

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
Michael G. Foster School of Business

# MBA CAREER SERVICES

BCC Resource Guide

Know Yourself • Know Your Market • Market Yourself



# Your MBA Career: An Introduction

The first step of your MBA career path is to relax. Most students enter the program with some degree of anxiety—worried they're not really MBA material, unsure of their career goals, concerned about making the transition back into an academic environment. Although these feelings aren't out of the ordinary, be confident that you were admitted to the program for a reason. Your particular background, skills and interests are all assets that enrich the Foster MBA experience for you and for your classmates.

In fact, who you are and what you've accomplished form the core of your MBA career, giving your degree substance and meaning. The time you spend in the MBA Program will serve as a bridge from your past to a new career that makes the most of your MBA skill set. Some students seek advancement on their pre-MBA career path, while others are ready to head in new directions altogether. However small or radical the change you hope to make, you will draw on your background to build a solid foundation for professional transformation. To be successful, it is essential to start your MBA career search with a deep understanding of who you are: your strengths and weaknesses, values and goals.

The MBA career search requires more than passive introspection. You should take advantage of the many chances presented by the program to challenge your self-understanding through practical experience. The Mentor Program, networking, informational interviews, your summer internship, and various projects over the course of the year all provide different ways for you to test new career directions as you learn more about yourself and what you want to do.

MBA Career Services is committed to helping you develop the career search skills that will help you take control of your career for the rest of your life. More than anything else, the MBA offers you

an opportunity for intensive professional growth. How you respond to this opportunity will determine the impact the MBA has on your career path. The more ambitious your goals, the more energy you need to put into career. Our coaches will help you identify your strengths and weaknesses, and your transferable skills. We will help you understand what the market place is seeking and how to build your experience to be attractive to employers. From resume prep, through networking and interviewing and negotiation advice, we will help you market yourself. The key to your lifetime career search success will be to follow this outline: **Know yourself, Know your market, (and we will help you) Market yourself.**

## Using the BCC Resource Guide

This guide provides you with an overview of your MBA career search. The intent isn't to provide you with all the information you might need at one time, but rather to illustrate how each aspect of your career search relates to the others.

You may want to keep a printed copy of this guide to organize your notes and other career-related documents. We hope that the modular nature of the sections presented will provide you with a personalized resource you can refer to over the next two years and throughout your career.

Over the course of the year, career coaches will give you supplementary material that is relevant to specific issues you are working on. We recommend that you print this material and add it to the appropriate section for reference.

## **Working with the BCC**

Perhaps at no other time in your life will you have so many people dedicated to your professional success. No matter where you are in your career search, the MBA Career Services staff at the Business Connections Center (BCC) is prepared to help.

Because the Foster MBA Program attracts a diverse group of students, our approach to career services is highly personalized. We recognize that no matter what your goals might be, every student's career path is unique, with its own challenges and rewards.

We encourage you to start building relationships with our career coaches as early as possible. They can help you evaluate your interests and experi-

ence, as well as help you clarify your career goals and develop a strategy to achieve them. Along the way, they can also be a sounding board and support network, connecting you to the right resources as you need them.

Through one-on-one coaching, workshops, events and special programs, we do more than help you land an internship and that first MBA job. We give you the opportunity to build a strong network and professional skills that will serve you throughout your career.

Some of the key skill areas we address are:

- Resume & Cover letters
- Networking & Elevator pitch
- Interviewing
- Salary negotiations

### **Types of Events Sponsored by the BCC:**

#### **Workshops:**

Throughout the year, we offer a number of workshops on various aspects of your career search, including resumes, cover letters, networking, interviewing and salary negotiations. We also offer information sessions on special interest topics, such as work authorization for international students and investment banking.

#### **Meet-the-Firm Events:**

During these lunchtime presentations, companies tell students more about their business and career opportunities. These events are often used to set the stage for on-campus recruiting.

#### **Fireside Chats:**

Fireside Chats are evening events held on Tuesday or Thursday from 6:00-7:30 p.m. Typically about five company representatives—often Foster alumni—come on campus and are interviewed as a panel. The discussion covers topics such as company culture, job activities and industry trends. These events also allow for more informal networking before and after the panel discussion.

#### **Road Shows:**

Road Shows are aimed at furthering Foster MBA placement with top employers in major metropolitan areas outside Seattle. Through these visits, MBA students and BCC staff seek to learn more about employers' recruiting plans and create a closer relationship with the Foster School. Typically, a group of between five and 20 current MBA students visit two to four companies each day to explore the job opportunities for MBA graduates. The company visit agenda is usually comprised of a presentation given by company representatives (often including alumni) and an opportunity for extensive Q & A. Previous focus areas have included tech companies in Silicon Valley, investment banks in New York City, and retail headquarters in San Francisco. Road shows often culminate in a networking reception planned in conjunction with UW Alumni Relations or independently by MBA Career Services.

