you to research the company prior to your first day, please note you won't – and can't – know everything about the organization. You're starting from the outside and need to acclimate to the distinctive qualities of your new employer. It's impossible to standardize all expectations and methods across the industry because you'll find differences in every employer based on size, location, customer-base, sector and a load of additional variables.

You might feel overwhelmed, clueless, thinking “I never learned this in school!” Or on the flip side, you may observe practices that you frankly think to yourself, “This is **NOT** how they taught it in school,” and thus desire to put your two cents in. I encourage you to take a step back to learn more about the organization before sharing your insights, suggestions, corrections or

even criticisms. See learning more as continuing the education you began in college.

This leads to one of the most important, if not the most **IMPERATIVE** soft skill to practice when beginning a new job: active listening. Beyond simply hearing, focus on what the person is saying and not on what you're going to say next. Don't interrupt, but do take notes. Those notes prove invaluable when you move to the next step of active listening, which is asking questions.

*“Tell me more about...”
“Could you fill me in on...”
“I'd like to understand....”*

Ask questions to understand how the organization works and how and why things are done the way they are. There may be some legit reasons your new employer is not processing something in the same manner school taught you or there are special circumstances you need to be aware of before you put your skills into practice. Strive to understand before you correct or suggest. After you've asked questions, take a few days to learn more, process and understand. Then you can slowly start sharing your suggestions positively, and if your boss or employer is doing things right, they **WILL** ask for your feedback. When they ask is the time to really show them what you know!

*“What do you think about....”
“I have an idea...”
“Have you considered...”*

So, the answer is, no, you don't know it all, and sorry to say, but you never will. There is no shame in that; such is the beauty and benefit of lifelong learning. Keep listening and asking questions to prove to your employer that they made the perfect choice in hiring you! **AG**



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Lessons Learned from Virtual Career Fairs

How do we go back to in-person career fairs?

by Kylie Farmer, Project Coordinator, AgCareers.com

We've all heard it before. In fact, we've all lived it! These past couple years have completely changed the way we go about our lives personally and professionally. For those of us nearing the end of our college career or who are new to the workforce, our job search has evolved from mostly in-person to mostly digital and now, after the pandemic, a hybrid approach that we are all trying to navigate.

Though first born out of necessity, virtual career fairs opened many opportunities for both employers and job seekers. Here are five lessons we have learned from virtual career fairs and how we can use them as we transition back to in-person career fairs:

THE LESSON

The Speed of Connection is Faster Than Ever

While sitting at a computer and logging onto a virtual career fair, email and LinkedIn are quite literally at your fingertips. Having this level of access increased our speed of connection. Instead of following up after the career fair, you could do that instantaneously. Now, we want to try to keep this same connection rate.

HOW WE CAN IMPLEMENT IT

Throughout the day, build breaks into your day to pause and connect with professionals on LinkedIn, send a thank you message or email a digital version of your resume while still on site. Decide how often you would like to stop (every other booth, every hour, etc.) and find a spot outside of the fair where you can stop, sit down, and put all your

focus toward making these connections. The closer you follow up to the initial meeting, the more you will impress the industry professionals you meet. Plus, by connecting and following up while still at the career fair, you are less likely to forget to do it later.

THE LESSON

Digital Resources are Important

Most virtual career fair platforms integrated digital resources beyond just a chat or video: links to websites, virtual resumes, LinkedIn profiles, email URLs and more. Even when off the virtual platform, having these resources accessible is still valuable in the in-person space, you might just have to be creative in how you keep these handy.

HOW WE CAN IMPLEMENT IT

To put it simply, make it easy to share your digital resources with employers, even if you are meeting in person. One way you can do this is to create email drafts with a subject line and your PDF resume already attached. Then, while you are speaking with a professional, you can share your resume with them during your conversation. While we always advise to keep printed resumes handy at career fairs, it never hurts to leave both a printed and digital version. Depending on the type of work you do or your personal networking preferences, you may have other digital resources you want to share with potential employers, like an online portfolio or a LinkedIn profile. QR codes are a simple and effortless way to send employers to your digital resources. Use an online QR code generator to create a code. Then, keep

the code handy on your phone or printed on a business card so it is easy to access and scan.

THE LESSON

Career Fair Platforms Impact the Time Available

Compared to in-person career fairs where employers are trying to keep a line from forming at their booth, virtual career fairs typically allow more one-on-one time to speak with employers. If you have gotten accustomed to having ample time to sit down with a potential employer, you will need to reevaluate your approach before returning to an in-person experience.

HOW WE CAN IMPLEMENT IT

To plan for a limited time with employers, take some time before the career fair to define why you are going to the career fair. Are you visiting to find a job? To network? To learn more about certain careers or companies? Once you have determined your purpose, find a strategy for that purpose. Keep in mind that depending on why you are attending the career fair, the time you require from employers may be longer than they have that day. For example, if you want to explore careers, you might ask more in-depth questions that will take longer to answer. A great strategy for this example is to make an initial connection at the career fair and request some time to meet afterwards when they return to the office.

Regardless of what you are trying to accomplish at the career fair, an elevator pitch is always a great way to open a conversation at a company's booth. An

>>>

elevator pitch should introduce yourself (including your major, university and year in school), summarize your experience, your career aspirations and why you are at the career fair. Great elevator pitches are 30-45 seconds and well-practiced.

THE LESSON

The Health and Wellbeing of all is a Top Priority

Virtual career fairs became the norm to keep people safe and healthy. Even as we transition out of the pandemic, we should always care for our own and others' wellbeing.

