



A Recent Grad's Guide to

LANDING
YOUR
DREAM
JOB IN
COLLEGE

Written by Keiana Holleman

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Introduction

As a recent college graduate, I felt the need to create this guide to share with incoming and current college students my best advice on succeeding beyond the degree. Going to college is about much more than receiving a document. A lot of people graduate from college and get jobs they don't want or can't advance in. I never wanted to be one of those people, and you shouldn't sacrifice your dreams either.

This guide gives you the building blocks to excel in the social aspect of college to land and secure your dream job after graduating. When I graduated, I took a lucrative internship with the government and landed my dream first job during the summer. It all happened quickly, and of course, my resume and interview played a large role in that success. However, this guide gives you the insights on exactly how I built my resume behind the scenes to land my dream job out of college.

I'm so excited that you've downloaded this guide to begin your journey toward ultimate success. College is such a great time and once you've applied these tips, you will see amazing results and start living the life you've dreamed of. Thanks for reading! Enjoy the guide.

Tip #1

What do you want to be when you grow up?

If you're reading this book, it is highly likely that you're an incoming, current, or a recently graduated college student. Congratulations on your decision to better your life through post-secondary education. The fact that you are reading this shows that you have initiative and want to take your brand to the next level.

The beginning step to building an awesome personal brand is to figure out what exactly it is that you want to do with your life. Building a brand takes consistency. Not only do you want to be consistent with disseminating your message, but also it is important that the message itself maintains a certain level of consistency.

As an incoming freshman, you have some time to decide exactly what you want to do. As an upperclassman and even a recent grad, you should be thinking about what career path you want to take now. You can always change career paths later. In fact, most people change careers at least once in their lifetime. However, when it comes to building your brand you should stick with one industry (preferably the one you're getting a degree in).

So how do you figure out what you want to do with your life? My tips for this step are simple.

- **Find your passions.** If you're not passionate about science and research, why are you a STEM major? You can't successfully promote your brand as a rising scientist when you don't even enjoy the field that will make up the content that you produce!
- **Learn more about potential fields of interest.** After you've decided what industries speak to you, do some research on actual positions within them. Is the salary enough? Will you need to take graduate courses to thrive in the role? These are typical questions that you need to know the answers to before you begin the journey toward a career.
- **Shadow someone in the field.** There is no better way to find out if a certain job is for you or not than to actually see what someone in that role does on a daily basis. Internships and volunteer experiences are great ways to get a feel for what your prospective position entails.

On my blog, I've referenced my own experiences with branding myself during my college years. How I started my journey as a marketing enthusiast was by interning for my university's communications department. I was a marketing intern for the entire academic year. I initially went into college wanting to become a sports publicist.

My internship experience showed me that marketing was more of my thing. I enjoyed creating marketing plans, sitting in meetings, and collaborating on integrated marketing campaigns. Without that experience, I would not have known how to brand myself to potential employers.

Use this space to answer the following:

- How does your major align with your goals and passions?

- List the employers you would like to work for some day.
- What are you doing now to gain experience in your dream field?
- What can you do in the next semester (or 3 months) to learn more about your dream field and gain hands-on experience?

- By answering the previous questions, you're already getting closer to finding out what you want to be when you grow up. Wouldn't it be nice to have a strong answer prepared when your relatives and friends ask you what you plan to do with your major? Well, this is just the first step toward actually having a plan you can run with! Realizing what you want to be has a lot to do with what you like but also who you are already. To truly realize what you want to do, you should consider implementing my marketing tactics to aid in your brand building efforts.
- **Find what makes you unique.** What's the difference between LeBron and Jordan? Both of them sell shoes, are well known basketball players, and have a cultural impact. The difference is in age, style of play, looks, backgrounds, etc. When in the same league, it is important to highlight what makes you... you! Which leads me to my second point.
- **Be personable.** The world probably knows that you're great at what you do, but can they relate? It is important that people feel a connection with you. People tend to buy into the person before they buy into the vision.