#### **MBA Forums:**

We hold two annual career fairs — one in the fall and another in the spring. More than just a job fair, these events are a good opportunity to network with representatives from a wide variety of companies.

## It's Your Career—You Manage It

Although we offer you extensive support, never forget: it's your career. Your success depends largely on how much energy you apply toward it. We can't compensate for what you don't put into your job or internship search, but we can complement your efforts. The key is to stay in touch: let us know of your progress and how we can help you overcome specific challenges.

The BCC is just one of many resources available to you. By using as many different resources as possible, you'll maximize your options, progress faster and have a better sense of where you want to go professionally.

## Time Management

As a student, you'll always have more obligations than time. Between the immediate demands of coursework and club activities, projects and social activities, it can be tempting to put your career search on the back burner. But if you expect to land a job you can be passionate about, you'll

### Making Appointments with a Career Coach

Although you're always free to drop by the BCC to see a career coach, keep in mind that schedules are generally quite full and a coach may not be available.

It's usually best to schedule an appointment in advance. During peak times of the year, you may have to schedule your appointment one or two weeks ahead of time.

To make an appointment with a career coach at the BCC, contact the front desk by phone or email:

206.685.2410  
bcc@u.washington.edu

Be sure to suggest a couple times when you would be available, and have your calendar ready in case you need to find alternatives.

If for any reason you need to reschedule or otherwise cancel your appointment, please contact the front desk as early as possible. Your classmates would be happy to take your slot.

need to exercise effective project management skills from the first quarter on:

- **Prioritize.** When deciding what is most important to do and when, consider how it will help you reach your goals. Always keep the big picture in mind.
- **Establish short- and medium-range goals.** Breaking your career search into manageable segments will help you stay on track.
- **Make it routine.** Set aside time each week for career research, informational interviews, and networking.
- **Find time, find opportunities.** However easy it might be, don't limit your career search to on-campus recruiting and events, as valuable as those are. It takes extra time and effort to go out into the community, but that's where the most opportunities are—including opportunities you didn't know existed.

## Professionalism

When interacting with potential employers and members of the business community, always remember that you represent not only yourself, but also the Foster MBA Program. Moreover, your conduct has a strong impact on the perceived value of your degree. If you want to be regarded as a leader, you need to act like one.

- **Thank the people who help you.** After informational or job interviews, mentor meetings, etc., always send a prompt email thanking the person for their time, their advice and any connections they may have made for you.
- **Treat others with respect.** Whether you're dealing with hiring managers or their secretaries, alumni or classmates, be courteous and conscientious.
- **Dress appropriately.** Even in the casual Northwest, you should take care to present a professional image. This often means dressing a bit better than those you meet with. During interviews, always wear a suit.

# Getting Started: STAR Statements and Your Resume

Drafting a resume is a good way to begin your career search. On the one hand, your resume will give people you meet a quick sense of who you are and what you've done. More importantly, though, the process of composing your resume will help you identify and articulate your strengths and key accomplishments—which in turn will help you communicate your value confidently when you start networking, writing cover letters and interviewing.

## The Accomplishment-Based Resume

In a traditional resume, you would probably itemize your job description, detailing what was expected of you in each role. However, this approach tells an employer nothing about you as an individual.

An accomplishment-based resume, on the other hand, gives an employer more accurate information by describing how you made a difference in that role, as opposed to anyone else who might have held that position. Moreover, it tells an employer that you are somebody who gets things done—and therefore that you would potentially bring value to the job or internship.

Remember, when talking with potential employers, who you are is almost entirely determined by what you've done. To present yourself credibly, you need to substantiate every assertion you make about yourself in a situational example. It isn't enough to say you are a leader, an effective communicator, a team-player and so on; you need to show it. Nothing you say will have more potential impact than when you describe a time when you proved that you are x or have skill y.

## STAR Statements

One of the most effective ways for you to communicate your accomplishments is by using a brief narrative structure that includes a targeted beginning, a short explanatory middle, and a strong ending that illustrates clearly what you can do for an employer. You can format these stories using the STAR technique:

Situation: Define the general context.

Task: Identify the key objective.

Action: Describe the action you took or initiated, emphasizing the skills you used to complete the task.

Results: Summarize the outcome in business terms.

Use the following worksheet to develop several STAR examples for each position you've held. As your career search progresses, you'll find that these STAR statements are a valuable reference for more than just your resume. They will also help you:

- **Develop a concise elevator pitch**
- **Write effective cover letters**
- **Prepare for behavioral interviews**

As you learn more about your target industry and function, you may want to revise these statements to make them more relevant.

