

TALK TO STRANGERS TO FIND THE PERFECT JOB

Summary: In this Q&A article, a person quit a job that was not utilizing their greatest talents and is now seeking to find new job opportunities.



Question: The most difficult thing for a prospective job seeker is trying to figure out what jobs are out there, and what they entail. For example, I am a 28-year-old student doing an MSc in economic history at the London School of Economics. I am originally from Mexico, and I am 100 percent fluent in Spanish. Plus, I have great presentation and communication skills. I am one of those people who gets told all of the time that I should be in sales, or working with people.

My professional background comprises four years working for a financial services firm on the equity trading desk. I wanted to move out of trading because I feel that it is too much of a hostile environment for a dead-end job that will one day be replaced by computers. The second reason I quit is because I never used my Spanish and interpersonal skills, and I feel they are my biggest talents and are being wasted.

What jobs are available to someone like me where I can use my trading/financial services and Spanish skills? I was hoping to find a job where I could be a representative of some type for a financial services firm that does business in Latin America. Any ideas what companies those might be and what positions that would entail?

Answer: That's a great question. It is indeed a challenge finding out what opportunities are out there.

To find out about them, the best thing you can do is talk to people—ask your former colleagues and friends and new people you meet who they know who might know somebody who knows about the industry you're interested in. Then talk to the people you're referred to.

You should also talk to people. We're social creatures. One way we learn is by talking to others and understanding our reactions to what they say. Does their work sound interesting? What aspect of what they do sounds fun?

Every person who holds a job is a Genie on that job—and can give you information that will help you expand your knowledge of the opportunities open to you. Pick the brains of friends, associates, alumni, and strangers. You don't know where these conversations will lead—but you will learn things about opportunities you never knew existed.