HOW WE CAN IMPLEMENT IT

As a rule of thumb, do not attend a career fair if you are not feeling well – COVID or otherwise. Spreading illness, even the sniffles, is not the first impression that you want to leave on a potential employer!

Even if you are completely healthy when you attend the career fair, it is always best practice to respect others' level of comfort at the career fair. We want to be considerate of different preferences for being around others,

space between people, etc. Next time you attend an in-person career fair, consider asking before shaking hands or wearing a mask when speaking with an individual who is masked up.

THE LESSON

Virtual Career Fairs are Not Going Away

Many organizations found that virtual career fairs allowed their teams to reach more potential employees while spending less time and money traveling. With the newly realized value of virtual career fairs, we can expect that they will remain a method of connecting to employers for the foreseeable future.

HOW WE CAN IMPLEMENT IT

Virtual career fairs are not going away, so your participation in them should not end either. Keep an eye out for virtual career fairs hosted by your university, AgCareers.com or individual companies. These virtual experiences may be especially helpful if you are trying to find a job or expand your network past your geographical location. Keep in mind, it is much easier for employers to attend

a virtual career fair than an in-person one, so attending virtual options will only expand your opportunities.

The virtual experiences in the last couple of years are great tools for us to use as we go forward in our professional careers. At your next in-person career fair, keep these lessons in mind to build your network and create opportunities.

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HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT INTERNSHIP

by Dene Dryden, Freelance Writer, National FFA Organization

Internships: For many college students, they're an important step on the road toward their desired career path in agriculture. For some, internships are a way to discover new roles and see if a certain industry is a good fit for them. Although landing an internship is an exciting moment, getting there can be difficult for first-time applicants, especially when trying to choose the right internship for your interests and goals.

Robin Thomas knows quite a bit about internships; as Syngenta's early talent and university relations manager, she works with college students and recent graduates seeking internships and early career opportunities at the company. She says internships at Syngenta — and across agriculture in general — cover several fields of interest.

"We have all kinds of internships," Thomas said. "We have a production and supply development program that we hire six to eight associates for each year. They pull from a broad variety of interns, from health, safety and environment interns, financing interns, logistics, procurement."

WHEN TO BEGIN

Thomas says the time to start looking for internships is at the beginning of the school year.

"I would start as a freshman," she said.

Whether you have a clear career path in mind or you're still figuring out what you want to do after graduation, Thomas says internships are a great way to find out what works for you.

"You have to approach it from the standpoint [that] you're looking for your best fit and where you're just going to click and be happy," Thomas said. "And it may not be your first internship. You may say, 'Wow, this is not for me, I don't want to do sales.'... But you have to approach it as a three-month interview, the company interviewing you and you

Thomas says the time to start looking for internships is at the beginning of the school year. "I would start as a freshman," said Robin Thomas, Syngenta.

interviewing the company too. The more internships you have, the more you can fine-tune what your interests are and what your best fit is by the time you graduate."

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

The two-way interview also applies to the internship discovery and application process. At career fairs or other opportunities to speak with recruiters, Thomas says it's essential to do your homework.

"Even if you're just browsing through a career fair and you see the company, and you're like, 'I wonder what they do,' step around the corner and Google them and see. Know what they do when you come up," she said.

Involvement in clubs and organizations like FFA can help you stand out to recruiters. However, Thomas says it is better to invest time

and effort into those clubs rather than joining just because "it looks good on a resume."

"If I see club member for 12 clubs, it doesn't mean as much as club president, vice president, secretary, committee leader for two or three clubs and organizations," she said. "It's more depth of engagement rather than breadth."

According to Thomas, what is even more important is knowing what you want to do.

"Sit down and think about, 'What do I like doing?'" she said. "'Do I want to be inside or outside? Do I want to work independently, or do I want to be part of a team?' Those types of questions can really help you narrow down what type of position you want to go into."

SEEK ADVICE

Asking recruiters and other professionals about their career paths can also be an excellent way to gain insight into what you are interested in and if a company would be a good fit for you as an intern.

"Ask people what roles they've had and what they liked about the role, what was the most difficult," Thomas said. "Everybody loves to talk about their career journey and about themselves. You can interview the folks at the career fair. Or, if somebody's visiting your club or organization on campus, make sure you come with an arsenal of questions for them."

If you're still unsure what career path is best for you, Thomas says to let

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internship recruiters know that you're exploring your options. They can help point you in the right direction.

"Start with, 'I'm still open; I'm trying to find that perfect fit for me. Here are some things I like to do,'" she said. "I know a lot of the career fairs, especially the bigger career fairs we go to, there are people there from our production facilities, from our research facilities, all of our sales brands. So, when you talk to that person, when you tell them what you like to do and what you enjoy doing or what you feel like your forte is, then they'll go, 'Oh, you need to talk to so-and-so over here.' A lot of times that fit in that internship is found that way."

KEEP AN OPEN MIND

Even if you're set on a particular career path, keeping an open mind can lead to new opportunities. That's what happened to Jessica Woodworth, who is now a Syngenta retail representative working with clients in Florida, Alabama and Mississippi. A few years ago, she was studying animal science at Kansas State University with the intent to become a veterinarian. She was first introduced to Syngenta when watching her brother compete at the National FFA Convention & Expo.

"I was looking for an internship because I was up in the air about vet school," she said. "My brother had

mentioned that he had heard during his contest that Syngenta was looking for interns. I kind of looked at my mom, and I was like, 'I have an animal science degree, I don't know if Syngenta would be interested in that.'"

