

HOW TO GET YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR WITHOUT EXPERIENCE IN BUSINESS

Summary: Find out how to break into the business world with an economics degree in this article.



Question: I'm graduating soon, and have no experience in a business atmosphere. The only jobs I've held have been retail sales positions. This isn't enough experience for an economics major. Where should I start to gain more professional business experience?

Answer: Don't sell yourself short, and don't discount your retail experience. Granted, it would be nice to say you've conducted an economic trend analysis for a big Wall Street bank or researched for LaDeDa Marketing Firm, but many successful graduates launch their careers without the benefit of direct business experience.

Start anywhere you can get your foot in the door—government agencies, market-research firms, banks—but have a specific agenda in mind when you target employers. In addition to meeting whatever needs your potential employers might have, select employers that will provide the opportunity for you to grow on the job and gain hands-on experience in your interest areas.

To strengthen your position, highlight class research studies, surveys or reports with data analysis on your resume and in interviews. Don't be shy about citing these skills as "value-adds" that distinguish you from the average job candidate. For more direction, read trade journals and join professional associations that represent the specific industries you're targeting.