# STAR Worksheet

## Situation

General context:

Where:

When:

Who else was involved or impacted:

One problem I had to overcome was:

## Task

One specific issue I addressed was:

## Action

To solve the problem, I:

## Results

The end result was:

## Drafting Accomplishment Bullet Points

For each of your last three or four jobs, refer back to your STAR statements to highlight your most significant achievements, particularly those that you enjoyed and that would be relevant to the next stage of your career. Quantify these achievements wherever possible, but don't hesitate to include other types of accomplishments: learning accomplishments, management accomplishments, process improvements, etc.

Depending on the significance and relevance of the experience, find three to five accomplishments for each job and draft them into bullet points. Bullet points typically follow this structure:

Verbs that describe your role in this accomplishment.

What you did.

What was the result? Why—in business terms—was this important to your organization?

### Example #1:

Led a team from Customer Services, CRM, National Marketing, IT, Legal and Finance through the planning and development of a \$38M national customer services cost savings initiative.

### Example #2:

Teamed with Samsung global ERP division to develop a new sales logistic model, streamlined order fulfillment processes and implemented SAP ERP and i2 supply chain management system for the visual display product division. Effort led to 10 % increase in order fulfillment rate, 30% reduction in account closing time, and 30% increase in inventory turnover rate.

## Resume Template

We ask that all Foster MBA students use the Foster MBA resume template for their resumes. You may download a soft copy of this template from the "Sample Documents" section of your Foster MBA Jobs account or from our website: [http://bschool.washington.edu/career/career\\_tools.shtml](http://bschool.washington.edu/career/career_tools.shtml) in the "Put it in Writing" section.

## A Living Document

No matter how many times you revise or rework your resume, it will never be "finished." Not only will you want to keep your resume updated with your latest accomplishments, but you also need to revise your resume for each application you submit. This will allow you to highlight those aspects of your experience that are most relevant to each specific job opportunity. (See the Applications section for more details.)

Before late October, you should prepare a working, first version of your resume. Because you will submit this resume to the MBAFocus resume book [see sidebar], it should be a polished representation of your career to date. However, consider this version of your resume as a starting point, one that only shows where you've been.

As you learn more about where you'd like to take your career, you'll revise your resume to reflect where you want to go. This will involve "translating" your experience into the language of the target industry and company.

## Resume Books

Rather than just accept applications, some employers actively pursue students they think might be a good fit for their organization. Typically they will identify candidates by searching various resume books.

You can add your resume to the resume books in Foster MBA Jobs. These books are generally used by employers who have a working relationship with the Foster MBA Program.

To reach a wider pool of employers, including many large, national employers, we also give you the option to include your resume in the resume books compiled by MBAFocus.

The MBAFocus deadline is October 29, 2008.

# Individual Internship Plan

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Functional Area(s)</b>	
<b>Geographic Preferences</b>	
<b>Companies</b>	

Quarter	Task/Action	Plan								
<b>Jump Start</b>	Attend a Career Discovery Workshop	Tuesday, September 9 : 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm or Thursday, September 11 : 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm								
<b>F W S</b>	Resume: Meet with coach to revise and edit	Personal deadline: Resume Book deadline: October 29, 2008								
<b>F</b>	Attend Employer Advisory Board Dinner	Monday, October 6, 6:00-8:00 pm								
<b>F</b>	Attend MBA Fall Forum	Tuesday, October 7, 4:30-6:30 pm								
<b>F</b>	Attend Mentor Reception	Wednesday, October 15, 7:00-8:30 pm								
<b>F W S</b>	Meet-the-Firms or other recruiting events	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">Company</th> <th style="width: 50%;">Event Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Company	Event Date						
Company	Event Date									
<b>F W S</b>	Attend Road Shows/Treks	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">Road Show City</th> <th style="width: 50%;">Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Road Show City	Date						
Road Show City	Date									
<b>F W S</b>	Attend national conferences	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">Conference</th> <th style="width: 50%;">Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Conference	Date						
Conference	Date									
<b>F W S</b>	Meet with coach for "sounding board"/career plan discussions									
<b>F W S</b>	Meet with coach to discuss accountability to your plan									



# Exploration and Targeted Search

## Keys to a Successful Search

- Balance your desire to explore new career options with the need to be productive – this said, you are encouraged to search out all the potential career paths to which your MBA might lead, but it is important to have a realistic perspective. Meet with a coach to talk about your “ideal” MBA career path as well as ways to create that “ideal” and not leave your previous education/work experience out of the discussions. Remember these decisions aren’t permanent. You’re searching!
- Use CareerLeader to gain a better understanding of your own strengths and weaknesses, company culture preferences, behaviors, etc.
- Develop a list of target companies based on function/industry, personal interests and values, geographical location, etc.–make sure to regularly update this list.
- Attend as many recruiting events as possible – Meet-the-Firms, Fireside Chats, Forums, Road Shows, national conferences, etc.
- RESEARCH COMPANIES!