- Don't try to be everything to everyone. Find your niche and stick with it. People who try to appease everyone generally have a harder time building a following and they fail to promote themselves effectively. Have a distinct and consistent message to share and your brand will thank you for it.

It's not hard to establish your brand. After you've identified your strengths and weaknesses, the real work comes during the promotional period. Don't worry! I have all of the tips and tricks for your brand building journey in this e-book.

Tip #2

Choosing the right internships

During my tenure in college, I interned for three different companies. As a sophomore, I helped a local organization establish their social media accounts and I assisted with public relations. My senior year, I interned for the communications office at my university and I also interned for the Mississippi State Office of AARP. Those internships as well as my volunteer experiences that I will refer to in a later chapter really helped me shape my brand and land the job I wanted after college.

Interning in the right areas is critical to your success. Do you like communications, but don't know exactly what field fits you? Take up an internship in social media, one in PR, one in marketing, and one in journalism. You might find that you like a few of those areas more than others. Either way, your career search will thank you when your resume is filled with various opportunities that potential employers will find both impressive and valuable.

Something else that helped me land my dream job out of college was the fact that I had been well equipped to do the job. I was an intern for my university's communications office and I loved the entire experience.

I learned the ends and outs of higher education marketing and I knew that working for a university in communications was exactly what I wanted to do to kickstart my marketing career.

You will more than likely have the same experience that I had while interning. You'll find your likes, your dislikes, and identify exactly what you want to do for the next two to three years of your life. I said two to three years for reasons you'll learn in later chapters. My best advice for choosing the right internships is to:

- **Jump for various opportunities.**
- **Maximize all four years of your undergraduate experience.**
- **Ensure that your internship opportunities will grant you: A) letters of recommendation and/or, B) A job with the company or organization upon graduation**
- Internships will make or break your success. I know people who have had great careers without internships. It is possible. However, to ensure that you land your dream job within six months of your graduation date, you need to brand yourself in the best way possible. Taking advantage of several internship opportunities is the right way to promote yourself to potential employers. So, how can you secure and succeed in your internship?

- When it comes to obtaining an internship in college I suggest a few tips that will make your job search much easier.
- **Start applying as a freshman.** The earlier you start, the better. By beginning the internship process in your first year, you will learn if you actually like the profession. If so, you've gained a term of experience to add to your resume!
- **Make your portfolio diverse.** As a communications major, I found jobs that want well-rounded candidates who are familiar with social media, marketing, and AP style writing. Depending on your major, you should diversify your intern experience by showing you are indeed well-rounded.
- **Keep up with your work.** Save projects that you've worked on so you can show future employers what you are capable of. It's one thing to tell someone you can do something, but it's an entirely different thing when you can actually show them.
- **Network with your peers.** Of course you should be making a good impression on your supervisors, but try to establish relationships with interns in your office. They might be able to help you land your next one.

Interning isn't an easy job. Obtaining an internship is even more of a challenge. However, you can excel and benefit greatly from an internship if you work hard and follow the tips above.

