

OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

MARKET YOUR DEGREE

PREPARATION

The importance of planning your curriculum and being focused cannot be emphasized enough. Many employers with whom we have spoken with have expressed the frustration of interviewing someone who is unprepared. Once you have decided on the focus of your career and personal goals, choose courses and activities that reflect those decisions. Employers will be looking at your curriculum and experiences to make sure that you have the necessary knowledge and commitment for specific jobs.

It is equally important to supplement your degree with other relevant work experience. Summer internship or associate positions, solid work experience, relevant volunteer experience, language proficiency, and regional expertise combine to make you more competitive.

Recommendations

- Get relevant work or volunteer experience. A concentration alone doesn't make you an expert.
- Develop your written and oral skills. Employers stress the ability to provide fast, efficient analysis as being extremely important.
- Call SIPA alumni/ae who perform your function(s) of interest for informational interviews.
- Be aware of the impressions you make at all times, especially with professors and internship employers. These people may be serving as references or networking connections for you when you are applying for full-time positions during your second year.
- Don't wait until the second semester of your second year to begin networking. Start making contacts as soon as possible after starting at SIPA through Office of Career Services (OCS) events, the SIPA LinkedIn group, the SIPA Alumni Directory, professors and other administrators, as well as your own personal connections.
- Don't rely solely on on-campus recruiting (or any ONE method) for your job search. Diversify and balance your search by using a variety of resources, such as organizational research, OCS events, LinkedIn, job advertisements, and personal contacts.

MARKETING

As any good sales representative learns, when one markets a product (and, in this case, YOU are the product), first it is necessary to fully **educate** oneself about the product. What do you really want in a job/career? What are your likes and dislikes? It is also important to identify the **strengths of the product** - what makes you unique? Your background? Previous work experience? Your internships? Your language proficiency? Your regional expertise?

Finally, you must consider the **needs and goals of the customer** – what is the employer looking for? What is her/his goal?

Only then it is possible to match your strengths with the employer's needs. If you can position yourself as an asset to the company, then the organization will see the advantage of hiring you. **In sum, the key to marketing yourself is knowing what you want, knowing what you have, knowing what "they" want, and effectively communicating all three.**

Recommendations

- Be yourself.
- Learn to stress the strengths of the SIPA degree. You need to be able to articulate this information in an interview. For further assistance, schedule a mock interview in the Office of Career Services.
- Sell your background and regional/functional expertise.
- Find the right person to whom you should send your resume and cover letter. Sometimes general recruitment may not give you the best "in."
- Try to leverage your former summer associate position or internship into a full-time position if, of course, you are interested in pursuing that line of work. While at your internship, take initiative and make a good impression so that they may want to hire you, or at least assist you in your job search.
- Do your homework. Know the organization and the job for which you are interviewing. It is not enough to know what you want. What do employers want?
- Have realistic expectations if you are beginning your career or are a career changer. You most likely will not be making policy decisions at the beginning of your career. Expect to pay some dues first. If you are a career-changer with work experience, you may be considered for more junior roles than expected.
- Be aware of other ways of achieving your end goal. Your first job may not be your ideal job, but a good stepping stone towards your ideal job. An "intermediate" job may make you more marketable in obtaining that ideal job.

Private Sector Specific Tips

- Don't apologize for not getting an MBA. Employers may ask why you didn't pursue that track; simply explain your decision and how it links to your professional development.
- Don't expect to be assigned an overseas assignment immediately upon graduation from SIPA. Corporations often want you to learn the business before sending you abroad. Also, do not expect to penetrate multinational corporations without having directly related experience. For example, to be a brand manager, you must have prior experience in sales and marketing.
- Don't necessarily expect to work on the international side of business at the start of your career. While you may be able to do so, be open to a domestic position in an international firm. This will allow you to gain expertise in business.
- Take your accounting, finance and banking courses as soon as possible. In fact, take as many quantitative courses as your schedule allows during your program at SIPA. Employers often identify these courses as important training for the private sector.
- Research organizations that deal with foreign markets in which language capability is an asset. For example, if an international bank that you're interested in has accounts in Brazil, it may be wise to strengthen your fluency in Portuguese.
- Take courses at SIPA and the Business School that pertain to your functional interest and visit corporate information sessions at both schools to learn about specific organizations.
- Consider small to mid-size businesses, especially in the area of import/export, sales/sales management, and new market development.

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