## How to Research Companies

### Go beyond the company website!

- Search the Internet for press releases and other information about the company in the news.

- Access the research tools through the BCC and Foster Library: WetFeet, Vault, Hoover’s, LexisNexis, etc.
- Informational Interviews–see the “Networking” section for more information, but there is no better way to learn about a company than talking to current and previous employees. Meet with a coach to discuss informational interview techniques and get out there.
- Meet with a coach to walk through a targeted search before an interview so that you know you’ve got all the information you need.
- Keep track of your research – have one place on your computer and one hardcopy (file folder or notebook) where you can keep all of the information you gather about companies, industries, and functions of interest.

## Important Information to Locate

### Corporate Overview

- Publicly or privately owned?
- Major products or services
- Annual Report–growth? Why/why not?
- How many divisions? What are they?
- Market share
- Which division(s) are you interviewing with? Where are the divisions/offices located?

### Corporate Strategy

- Has the company been in the news recently? What are the major topics / issues facing the company at this time? What does this

- tell you about its strategy?
- Have there been any major changes within the organization recently—changes in senior management or other reorganizations? Mergers or acquisitions? What has the effect been on the overall company and how might it affect the position for which you are applying?
  - Annual Report—comments on strategy?

### **Career**

- What is the typical path of an MBA-hire at this company?
- Are there UW MBA alumni working in the company and/or division for which you are interviewing? Do any of your classmates have connections and insights to the company?

### **Hiring Process**

- Know the different hiring/recruiting practices of various companies and divisions within those companies—behavioral and/or case interviews? Interview with recruiter, hiring manager or entire team? One or two rounds of interviews? Is there a presentation required? What is the projected hiring timeline?
- Has the company hired UW MBAs in the past?
- What is the company looking for in candidates?

# Networking

What is “networking”?

“It’s not what you know, but who knows about you!” It’s a common cliché uttered often to those in search of a job. What the person offering that helpful advice is most likely referring to, is your need to establish a network of contacts. To date, networking is still the number one job-search method and accounts for about 80 percent of job offers. Networking is, however, something of an art. It requires some time and a little luck to meet the person holding the key to your dream job.

As defined by Merriam-Webster, networking is: *the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups or institutions; specifically: the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business*

Networking is...

- something you do everyday
- a simple conversation
- expressing interest in another
- making a connection that may be mutually beneficial

Networking is not...

- building lifelong friendships
- something new or mysterious – no need to be nervous!

## Importance of Networking

Networking is not something you only do during your MBA experience. We hear from a number of business leaders – locally and nationally – who attribute a significant portion of their success to the network they have built. You need to continually challenge yourself to meet new people as you never know where that new

connection will lead.

Seattle is an extremely tight business community, and you will soon realize that you may be only a few people away from meeting someone like Richard Tait, Howard Schultz, Blake Nordstrom, or even Bill Gates. Networking takes on many different forms and many different paths, and it becomes your own personal process – what is most comfortable for you.

## 10 Golden Rules of Networking

**1. Be Prepared - Any Time, Any Place - Keep your business cards and copies of your resume with you all the time. You never know whom you might meet.**

**2. Talk with Your Personal Contacts First - Start with the people you know personally - friends, family, and professional contacts, such as clients, vendors, coworkers, professors, classmates and former bosses. Practice marketing yourself to those who are close to you before you try your new sales technique on new faces.**

**3. Begin contacting those people to whom your personal contacts referred you - Network your way to a hiring authority or “influence.” Initiate each conversation by stating how you received their name and work to establish a relationship by showing an interest in what they say, not just what they have to offer. Ask for 20-30 minutes of their time and stick to that time commitment.**

**4. Ask for Information - This approach is referred to as the “informational interview” because it is an opportunity to learn about industries, job opportunities and local busi-**

nesses. When you request the meeting, say you wish to talk with the contact about your career options. Your goal is to have a conversation that generates information, ideas, leads and referrals. You can be candid and open about your own career aspirations, and why you are interested in the person's industry/company/function. While you can safely assume your contact knows you want a job, since you are discussing careers, this is not the appropriate time to ask for one. If the contact likes you and can help you in some way, he/she will. Get permission to use his/her name with any referrals provided and always say thank you.

**5. Focus Your Conversations** - Use each conversation to get the most information possible. Give your contact a brief summary of your career objective, major strengths and accomplishments. Then ask specific questions that will provide you with helpful information. Get realistic feedback on your goals vs. qualifications and on your resume.