Tip #3

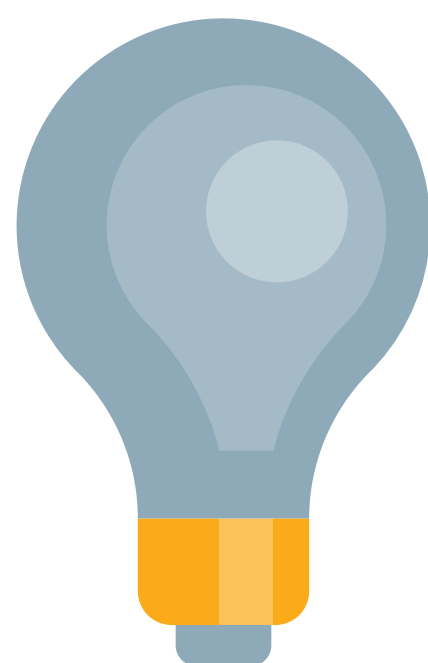
The Importance of Volunteer Experience

At my university, we were required to complete community service hours as a requirement to graduate. A lot of people fed the homeless or read to children. I actually used my volunteer time to network and gain experience in my field. While people wasted time delivering the college newspaper or sitting at a dorm desk, I volunteered at the museum. I met so many influential people while volunteering for some of the events. I met all of the physicians and dentists in the area, and several PR and marketing professionals. This benefitted me as I looked for knowledge and guidance in my field.

I landed my dream job during the summer after I graduated not because of who I knew, but because of what I knew. My volunteer gig really paid off in the realm of experience. When you finally land your dream job interview, you have to show them that you know your stuff. Those conversations and new relationships gave me the knowledge to sit in front of a panel and talk about marketing and communications with great confidence. My other volunteer gig was with a college professor.

He was a serial entrepreneur and gifted at marketing. In fact, I credit my success in my field to him. During my second week of classes at my college, I walked into his office eager to gain experience. He gave me the chance to work on his public relations campaign and from there its history! Too many people take the easy way out and look to people to assist them rather than assisting themselves. They want opportunities that only lead to a job or money. This is the wrong way to go about climbing the ladder to success. If you want to make the most out of gaining real experience and building your portfolio (I think I'll write a second guide on this), I strongly suggest that you:

- **Find networking opportunities.** It is a very beneficial idea to find volunteer experiences that get you in front of key players in your field. I have a friend who wanted to join a sorority, so she volunteered at events they sponsored. You have to go where the real experts are.



- **Look for knowledge not reward.** It never benefits you in the long run to have your hand out when you meet people. Whether it's an internship or a volunteer opportunity, go with the mindset that you are going to learn something and establish a great connection. One of my internships allowed me to get to know a former Representative of the state I went to college in. She is one of the only women who truly gave me great advice for my career. I didn't expect a job from her, nor did I ask for one. However, having her as a recommender for my dream job clearly made a great impact. This is turning into a longer bullet point than I wanted it to, but it is very important that you go into any opportunity looking to learn and assist rather than having a selfish mentality.

As a college student, I highly recommend that you make time in your schedule to participate in some sort of volunteer activity. It truly helps you brand yourself in a positive way and pads your resume. There are hundreds if not thousands of people applying for your dream job. The experiences that you take advantage of will allow you to gain knowledge, meet great people, and stand out.

I met a college graduate in Iowa several years ago and during the summer after she graduated, she secured a position that most college students didn't have enough experience for. The advice in this chapter is what gets you past the basic day job and straight to the job you're dreaming of right now as a college student.

Use this space to brainstorm volunteer opportunities that you could participate in:

Tip #4

Joining social organizations

When I first entered my alma mater, I attended an organization fair. My university had a lot of organizations, but most of them weren't of interest to me. I joined a few organizations, but I wasn't very involved in them. My junior year of college, I became a member of a business and professional sorority. It was such a great experience that benefitted me socially and professionally. I have a life long sisterhood and gained a strong network.

I'm not encouraging you to join a fraternity or a sorority for networking purposes, but all organizations will give you that experience if that's what you're going after. The key is to join organizations that truly interest you for the right reasons. That is a message that has been repeated throughout this guide. You have to do everything for the right reasons. Most people join clubs and organizations to meet people. If that is your goal, I am all for it. I definitely recommend that you join clubs that interest you and from that I can guarantee that you'll make friends and connections without even trying. That's the goal: to make non-forced connections with other people. Joining organizations allows you to not only meet people but also to thrive.

The key to thriving is to find organizations that aid in your social and academic careers. If you're an engineering major, join STEM related organizations and obtain a leadership role. You might be wondering, do future employers really care about my involvement in college? Yes and no. Because I was the chapter president of my sorority, and spearheaded some marketing and public relations projects on teams in my department, I was able to point that out on my LinkedIn page and in interviews.