Woodworth's mother encouraged her to talk to a recruiter, and that person got her in touch with Thomas.

"I realized that with Syngenta, as long as you had the base foundation, it didn't matter what your degree was in as long as you were willing to put forth the work and effort," Woodworth said. "I got connected with Robin, and she helped me land an internship in Arkansas."

Woodworth's internship coincided with the window of time where she would have applied to veterinary programs.

"However, I got into my internship and absolutely loved it — completely forgot about vet school, never applied," she said. "At the end of the summer, I interviewed for the developmental sales position. Then, right out of college, came to Syngenta for that position in northern Illinois."

Woodworth says that if she could give her past self one piece of advice for her career journey, she'd tell herself to be open to different opportunities.

"Stay open-minded because you never know what your future might hold and where you might find yourself that you never thought you would be," she said. "I never would have dreamed that

this is what I love."

The process of choosing the right internship can include talking to recruiters at career fairs and events, like how Woodworth approached Syngenta. But there are other tools out there for prospective interns, like the FFA Forever Blue Network. Allie Ellis, the associate director of the FFA Alumni and Supporters, says current FFA members, alumni and supporters can all join the online network.

The Forever Blue Network is also a resource for finding events, mentoring opportunities and special interest groups.

"Stay open-minded because you never know what your future might hold and where you might find yourself that you never thought you would be," said Jessica Woodworth, Syngenta. "I never would have dreamed that this is what I love."

Choosing the right internship can be a challenging but rewarding process. In the end, it's about finding an opportunity that works well for you and your professional goals.

"Get outside your comfort zone," Woodworth said, "because you never know where you're going to land, what you're going to do." **AG**



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LIFE PAST COLLEGE

How Do I Handle This Full-Time Job?

by Clara Boles, Digital Marketing Coordinator, AgCareers.com

Clara Boles sat down with Elizabeth Byers-Doten, Assistant Director of Academic Excellence and Transformational Education, College of Agriculture at Purdue University, to chat about life past college and managing a full-time career. Elizabeth's role at Purdue is to help students discover different opportunities in the college of agriculture to help transform their leadership experience.

You graduated and are starting your full-time career, entering the so-called real world—how different can this be?

Personally, I didn't realize how big of a life change this would be, and I don't believe I am the only one who feels that way. Some of the following tips may help!

1 GO IN WITH AN OPEN MIND

Elizabeth gave this advice: "Go into this process with an open mind and be honest with yourself. Make sure that your values align with your company and coworkers."

Just because you are graduating and you might not have homework every night, remember the learning is not over yet! You might think you know everything about this role, but you do not, and that is okay! Find a way that works for you to retain all this information. For example, I took notes on my computer during my training, and I still reference these notes after being with the company for over a year. Keep your mind open to all opportunities and possibilities!

2 SET YOUR BOUNDARIES EARLY

In college you are a student 100% of the time. It is common to be checking your email at dinner or doing homework at midnight. Realize a full-time job has a start and end time. Elizabeth mentioned that a boundary she set for herself early

is not having her work email on her personal phone. If you are going to be tempted to check your email at night, simply do not put the app on your phone, or turn off notifications. Once you open that door of answering emails or being available to coworkers or clients outside of work hours, it is going to be much harder to shut that door later in your career.

But, realize for some agricultural roles this just won't be the case, for example, if you are a veterinarian, you could be on call at certain times, or a seed salesperson is obviously going to be much busier ahead of the planting season. There are also ways to set boundaries for these types of roles, but it may just look a little different.

3 DON'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE

This is a very new stage of life, so don't get too "comfy!" Make new friends and try to get to know your coworkers!

Elizabeth told me, "I have found one of the best ways to work with different generations is to have mutual respect for each other."

Try to think of this as a growing opportunity and learn something!

Having friends / mentors at work makes learning new things easier and asking those questions less frightening. Feeling uncomfortable is part of the change and growth; learn to be okay with those feelings.

Remember to keep asking questions. I know at one point when I was hired, I almost got nervous to ask a question, because I thought to myself, "If they hired me to do this job, I should know what I am doing, right?" WRONG! Yes, you should have some idea of what you are doing, but every company does things a little bit differently. It is 100%

normal for someone to ask questions. Wouldn't you rather ask and clarify than do something wrong?

4 YOU ACTUALLY HAVE BEEN PREPARING

If you really think about it, you have been preparing for this life change! You went to class, which is now your "work," and you were involved in activities outside of class, like clubs, sports, church, volunteering, which are now your "social life." The time management you learned in college by balancing these things in your life is now paying off!

Work may sound repetitive. We don't get a spring break or that summer break we all dreamed of in school. Make sure you are going into a company that aligns with giving their employees the deserved time off. Plan your time off and look forward to that trip or even a "staycation."

5 KEEP DREAMING

Elementary school, high school, college, dream career, okay.... now what?? I am a goal driven person. I LOVE looking towards the next thing. So, when I got a job with a company that I could see myself working for over the next fifty years, I freaked out a bit. And to be honest, I feel like I probably wasn't the only one.

When talking with Elizabeth, she said, "It is so important to still dream and have goals, and let other people know of those goals."

Everyone's goals don't look the same. They could be saving money for a trip, being a board member, or even finding a volunteer activity they love!

It is so important to keep dreaming!