**6. Look for Opportunities to Reciprocate** - Offer something of value to those who are taking time to help you. Make your conversations two-way communication. As you ask questions and listen to answers, respond with helpful information of your own. Remember, your own network, knowledge and experience may benefit your contacts.

**7. Keep Your Promises** - Again, adhere to your 20-30 minute time commitment. If you promise to call back, do it. If the person is difficult to reach, keep trying. It is your responsibility to make connections happen.

**8. Stay in Touch** - Keep your contacts informed about the progress of your job search through brief phone calls or short, handwritten notes. Send a thank you letter within 24 hours after every informational interview. To keep the relationship beneficial for you and your contact, keep communication consistent. After you land your job or internship, thank those who helped you along the way, letting them know where you ended up. Such gestures allow you to maintain these relationships into the future.

**9. Professional Organizations** - Gathering information from people in the industry can be made easier by visiting or joining a local professional organization. Many members are eager to help job seekers and often know companies with open positions.

**10. Get a Mentor** - Find someone with experience in your field and build a relationship with them. Get their advice and use them as a sounding board for discussing your thoughts and ideas. Ask for an opportunity to shadow them for a day in order to get a better picture of what they do.

## Identifying Your Network

### The Foster MBA Network

One of the networks that you have accessible at your fingertips is the Foster MBA Network.

Q: Who makes up the Foster MBA Network?

A: You, your current classmates, the Evening MBAs, the TMMBAs, and the generations of Foster MBA Alumni who have preceded you.

Q: How do you access the Foster MBA Network?

A: Check out the MBA Program Student Directory (given out each Fall by the Program Office), use the ProNet feature on your Foster MBA Jobs account, get LinkedIn to the Foster MBA Program, attend recruiting/networking events which alumni participate in regularly, talk to your classmates in the MBA Lounge...the list goes on and on.

### Expanding Your Networking

Start with those you know...

If you're new to the whole idea of "networking," then start with people you know and work out from there.

### What connections/resources does the BCC Offer?

-Recruiter, Employer, Alumni Networking Events

- MBA Fall and Spring Forums
- Meet-the-Firms and Fireside Chats
- Mentor Program
- On-site employer events

-Connections to alumni and other business community members on a case-by-case basis

-The Foster MBA Jobs ProNet service

### Other Networking Resources

-Professional associations (i.e., American Marketing Association, NetImpact, etc.). You'll find links to their calendars of events at [www.iloveseattle.org](http://www.iloveseattle.org).

-UW Alumni Association's Husky Career Network (<http://www.washington.edu/alumni/careers/careerconnections/>)

-LinkedIn

-UW Husky Connect (available only to UW Alumni; can pay a fee as a current student)

### Informational Interviews

Informational interviewing does not mean asking for a job, or going on hands and knees to people for help. It also doesn't mean ignoring anybody that doesn't already have a job for you.

It does mean:

- Talking to people — lots of them
- Graciously requesting useful information from those willing and able to give it, whether they have a job for you or not
- Allowing people to get to know you, so that they can think of you when conditions for you are right

### **What Informational Interviewing Can and Should Do**

When done with attention and follow-through, informational interviewing yields four results:

- You learn more about the field you're in, or the field you're shifting to. Or, you learn more about the field in a given region.
- You develop a set of relationships, some of which will last through your entire career.
- You glean information that helps you make a decision about where you want to work.
- You find your way to a job or internship.

### **How to Prepare**

- Draft your resume, so you're clear about your accomplishments.
- Understand your criteria for a job or an internship.
- Have your elevator pitch clear in your mind. Know who you are, what you're good at, and where you're headed.
- Have a starting list of who you want to talk to, and be clear about why you've picked them. Be prepared to add to this list.
- Send your outreach email or letter to the people you want to talk to, and follow up by phone or email a week later. Don't expect a high response rate, but if you get no responses, check your email or letter for content and/or style. Or examine your industry or strategy to make sure your target companies make sense.

### **Tips for Success**

- Your discussion isn't an interview, but it is an interview situation. Dress as if it were an interview.
- The person you're talking to knows you're looking for a job without your saying anything about it. In your outreach email or letter, you will implicitly say you won't talk about your job search. And, most of the time, the people you want to talk to are trying to avoid being asked for jobs. So honor that commitment — don't ask for a job during your discussion.
- However, there are times when following this approach can come across as coy or otherwise inappropriate. If you can tell that someone is trying to sound you out about a job, it's okay to respond.
- Thoroughly research the company you're talking to, and come prepared with questions that will give shape and purpose to the discussion. Since the talk is happening at your request, your energy should drive it. As with a job interview, these questions should be at a level that demonstrate your strategic thinking, your insight, and the initiative you've taken to do your homework and set up the discussion.
- At the end of the discussion, it makes sense to say something like this:

"This has been tremendously helpful — it's terrific of you to take the time to talk to me. You've probably gotten a pretty good sense of who I am and where I hope to be headed—who do you think I should talk to next?"