The goal of everything in this guide is to get you around the right people and give your resume some oomph! There are hundreds of thousands of students just like you graduating every year. These people are applying for the same jobs that you're applying for. Everyone has a bachelor's degree. Everyone has done an internship. What will make you look like a go-getter? What will allow you to stand out and perhaps draw similarities with your potential interviewers? Membership in organizations will.

The political science major who was active in student government and a politics based organization on campus or even in the community will have the upper hand over a student with the same major who wasn't involved. It's not the involvement alone that makes the difference. It's the work you put in and the relationships that you build while doing so.

I can tell you that all of my success was based on relationships that I made during my internships, my memberships, and attending events. I never pass up the opportunity to meet new people. Neither should you.

Here's some homework for you:

Locate a list of clubs and organizations on your college campus.

Find 2-3 that you are the most interested in.

Do some research on those organizations.

Attend the organization fair at your college.

Go to the meetings for those organizations you prefer.

Exchange your social media information with a few people before or after the meeting.

Be an active participant and run for an e-board position when elections come around.

I also recommend participating in social events on campus. I met two of my best friends in college at events. Those are women that I still talk to and hang out with post-college. You will meet some amazing people outside of the classroom and your general day-to-day. Like I said, and I can't stress this enough, don't pass up an opportunity to meet new people. So get out there and join something!

Tip #5

Find a mentor

During my time in college, I was blessed to have to amazing career mentors. My first mentor was a sassy AKA from Louisiana. She attended Xavier in New Orleans during her undergraduate years. She pushed me to be the greatest. I never thought about becoming a VP of Marketing or even starting my own consulting firm until she encouraged me to be a game changer. My next mentor was a professor and academic advisor of mine. He had an extensive background in entrepreneurship and writing. In fact, he inspired me to write guides just like this one for people who stood in my shoes as a college student.

I can't tell you how valuable a mentor is to your success. There is a lot that you don't know. Because you've downloaded this guide, you're one step further to achieving your dreams. This guide won't give you all of the tools you need to rock out your college years and land your dream job when you graduate. A mentor can give you personalized advice and guidance that will serve you tremendously in your journey to achieving your dreams.

I wouldn't trade my mentee experiences for the world. If there's anything that you should take from this guide, it is this: gain a mentor during your undergraduate years and never stop learning from them. People are so willing to help you. You just have to show them you want to be helped. So you're probably wondering at this point, how do I get a mentor? This is very simple!

Attend networking events. This will put you around key players who have years of experience in your field.

Establish the connection first. Don't go up to someone and immediately ask him or her to be your mentor. They don't know you yet. My best advice is to introduce yourself and share your goals.

Keep in touch from there. Informational interviews are a great way to learn more about the person and their experience within their field. That's such a valuable conversation and I can assure you that it will lead to many more.

Being a mentee is such a thrilling experience. Like, seriously. Don't be afraid to get the help you need. You don't know everything yet and that's okay. The only thing that stands between you and your dream job is good career advice. Take from the people who were once in your shoes and now call the shots to hire people just like you. You'll be amazed just how effective this will be.

So now what?

So I've given you 5 tips on how to begin. You're going to figure out exactly what you want to do. You're going to find and apply for the right internships that will benefit your job search. You're going to volunteer to gain great experience in your field. You're going to join a few organizations to boost your network and your resume, and finally you will meet a mentor to take your dream to the next level.

Work on implementing these tips as soon as possible. This is definitely not the end of the road. My next guide will teach you how to build your brand in college as a means to amplify the work you're doing behind the scenes. In the meantime, I suggest reading posts on my blog site. There are several articles just for college students like you! Stay connected with me and feel free to share how these tips helped you. This is my first e-book guide so give me your feedback and what you liked about this format and what you'd like to see from the next guide.

Thanks for reading!

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