AG




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Working in Agricultural Jobs Without an Agricultural Background

by Allyson Herts, Marketing Intern, AgCareers.com

It may be scary to explore a career in agriculture, especially if you have no prior experience in the field. However, do not let this stop you from pursuing your interest. There are many options for getting into agriculture with the wide range of work opportunities within the industry. With this variety of options, everyone can get involved in agriculture, from skilled workers to college graduates.

So, if you find yourself in an agricultural job without an agricultural background, here's some tips to kickstart your agricultural knowledge.

RESEARCH IS KEY

With the numerous options in agriculture, those considering a career in agriculture should research the best field of agriculture for them. After deciding on pursuing a career in agriculture it is great to network and develop those connections. Career fairs, internships, networking on professional social media, and job shadowing are good places to start. Research is one of the best ways for those with or without an agricultural background to gain experience and knowledge.

AGRICULTURE IS MORE THAN FARMING

The most common misunderstanding about agriculture is that it requires 600 acres of land or 200 head of cattle to be classified as agriculture. This is not the case. Most jobs available are not traditional farm positions. There are a wide variety of career opportunities in agriculture, food and natural resources. You can become a biochemist, a public relations professional, a real estate agent, a lawyer, a drone tech, a salesperson, or a hydrologist.

If you want to work in agriculture you don't have to acquire property, livestock, machinery, etc. to enjoy that part of the industry. For example, you could work for an agricultural firm, with a traditional

office job, and still be classified as an agricultural professional.

GET MORE FROM YOUR EDUCATION

The variety of options available in agriculture permit post-secondary graduates to receive greater value from their education. Those who pursue a business degree, such as marketing, supply chain management, accounting or management information systems, to mention a few, have the opportunity to work for a variety of businesses, including those in the agriculture sector.

The true added value of working in agriculture, food and natural resources is that every single employee in this field is working to feed, clothe and fuel our world. Not many people work full time and believe they are making a positive impact on the world, agriculture, on the other hand, does make a difference and maximizes the effort put into your education.

AGRICULTURE IS BIG BUSINESS

It takes many hands to run a business, and an agriculture business is no different. Employees are needed to work on all elements of the organization and in numerous positions. Look at technology as an example, as technology advances, agriculture practices are continually shifting and employees are in demand.

Agriculture is so diversified that there are opportunities for everyone. This also allows individuals who do not have exposure to agriculture to be able to fill these open positions. The worldwide agricultural industry's critical nature contributed to its stability and robust hiring for 2021.

In 2021, AgCareers.com had more than **56,000** job opportunities worldwide, an increase of approximately **30%** from the previous year.

EXPERIENCE MAY BE NEEDED

While many agricultural companies like their employees to have some form of agricultural experience, this usually only applies to specific positions. It is not needed, but highly encouraged, to network with those in the sector that you are interested in and develop at least some understanding of the industry. Having some basic knowledge and understanding will improve your chances of acquiring the position you desire. Researching different sectors might also give you some insight into how much it takes to farm 600 acres of land or keep 200 head of cattle healthy and profitable.

WHERE TO GAIN EXPERIENCE

There are several opportunities to gain agricultural experience, for example, job shadowing, internships, and career fairs. To help you gain experience some high schools, and post-secondary institutions offer agricultural programs to broaden your knowledge base.

Planting the seed now is the best approach to becoming involved in agriculture. Begin your investigation into what aspect of agriculture piques your interest. Because of the industry's size, there is something for everyone. It's always a good idea to leave the door open to fresh possibilities since you never know where a tiny little seed will lead you. **AG**



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TO PLAY OR NOT TO PLAY. IT'S NOT REALLY A QUESTION.

**Your network is one of
your strongest tools**

by Paula West, Digital Experience Project Manager, AgCareers.com



Call it making connections or relationship building, but at the core, it's good old networking; It is the human connection that often occurs naturally between people. Networking is the magic that brings joy to our workdays and laughs in the lunchroom, it's those relationships that help us grow professionally, advance in our careers, and celebrate our wins. They also teach us valuable lessons when we fail, lead us to new opportunities we did not know we wanted, and sometimes put us into uncomfortable situations that force us to take our biggest, bravest risks. These relationships within the professional world can be tricky to build, sometimes hard to maintain, but also turn into lifelong friendships.

Professional relationships have helped me change industries, helped me define goals, and guided me forward down my career path. These relationships have allowed me to transition into the role of mentor while still being a mentee. Without healthy working relationships, we risk feeling alone, unguided, and unengaged in our professional roles.

In many industries, outside-the-

office activities, like golf, are times for networking. Why is networking so important? People want to work for or with people they like, it is natural to want this connection.

The unfair political game means it has nothing to do with your ability to perform your job. I say this because the people who attend the golf games typically hold higher roles on the organizational chart and are not interested in hanging in the lunchroom and getting to know you while eating a brown-bag lunch. As I said, it is not a fair process. It's about them, not about you. It's learning to "play the game" at a basic level.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH COWORKERS

Making connections with the people you work with means more to your career than just making friends. It includes invitations to company outings, opens doors to collaborative project work, and, most importantly, reminds the leadership that you are a wonderful team member.

It is no secret that office politics is not fair. Our society puts policies and procedures in place to attempt to control the political game within companies

but can still fail. The way to combat this is to build allies within the company. This means working relationships with those who you can help, and those who can help you. It is a give-and-take relationship. You can do this by being open to conversation when in the lunchroom. This means no earbuds. Ask people about their weekend and make small talk with others. Allow them to get to know you a little more.

This also includes connecting with your coworkers on LinkedIn and exchanging personal emails or phone numbers. There will be times when a coworker is no longer with the company, and you may have missed a great connection for your future.