Let the person advise you. You're likely to get a lot of good suggestions (and contacts) this way.

- As you walk out the door, it's okay to say something like this:

"Again, thanks so much for seeing me. It was

really helpful. Let me know if there's ever anything you think I could be helpful with — it would be great to work with you sometime."

- Send a thank-you note, whether handwritten, in lettermail form, or via email, within a few days. If you forget, do it anyway, as soon as you remember. In your thank-you note, say something like, "I hope I may take the liberty of keeping you informed about my progress."
- Keep the person informed! Every couple of months, send them a note or an email letting them know what's happening at your end. Occasionally, ask them to have a cup of coffee with you. Send them a holiday card. These things are all part of maintaining a business relationship that's less than a friendship, but more than an acquaintanceship.
- If you do a lot of informational interviewing to get a summer internship after your first year (highly recommended), maintain those relationships. Your search for a permanent job becomes much simpler if you do.
- Keep track of your contacts: who you've talked to, who you've followed up with, who has referred you to whom, and so on. As you talk to more people, your world will expand and will need attention.

# Applying for Jobs

## Where to Find Job Openings

### Foster MBA Jobs

The BCC posts jobs and internships throughout the year. Companies will select to receive resumes and cover letters via one of the following methods:

- **Resume Collect** – candidates upload their documents and apply through Foster MBA Jobs. The submitted documents are sent to the employer the morning after the deadline.
- **On-Campus Recruiting** – candidates, again, apply through Foster MBA Jobs and documents are sent to the company the next morning. By selecting On-Campus Recruiting, the employer has agreed to hold the first-round interviews in the BCC. Check Foster MBA Jobs to see if you have been selected for an interview and to schedule your interview time.
- **Web Job Listing** – candidates are directed to apply through the company. An email address or website will be provided. Two important things to note about Web Job Listings:
  1. Apply as soon as you see a Web Job Listing posted. The application deadlines seen in Foster MBA Jobs are arbitrary.
  2. Web Job Listings are just as important as Resume Collects and On-Campus Recruiting. The posting company will be looking for Foster MBA candidates; they just require

you to apply through their system versus the BCC's.

### Networking / Company Websites

There is a trend developing where more companies require students to apply through their website. They may post the position with the BCC, but require candidates to apply online. In this situation, it is very important that you have made an effort to make a personal connection at the company.

A “personal connection” does not mean bothering the HR recruiters, as they are extremely busy and usually are not able to help you. Work with the BCC on coming up with a “Networking Plan” to get to know other individuals in the company – ideally, hiring managers and others with whom you might work.

### Career Fairs and Other Recruiting Events

Each year the BCC hosts the Fall and Spring Forums to help get you connected to companies. Use these events as an opportunity to learn more about the company, their culture and what positions they may have available.

There are also a number of Recruiting Events held throughout the academic year. Make sure to attend Meet-the-Firms, Fireside Chats, and on-site company events as all of these are planned so that candidates and recruiters/hiring managers can meet.

### Job Boards

There are a number of job boards and generic websites out there through which you can apply for jobs. These sites are good to see what postings are out there, but check with the BCC

to see if we can assist you in making a personal connection.

### Applying for Jobs/Internships

1. Prepare your resume – tailor the document for the position (see Applications below)
2. Prepare your cover letter – individualize for each job (see below)
3. Apply via Foster MBA Jobs, website, email, etc.

#### FAQ:

Q. How long should I wait to hear from a company before I check on the status of my application?

A. If the job is posted through Foster MBA Jobs, check in with the BCC first. If you found the job through the company's website, wait at least one week. Take each company on a case-by-case basis and work with the BCC about the best way to check on your application.

### Applications

Although you prepared a basic version of your resume at the beginning of the year, you should re-work it for each application that you submit. Most likely, this first resume reflects where you've been in your career.

When you apply for specific jobs, your resume should instead reflect where you want to go professionally—i.e. into the position for which you are applying.

Ideally the accomplishments you choose to highlight in your resume should correspond to the key requirements listed in the job description. However substantial your experience might be, you won't be a viable candidate unless your experience is relevant to the position. It's your job to make this relevance as obvious as possible.

Chances are, many of your accomplishments are relevant—you just need to think and speak of them in appropriate terms. Often this entails translating your experience into the language and culture of the target company. Good research (for example, from informational interviews) will give you the opportunity to learn

what language to use and which accomplishments to highlight.

Make the connection between your experience and the requirements of the role explicit. Don't make the recruiters read between the lines to see that you are a good match for the position. They won't!

Use a FIT document (example below) to help frame your experience relative to the job description. Remember, though, that employers often have additional requirements that aren't spelled out in the job description. You can learn these through informational interviews with people in the company or industry.

