

BUSINESS SCHOOL GRADS CAN EXPECT A BRIGHTER JOB OUTLOOK IN 2017

Summary: Find out what the current state of the market is for MBAs.



Question: As a second-year M.B.A student, I am looking for an assessment of the current market. What does the on-campus recruiting picture look like, and what approach would you recommend to 2017 graduates?

Answer: While the economy is slowly rebounding, a cautious approach to hiring persists. In response, business schools are working creatively and aggressively to attract recruiters. Still, M.B.A students are well-advised to supplement their university's formal corporate-recruiting program with a proactive and multifaceted approach.

Consider some of the following recruiting trends at work:

- **A just-in-time approach to hiring**, which means more corporate recruiters on campus during the spring and summer and fewer from September through December.
- **Highly targeted recruiting practices** with recruiters developing close ties with a few universities, relying more on phone screening and hiring selectively.
- **Related work experience becoming highly valued**, if not a prerequisite.
- **A return to traditional employers.** The majority of b-school graduates are accepting positions in fields like marketing, management, and finance, with limited hiring in consulting and investment banking.

To carve out a strategic advantage in a competitive market, use your final year in b-school to gain related experience through an internship, part-time work, shadowing and community or campus leadership roles. Target prospective employers, thoroughly research their needs and go after them to make the business case for your employment.

Think small and alternative. It isn't that there won't be opportunities with large institutions, but a share of the hiring action will be with small companies and government agencies. Use relationships you have developed, as well as alumni resources, to make connections that will open doors.

And, finally, polish your presentation. When everyone else is on their best job-seeking behavior, there is no room for sloppy correspondence or an air of entitlement. Go the extra mile in your planning, delivery, and follow-through to attract employers and pull in the offers.