GET THE INVITE

Attending the golf tournament, or any social function that involves networking, is important for all employees. Having the opportunity should not be based on your gender, your golfing skills, or your ability to tell a good joke. This is a work event, and all should have the same opportunity. However, here are some ways you can bait the fish.

- Purposefully join in the conversation.

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- Drop some comments about your last game, the laughs you had at yourself when your foursome did poorly, or about how you want to golf more.
- Keep some memorabilia at your desk. Display a personal interest or a photo of your favorite vacation/trip. This is a great icebreaker. Also, remember to ask others about their memorabilia items or photos on their desks.

Ask. I have had great success in just asking. Yes, it may feel awkward, but you will probably only have to endure it once. I have found that when people learn you like fun, they are happy to include you. Though golfing is a great catalyst for networking, any activity can provide these same opportunities for you to grow your professional circle, get your name and face out there, and keep you from missing out on the conversations that happen outside of the boardroom. Remember, when you are given the opportunity, you are still working. There is an outcome, and your employer will or should ask how it went, who you met, and if you learned anything. This is not an opportunity to hang out with the colleagues you already know, overindulge in alcohol, or enjoy the most expensive dinner on the menu. That is a quick way for you to lose the opportunity next time.

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is talked about repeatedly, but I cannot stress how much these activities can affect your career path (and help others too!). The experience alone is great, but the connections that you can make can be even greater. You do not have to make long-term commitments to get the benefits. Do some research. Find out what companies take part with which charities. Be mindful of the activities you participate in and what doors they can help open. Make sure you keep a list of the contacts you have met or connect with them on a mutually agreed-upon

social media platform. LinkedIn is a commonly used tool for professional relationships, especially with people you have recently met.

If your time is limited, you must be strategic. Short-term involvement in strategic activities could mean participating in a one-day food drive or volunteering to work at a charity event. Setting yourself up for success involves research, pre-networking, and a prepared elevator pitch about yourself. It may sound unorthodox to approach volunteering in this way, but it is part of the networking game played for decades.

Long-term strategic involvement can include sitting on a committee for a charity or with a group that is in your field, or a field that you want to become involved in. Committees help increase your opportunities to meet like-minded professionals. Committees are great steppingstones to one day landing a seat on a Board of Directors. Longer involvement also increases the pool of contacts you have for future references.

I'M OUT THERE, NOW WHAT?

Great, you are at an event! People are there to do the same thing as you are, meet people. Agree to connect later with those you already know and attempt to meet new people. Here are a couple of tips that will keep you as a welcomed connection:

- Pay attention to your appearance. First impressions are everything. Remember, the game is not always fair, so manage the plays you can. Good hygiene, businesses appropriate clothing, and clean shoes are in your control, so do your best.
- Listen to people, ask about them and leave the hard selling out of it. Say their name. Ask about their roles, their company, and even their future career

goals if the opportunity presents itself. Also, don't clam up when asked a question. Conversations should flow back and forth.

- Remember when you leave a conversation ask for their permission to contact them. When they say yes, send a brief message using whatever platform works, social media or email, that includes where or how you met. In the future, when you go back through your message history, it will be there as a nice reminder for both parties.

Networking and making the effort to build professional relationships can be hard for some people. I challenge those people who are shy or do not love social situations to network and connect with their coworkers. Talk to them in the lunchroom. Small talk is a valuable tool to master. Those who are sitting alone in the lunchroom may have the same feelings of apprehension as you do. My advice is to just go for it, every day, set down the phone, and talk with someone. Remember, it is better to have ten strong mutually beneficial relationships over hundreds of soft connections on a social media platform.

For those who find it comfortable in a social setting, be sure to make a spot for those who need help grabbing a chair and starting the conversation. One day, you could look to them for support.

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Soaring CAREERS

The **National FFA Organization** and **AgCareers.com** have joined forces to create a robust career website to help you explore the broad range of careers within the industry of agriculture — careers that may have you using advanced equipment, creating new hybrid seeds, raising animals, managing people or designing new products and packaging.



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HOW TO HANDLE YOUR FIRST JOB OFFER

by Clara Boles, Digital Marketing Coordinator, AgCareers.com

MY FIRST JOB OFFER! NOW WHAT?

You finished your education, put in the work, got your degree, and now you are on your way to your first full-time career! CONGRATS! The offer comes in after lots of hard work and researching, trying to find the right job. Let's be real, you probably had to apply to more than one position. But what if the offer isn't exactly what you had in mind? What do you do now?

FIRST OFF, BE PROUD OF YOURSELF; CELEBRATE!

This is really hard stuff! Be proud of yourself that you even got an offer! Many people are under the impression, and I know I was, that if you go to college and obtain a good degree, someone would almost hand a great job right to you. I quickly learned that was not the case and I am sure you are going to learn that too. This is not to discourage you, but to hopefully prepare you.

Keep in mind that you might not find your dream career, salary, and all the right benefits right out of college. To be frank, it is normal not to find it right away. Keep the faith; you have lots of time to locate your perfect fit if this is not the one.

PREPARE MENTALLY & DO YOUR RESEARCH

This is something I wish I really would have done. I was a bit naïve and didn't do appropriate research, so I had my mind set on something bigger than I should have. I don't want to tell you to lower your expectations, but keep in mind the realistic picture. You have just graduated from college, and chances are you will start with an entry-level position.

