

HOW TO START YOUR CAREER IN A TOUGH JOB MARKET

Summary: Learn how you can find a business administration job during an economic downturn.



Question: I graduated after the economy started to slow. I earned a bachelor's degree in business administration with honors and completed internships and extra activities, but I am still struggling, like many of my peers, to get a "good" job. As a first-generation college graduate, I thought a degree would open the door to opportunities, but it seems like the only successful graduates are the ones whose parents or friends have connections. What can I do to start earning offers?

Answer: You graduated into an economic era that requires a "keep the faith" outlook. Research and experience maintain that, in the long run, your college education will pay off in both opportunity and income.

As far removed as your current job may seem from your ideal job, view it a stepping stone to your future. Look for ways to develop leadership skills, cross-train on every aspect of the business and build a reputation as an outstanding contributor. These are the types of qualities and competencies that will transfer to more desirable positions. When updating your resume, focus on transferable skills and accomplishments from both your current position and from your internships.

As you note in your question, established connections are useful door openers to potential employers and job leads. When they don't come ready-made, it is important to use alternate methods to build a network. All of the following offer the opportunity to learn about others and introduce your interests:

- **College alumni:** Call or e-mail your school for information about its networking process.
- **Customers and vendors:** Think about current contacts and those from your internships.
- **Professional associations:** Identify a targeted business function and attend a meeting or luncheon.
- **Social clubs and religious gatherings**

Networking proves to be most useful if there is a focus on particular types of work or specific employers. As part of researching careers and becoming focused, interview people about their work or ask about the possibility of shadowing for a day. In addition, some cities have local job search clubs that provide a boost to morale while you are still straining to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

See the following articles for more information:

- [Six Reasons You Need to Be Networking](#)
- [Develop Marketable Skills to Gain Success in Your Career](#)