### Cover Letters

Unless otherwise directed, always include a cover letter with your application. A cover letter is often the first thing a potential employer sees, so it should be compelling enough that he or she wants to learn more about you in your resume. And like your resume, your cover letter should offer information about yourself that is relevant

#### FIT Document

Job Requirement	Relevant Experience
Operational Effectiveness and Safety	I have directly facilitated increases in revenue of up to 12% and reduced costs by as much as 33% while improving productivity and efficiency.

to the target position and company. The more specific your letter, the stronger your application will be. Choosing the strongest points, draw on your FIT document to identify how your experience speaks to the job in question.

but never copy them outright! The most effective cover letters are ones that are specific to a particular position in a particular company—and moreover, that show a bit of the applicant's personality.

Sample cover letters are available online (including in the Sample Documents section of your Foster MBA Jobs account) and in numerous books. Refer to these examples for inspiration,

**Date**

**Your Name**

**Your Address**

**Your Phone Number**

**Your Email Address**

**Contact Name**

**Contact Address**

**Dear Contact Name:**

**Opener: 2-3 sentences. Describes 1) who you are (e.g. first year MBA student at the UW Foster School of Business with a concentration in marketing); 2) what you want (e.g. apply for the Product Manager internship or set up a 15 minute phone conversation to learn about your experience with XYZ company); and, if appropriate, 3) how you learned about the position or got the person's contact information (e.g. internship posted on our school's job site or got their contact information from Professor ABC).**

**Body: 3-4 sentences each in one or two paragraphs. 1) Link your skills, experiences and interests to the needs of the company. Don't rehash your resume but rather choose those select (4-5) things that play to your strengths and differentiate you from the competition. Be succinct; and 2) Talk about what draws you the industry, company and specific opportunity. What differentiates them? Don't suck up and don't tell them their business, but show them you've done your homework about why you'd be great fit.**

**Closer: 1-2 sentences. 1) Thank the contact for their consideration; and, as appropriate, either 2) tell them you look forward to hearing from them, if you're applying for a posted job, or that you'll contact them on specific date, at least a week in the future, to discuss an appropriate next step (e.g. schedule the phone conversation).**

**Sincerely,**

**Your Name**

*Note: This format can be applied to an email less the date and with all your contact information at the end. Your email should be less than one screen and your entire letter less than a page.*

# Interviewing

Most people describe interviewing as the most intimidating part of the job or internship search. However, learning how to interview well is a skill that can be developed by anyone—even by those who feel especially anxious in interview situations. The key is thorough preparation and consistent practice.

Much of this preparation builds on the work you will already have put into your job or internship search:

- Drafting an accomplishment-based resume based on STAR statements will give you stories that confirm your competence;
- Doing company research and informational interviews will help you articulate why you are a good fit for both the position and the company; it will also teach you the language and culture of the target industry and company;
- Writing a cover letter that clearly matches your experience point-by-point to the essential requirements of the job will help you demonstrate the relevance of your skill set.

The next step is to turn this raw material into answers to potential interview questions. Although there are countless possible questions an interviewer might pose, you need only know the key messages you want to communicate about yourself. These messages will address any number of questions, and should be formulated as concrete stories about yourself and what you've accomplished. Just as every good story has a beginning, middle and end, you should structure your answers clearly, using the STAR format that helped you write your accomplishment-based resume. Describe the:

Situation, Task, Action, and Result.

## Mock Interviews

Well before any anticipated interviews, you should begin practicing your interviewing skills through regular mock interviews with a career coach. After your first mock interview, use a webcam to record a simulated interview at home using InterviewStream [see sidebar]. After reviewing the recording and evaluating your own performance, schedule a follow-up mock interview to gauge your progress.

We recommend that you complete at least three mock interviews per quarter. In any case, before you are allowed to participate in on-campus recruiting, you must complete at least one mock interview.

### Tips for using mock interviews effectively:

- Running through repeated mock interviews—no matter how many—isn't enough to make real progress; you need to identify problem areas and develop strategies to address them.
- Don't cram in mock interviews just before a real interview. That time is better spent researching the company/industry, eating well and getting rest.

#### INTERVIEW STREAM

Interview Stream is an online tool that allows you to practice interviewing on your own. All you need is a computer, internet connection and webcam. Recording and then evaluating your responses can be invaluable: you'll see and hear yourself just as an interviewer would.

[www.interviewstream.com/login/?schoolid=121](http://www.interviewstream.com/login/?schoolid=121)

## Interview Preparation

While mock interviews are an effective way to develop your interviewing skills, they aren't sufficient as preparation for an actual interview. Beyond telling the interviewer about yourself, you need to show that you are both serious and knowledgeable about the company/industry/position. How well you do this will determine whether the interviewer perceives you in a limited functional role or as a potential leader.