Use the resources available to you. There are online sites to look up a salary in your field/industry. Check out your college department; they may also have resources available to give you a better idea of what you are getting into. You should be able to come up with a tentative dollar range that is comfortable for you. Don't forget to factor in the cost of living, your education level, and any extra training you might have.

MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR OFFER

This is no little part-time job where you work in the evenings for some extra gas money—this is a big deal!

If you go through with your offer, you are signing a legal document for your career, which lists your salary/wage, your retirement, your benefits, your PTO, and more.

So, really make sure you understand the job offer. It is a great idea to have a parent/mentor look over your offer as well. Make sure you are not missing anything. Make sure you comprehend everything in that document. How do you do that? Google it, try to find a YouTube video or a blog that goes more into depth about terms in the offer you might not understand. If you feel comfortable with the employer who gave you your offer, ask for clarification from them on questions you have.

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU REALLY WANT

Do you want to work for a huge corporation and make a big salary? For some people, this is a YES! They want to be a part of this huge organization that has lots of opportunities. That is great, but is it for you?

Do you want to work for a smaller company, perhaps not making as much at the beginning? Working for a smaller company might not give you all the glam and big salary, but this comes with other benefits. You might have your voice heard and be able to use a larger variety of your skills to your best ability, plus learn new skills. These things are great, but is it for you?

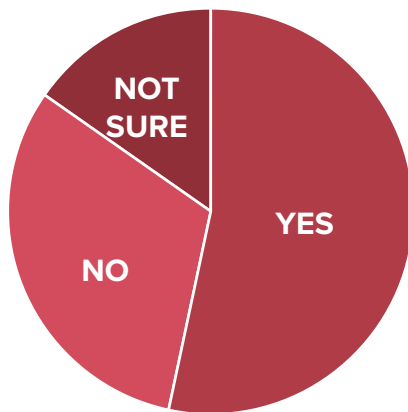
Sometimes it is hard to not just focus on the dollar sign, but there is a lot to consider. >>>

SO, THE BIG QUESTION:

DO YOU NEGOTIATE YOUR FIRST OFFER OUT OF COLLEGE?

Well, that is a very personal choice. We polled AgCareers.com's followers to see if they would negotiate a job offer right out of college.

Here is what we found:



53%

said they **WOULD**

31%

said they **WOULD NOT**

15%

said they were **UNSURE**

A lot of this decision is situational. You really must understand what you need to maintain or improve your personal lifestyle and match the offers to see what is best for you.

If the employer brings up money in the interview, you can even ask if the salary is negotiable. If you are comfortable, also ask about their benefits package. Inquire about what sections are negotiated and when. You can also ask for details about performance reviews, raises, and how often that conversation takes place on-the-job.

You should know, if you are 100% sure

that the salary/wage they give you will not work for you and **you ask for more, your original offer with the initial salary/wage can be completely withdrawn.** You really need to be comfortable losing the offer completely before you decide to make this big decision.

BUT, OK, THERE IS MORE THAN MONEY!

Some companies have a set rate for an entry-level position and that number cannot budge. Many people believe that if you can't negotiate with money, there is nothing else to negotiate on... **WRONG.** Listen up, here are some items you may not know you can negotiate:

Paid Time Off

Sick Days

Vacation Days

Gym Membership

Volunteer Hours

Professional Development

Tuition Reimbursement

Company Vehicle

Internet Reimbursement

Cell Phone Bill Reimbursement

Work hours/days

Relocation expenses

Bonus

SO, HOW DO YOU EVEN DO IT? WHERE TO START?

I recommend writing your thoughts down on a piece of paper. Sit down and compare the pros and cons. Write it all out. This will keep it concise, and odds are you will probably clearly see if this offer will make you happy or not.

If the offering company doesn't give you a date to respond by, ask for one. This is nothing to decide on instantly.

Take your time and sleep on it. You need to be confident with this number and that all the benefits offered to you will match your financial requirements for your lifestyle and will allow you to grow towards your goals.

If you accept the offer as is, simply sign it and thank them for the opportunity. If you have some negotiations, draft up an email with what you are requesting. Same with declining your offer, email the employer and really let them know you are grateful for the opportunity, but you cannot accept this offer. You can share the reason if you are comfortable, but this is not required. Keep your communications professional. You never know when your paths will cross again.

ASK FOR GUIDANCE

The best advice I can give you is to ask for guidance. Usually, when you are negotiating your first offer, you are still in college, which is a fabulous thing because you still have a relationship with your advisor or maybe even a mentor.

Really use what you have in your back pocket. Most likely, these advisors know you pretty well by now and will be honest if you are getting a fair offer. This is a very new situation you are going through—but not to them. Take this advice—it will be beneficial now and will help you in the future with your next offer.

Also, seek advice from friends and parents. When I got my first job offer, my best friend in college did too. We didn't go into details about our salaries, but we could go through this new experience together, bouncing ideas and situations off one another.

There are many great resources for you on the AgCareers.com website in our Career Success Library. I encourage you to prepare for that first offer. I know it will be an exciting and possibly overwhelming time, so start preparing now! **AG**



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UNWRITTEN RULES OF THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

by Allyson Hertz, Marketing Intern, AgCareers.com

The interview procedure is very routine. Fortunately, there are a few things you can do to set yourself apart from the rest of the applicants. These tips are not the same as the standard advice like “dress to impress,” “make a good first impression” or “arrive early.” Behold, the unwritten rules of the interview process. These unwritten guidelines can be applied in the two main types of interviews: online and in-person.

