

HOW SMALL-SCHOOL GRADS CAN LAUNCH BIG CAREERS

Summary: Learn how to find a job at an international sales company after recently graduating from a small college.



Question: I recently graduated from a small college and am trying to get on my feet with a small international sales company. Many of my former classmates either haven't found employment or have accepted minor positions at small companies. How do graduates from smaller schools get noticed? How can I justify my college education when it seems that I might end up in a career that doesn't require a degree or isn't related to my course of study?

Answer: As a college graduate, where you start and where you end up are two different places. This is a defining reality and distinguishing feature for most college grads. According to Census Bureau figures you will make far, far more money. But what these figures don't reveal is the period of time it takes for college grads to realize this significant advantage.

The first part of the journey often is the toughest mile up the career mountain. And though the reputation and connections of a large prestigious institution can offer an edge in getting a foot in the door, many small-school graduates develop admirable track records and career paths once inside. To accelerate the process, view every assignment as a building block. Find a mentor at your current employer, put your hand up for a cross-functional opportunity and negotiate for formal training to enhance your skills.

To support your move beyond your current company, take an active role in a regional professional association. Use this forum to develop outside of your existing job responsibilities and extend your base of contacts for future employment opportunities.

Education does pay over the long run, but success often starts small. Keep a record of accomplishments in this early, building phase of your career. Create a folder of customer compliments, quantifiable sales results, performance reviews, coursework and professional involvement. Slowly but surely, these actions will feed your ambition and propel you toward your career goals.

See [Is Your Career on the Right Path? 7 Ways You Can Tell](#) for more information.