You will demonstrate your knowledge implicitly and explicitly by:

- How you contextualize your answers. Do you have a broad perspective that connects the tactical level to general strategic issues?
- The depth and relevance of your questions. Always prepare at least several questions for your interviewer.

Use the time before an interview for in-depth research:

- Talk to classmates, alumni and others in your network with experience at the company or in the industry.
- Go beyond the company's own website to find out what others (competitors, the media, government offices, etc.) say about the company and the industry. LexisNexis, an online archive of news, legal and business content, is a great resource that is free to UW students: <http://www.lib.washington.edu/databases/LexisNexis/>
- Attend any information sessions the company might hold on campus to learn first-hand about the company's culture, potential career paths and hiring process.

## Interview Etiquette

At every stage of the interview—from the parking lot and reception area to the interview room—consider that you are being evaluated. Behave courteously and professionally.

Always ask for the interviewer's business card. Send a thank you note (by email) within the next day. Should be straightforward, sincere thanks for the interview—at most reiterate interest in company and position, but don't sell yourself. This can often diminish the sincerity

of your note. However, it can be acceptable to correct a mistake you made in the interview or otherwise supply information you didn't have during the interview.

# Negotiating an Offer

**Always remember, this is the start of the relationship with your employer.** Negotiations will set the tone of that relationship. Ask for too little and you will be disadvantaged throughout your time with that employer; ask for too much or be too pushy, and you can set a negative tone to the relationship before it truly develops. Everyone involved wants to walk away from the negotiations feeling good about the deal. Keep patience, tone of voice, and your bottom line in check. Most companies aim to treat you fairly with their offer and want you to be happy and accept the position. Make sure to not come across as greedy or unreasonable, as you may cause the deal to fall through.

**Be prepared.** Make sure to do your research in advance. Know as much as possible about your market value and the employer before starting the discussion.

**Examine your priorities.** What do you really want? Salary? Equity? Other benefits? Besides allowing you to clearly define your terms in the negotiation process, examining your priorities will help you determine the type of company for which you want to work.

**Know your skills.** Be able to clearly demonstrate the skills you will bring to the job. Be able to demonstrate the value you will add for the employer. Assess the situation and know if your skills are in high demand – is it better to stress those abilities or should you focus elsewhere?

Honesty is essential. There is no advantage to lying in employment negotiations. You risk

more by lying than you are likely to gain. At the same time, though, there is no need to reveal too much information. This applies to information about yourself as well as your salary history and requirements. Read the situation and determine what you need/want to say and when it should be said.

**Fairness matters.** Fairness is a basic principle of negotiations. Employers make offers and keep negotiations within a certain range based on budget and organizational structure, and they aim to be reasonable. Every request you make needs to be made with this fairness in mind. The employer wants you to accept the offer and for you to feel as though you've been treated fairly.

**Consider the value of the total package.** Remember to consider other ways to achieve your negotiation objectives. Be open to making tradeoffs to increase the overall value of the deal. Find creative options that allow you to get what you are looking for and allow the company to remain flexible and fair in their offerings. Don't let the act of "winning" become more important than achieving your goals.

# MBA Student Web Resources

## **MBA Career Services Homepage**

<http://bschool.washington.edu/career/>

## **Foster MBA Jobs**

<https://business-washington-csm.symplicity.com/students/>

Username: Your UW email address

Password: After you receive your initial password, you may update it from within the system

User fee: \$35, payable to the University of Washington, (included in LEAD fees).

## **WetFeet**

<http://crs.wetfeet.com/?dpid=142>

Login: mbastudent

Password: washbiz

## **Foster Business Library**

<http://www.lib.washington.edu/business/guides/careers.html>

## **Vault Online Career Library**

Access to Vault Career Library is now provided through the Foster Library.

[http://www.vault.com/cb/careerlib/careerlib\\_main.jsp?parrefer=6006](http://www.vault.com/cb/careerlib/careerlib_main.jsp?parrefer=6006)

## **Hoover's Online**

Access to Vault Career Library is now provided through the Foster Library.

<http://premium.hoovers.com/subscribe/>

## **CareerLeader**

<http://www.careerleader.com/cf/univ/uwashington.html>

Login: uwashington

Password: kitchen

User fee: \$20, payable to the University of Washington, (included in LEAD fees).

## **Interview Stream**

<http://bschool.washington.edu/career/interviewstream.shtml>

## **UWAA Husky Career Network**

<http://www.washington.edu/alumni/careers/careerconnections>

Login with your UW NetID

**Passwords subject to change. If you encounter problems, email [bcc@u.washington.edu](mailto:bcc@u.washington.edu).**