KNOW THE ROLE AND COMPANY

Before applying for jobs, you should conduct research on the company. Consider the company’s clientele, products, and services as a starting point. The company’s culture, mission, and values are also important to investigate. The most crucial item to research is the position for which one is applying. Not only will this save the applicant’s time, but it will also save the interviewer’s time.

UNSURE IF YOU SHOULD APPLY?

It can be psychologically draining and even daunting to apply for jobs. You could be hesitant to apply for a job because you do not meet all the

company’s qualifications. Do not let this deter you from applying for the job. You would be selling yourself short if you did not apply. Nevertheless, do not lie to your future employer. Instead, discuss the prerequisites with them. If the prerequisite is something you are unfamiliar with, tell the interviewer that you are eager and willing to learn.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Congratulations, you have been selected for an interview! The first thing you will want to do is see if you will be having an online or in-person interview. Now is the time to practice answering questions about yourself, your experience (internships or jobs), and what is on your resume. After you are satisfied with your rehearsal interview, think of three to five relevant questions to ask the interviewer towards the end of the interview.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE WITH IN-PERSON AND ONLINE INTERVIEWS?

The difference between in-person and online interviews is minimal. However, there are a few factors to keep in mind when preparing for an online interview. Make sure you have a quiet

area to go, make sure your internet is up and running and ensure you are able to access software like WebEx, Teams or Zoom. Another thing to remember is to use a background that is not distracting. In addition, you may consider overcompensating your body language due to being online.

WHEN THE IN-PERSON INTERVIEW BEGINS

When it comes to in-person interviews, many individuals forget that the interview begins when the applicant checks in at reception. Some companies will inquire about the applicant’s demeanor from the receptionist. Another thing to keep in mind before the interview begins is the handshake. This can demonstrate to the interviewer that you are confident in your abilities.

SMILING CAN IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES

Most people experience anxiety before or even during an interview. One may fumble over words, fidget and so forth, and that is okay. You can combat these nerves by remembering to smile.

>>>

This detail demonstrates to the interviewer that you are approachable and friendly.

CONSIDER BODY LANGUAGE

Body language is the most crucial aspect of an interview. In fact, studies suggest that over 90 percent of communication is non-verbal, including body language and tone of voice. You cannot get away with body language, so if you are stressed, it will show. This involves things like posture, head nodding, smiling, and maintaining eye contact.

ARE YOU LISTENING?

Did you know body language is one of the most important things interviewers look at? It also signals that you are engaged in active listening rather than passive listening. The distinction between the two styles of listening is substantial. Active listening demonstrates that you are paying attention and comprehending the interviewer's information. Head nodding in agreement with what the interviewer is showing you are actively listening. Passive listening is simply going through the motions or not paying attention to the conversation. You do not want your interview thinking you are not listening, so make sure you show them, through your body language, that you are listening.

LET YOUR EMOTIONS SHOW

In addition to body language, interviewers will be on the lookout for enthusiasm. If you are not excited about the opportunity, the interviewers may assume you are not thrilled to be there, or worse, that you do not have the motivation to come to work every day. A little excitement goes a long way. Remember to be yourself. It's natural to be a little nervous at the start of an interview, however, if it is nearing the end of the interview and you have not yet relaxed, it could be interpreted by the interviewer as a sign that you are unprepared for the responsibilities of the position. One way to come out of your shell a little more is to show confidence in your answers, which can be achieved through practice and preparation.

NOTE-TAKING IS IMPORTANT

Another tip for you; interviewers watch for the applicant to take notes during the interview. It demonstrates to the interviewer that the candidate is serious about this job opportunity. The candidate does not have to jot down every word that the interviewer says, but rather highlights and pieces of essential information that may be relevant to the offer of employment.

INTERVIEW THE INTERVIEWER

Near the end of the interview is your chance to ask the interviewer questions. Not just any questions, but relevant and prepared questions. You should have anywhere from three to five that are relevant to the interview or the position. For example,

- **"What are some challenges within the position?"**
- **"What do you believe helps people succeed in this position?"**
- **"How would you describe this company's culture?"**

This demonstrates to the interviewer that the applicant is enthusiastic about the position. Lastly, remember to say thank you for the interview. Applicants should express gratitude to the interviewer for their time and consideration for the position through a verbal thank you and an email or thank-you note after the interview.

NOW WHAT?

Congratulations, you have now completed the interview process! What do you do now? This is the part I know I struggle with the most, the waiting portion. The waiting portion may feel like weeks before you hear back from the company. You may consider sending the interviewer a thank you over email. However, do not email the company back right away or even a couple days after you have had your interview. Wait at least five business days, then send a "checking in" email to the interviewer. In the checking in email, ensure you are being polite and asking rather than demanding when you will hear back from the company. It is important to remember

that just because you may have sent an email, it will not hurry up the offer, or even secure the job position.

There are two outcomes that could happen once the company has interviewed everyone who has applied. Option one, you are offered the job position and are either going to accept or deny the position. Option two, the company says, "thank you for your interest in this position, but we are going to take a different direction."

WHAT IF THE COMPANY GOES IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION?

Hearing or reading the words, "we have decided to go in a different direction" is never easy to hear and can get discouraging. It is important to keep your head up and realize better opportunities are out there.

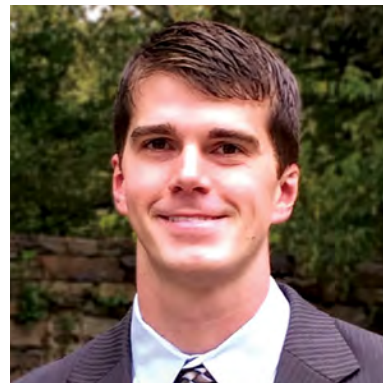
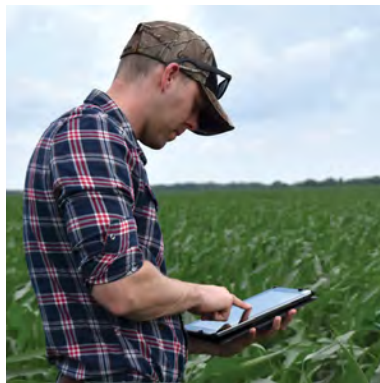
An AgCareers.com article by Clara Boles, "Keep the Confidence" goes over some great information on how to handle rejection with grace. Boles emphasized you should never destroy a connection, but rather express your gratitude to the interviewer for taking the time to speak with you and learn more about you. You never know what the next ten years will bring, so accept rejection gracefully, be grateful for the opportunity, and know that something greater is on the way.

YOU GOT THIS!

This may have been a lot of information to process, but remember to relax and be yourself. **AG**

For more tips and tricks on how to navigate through different workplace areas, be sure to check out the AgCareers.com Career Success Library.





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HOW TO ASK FOR A RAISE



by Katie Hunter, Talent Solutions, AgCareers.com

You love your job but are looking for more compensation. Do you know when the appropriate time might be to ask for a raise from your employer?

Recently AgCareers.com polled over 600 people with the question, “How do you feel about asking your boss for a raise?” Of the respondents, 39% said they have asked for a raise in the past, 37% said that they’d never ask and 22% said they ask annually.



Current employment trends show that now, more than ever, companies are looking closely at employee retention and keeping their staff happy. Many employers know that employee satisfaction is closely connected to compensation levels. Research has shown that as companies are returning to the office or shifting to a hybrid model, there are some employees that are taking this opportunity to make a career shift or change. If you are feeling like now is the right time to make a change, and your reason for the shift is only based on opportunities for increased compensation, now might be the right time to discuss opportunities with your employer.

When considering asking for a raise, consider and evaluate these factors:

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WITH THE COMPANY?

If you recently joined the company and are already considering asking for a raise, hold off until you have proven yourself and the value you bring to the company. Onboarding a new employee takes time and resources, and the company will want to see that you are capable and committed before raising your salary.

IS THERE AN ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS?

If the company you work with has an annual salary review or performance review program, this could be a good chance to discuss option for increases or incentives with your boss. Some employers only offer raises at the annual performance review.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Is the salary you are currently making in line with industry standards? Are you making the same as your colleagues in similar roles? Industry salary surveys like the AgCareers.com Compensation Benchmark Review can offer salary data to employers to help them ensure they are offering competitive wages to their employees.

BOOK A MEETING

If you’ve decided that you are going to ask your employer for a raise, schedule time for a meeting with your manager to have this discussion; don’t bring it up in a group setting or at an inappropriate time.

PREPARE

Expect potential pushback; while you have thought about why you might deserve a raise and the value you add to your team and the company, if you didn’t give your employer advance notice, this might be something they need to process and think about and potentially get approved. If you come into your meeting well prepared with facts about deliverables or increases in revenue or results that you have brought to the team and the WHY you deserve a raise, this will give them more of the information they might need to approve your request.

BE PATIENT

Understand that while this increase that you are looking for is a priority item for you, there might be certain approvals that are required for them to make these changes.

NOT RIGHT NOW

Your employer may not offer you an increase at this time; prepare yourself for this response. Be open to the fact that while this isn’t the result that you are hoping for, they might not be able or willing to provide an increase even though you requested it.

SALARY STATS

Each employer and company work differently in terms of how they give raises. Some might give a certain percentage increase annually to all employees, some might have incentive bonuses based on performance, and some might only offer raises to a select group of employees each year.

When AgCareers.com polled over 400 subscribers about their raises, there were mixed results. Twenty-six percent of respondents said the employer reviewed their salary annually, 25% said their salary increased annually, 24% said their raise was based on performance and the other 25% said their work didn’t provide raises.

We can contrast this, however, with recent results from the 2022-2023 AgCareers.com Agriculture and Food HR Review, an annual survey of employers in the industry. Over 60% of U.S. employers said that ‘all’ staff would receive raises in the next year, and 34% said ‘some’ staff would receive raises.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Your employer will notice and recognize the positive attitude and impact that you bring to your team. While not all employers can offer everyone on their team an increase each year, the employees that are strong contributors and have a great mindset will be the first ones on the list when increases are available. **AG**



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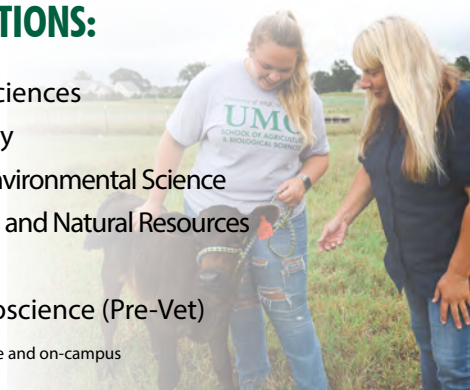
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- Click "Submit Application."
- Some employers require completion of the application process on their site. In this case, you will see a note in a red box and be redirected. Follow directions given on their site.
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- Click "Process & Preview Profile." If you need to make changes, click the back button. Once satisfied, click "Save & Exit" at the bottom.
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