

## Top Tips – Experience

The real route in was voluntary work

I got a job volunteering for a few months in the administration department of a charity. This helped develop existing and gain new transferable skills which I brought with me and use within my current position. These skills certainly helped me get my current job as I was able to add more experience to my CV and answer questions on job application forms more comprehensively. I was also able to talk about the skills I had gained in the interviews.

Young people need to know that qualifications are important, but today so is experience and they need to find the opportunities to gain this as it will pay off in the long run.

I worked as an intern at Oxfam. I think this definitely helped me get my current job. Had I not been an intern, I would have struggled to give good answers to a lot of the questions that I was asked at the interview. If I'd just been to university and had no work experience, it would have been more difficult. It gave me some skills that other people don't have if they don't have experience. Doing that has led me to where I am now.

School work experience is different. If you are looking to get work experience to help you get a job, then planning your work experience is extremely important; I think if you're doing something that's not quite related to what you want to do; you should be doing something else.

As well as gaining qualifications, I really believe undertaking voluntary work or gaining work experience is very valuable, even if it is just a couple of hours every week. Not only does this help you to get a paid job, but it also helps to develop your confidence and gain many different skills and experiences which employers look for these days.

I think when applying for jobs like this you need to demonstrate to the employer that you have experience of working with people and can handle a range of different situations. Some of the people you will work with in this area can be particularly challenging and you need to be able to show the employer from your past experience that you have the skills to be able to deal with situations in a professional way.

Every Friday evening for the past eight years I have worked voluntarily for PHAB (Physically Handicapped Able Bodied). As a youth worker I have supported a range of people to participate in and enjoy a range of activities. This experience has proved valuable in helping to demonstrate to employers that I have the skills they are looking for and will go the extra mile.

I think it is important for my future career aims that I get the most out of every opportunity. Therefore, I have asked to do additional courses while doing my apprenticeship. This can only help me in the future as it demonstrates to employers that I am hardworking, enthusiastic, willing to learn, succeed and positively progress.

While at University I participated in a number of sporting clubs and activities. During my time in the 6<sup>th</sup> form I also taught gymnastics to primary school pupils and was captain of the school football team. It was these skills (teamwork, communication, organisation) that I used to demonstrate to the employer that I had the necessary qualities which would allow me to successfully do the job. When applying for this apprenticeship I was also able to demonstrate that as a result of the 2 ½ years I had spent within the architectural design industry I also had project management skills and experience of working within an office environment using a range of different software.

## **Top Tips for Finding Work**

Don't stop looking for work! My advice for anyone looking for opportunities is to keep persevering and learn from each experience.

I applied for nearly twenty jobs a week. I spent two hours, three times a week looking for jobs and the rest of the time sending CVs, requesting and completing application forms and attending interviews when I got them.

I kept a log of jobs I applied for so I didn't apply for the same job twice.

I rarely heard back from any of the jobs I applied for, but this did not stop me from applying for others.

Apply for loads of jobs – all interviews are good experience.

Apply as early as possible as lots of apprenticeships are popular.

Check websites regularly for opportunities.

When in temporary or contract work, keep your eyes open for other opportunities and apply for them.

Apply for jobs while you still have one.

I have realised that you will always get setbacks in life, but it is important to view every experience as positive and move forward.

## **Top Tips – Application Process**

I think it is important to take time over your application form and tailor your answers to the role you are applying for

My advice would be to answer every question on the application form, because I've heard of people who leave bits out. Just make sure you write at least a line about every single thing as that will give you a really good chance

I would advise other young people to look at what skills they have and try to match up their skills and abilities to the person specification when applying

I prepared by researching the council; my original job choice; asking my voluntary work manager about the kind of questions I would be asked and by doing a practice interview

You need to research whatever job you are applying for as well as the department or company. I would also advise others to talk to those people doing the job and to consider why you want the job.

I think you need to research the company and gain as much background information as you can. This shows the company you are interested in them as well as the job

Make sure you know where the interviews are going to be held!

I think when going for the interview it is important to have a few questions ready for the employer so you can make sure you fully understand the demands of the role. It is also important to demonstrate that you have thought about the job to the person interviewing you.

I think it is really important to do some preparation on the company and the job role you are applying for as you may be asked to talk about this. If you

have not done any research then this may have a negative effect on your interview, as the image you are displaying would not be positive.

To help prepare for the assessment centre, I undertook some practice tests on-line for literacy and numeracy.

My preparation was mostly around the presentation, rehearsing it really. It's pretty easy to predict the questions they're going to ask. If you go online and search for job interview questions, it lists the ones likely to come up. Try and talk a bit, but not too much. And try not to give one-line answers. Practice with your friends.

I talked to my Auntie about my application and she helped me a lot - it also got rid of some of my nerves. It's good if you can remember old interview questions too. The one they always ask you is how you would respond in a difficult situation. To a young person I would say, practice with someone you can trust, someone who is not going to giggle. You can get practice questions on the internet and make notes as well. Find out about stuff like communication skills, so you know what you can bring to a job.

## **Top Tips – afterwards**

When you go for interviews it is also important to learn from each experience. If you do not get offered the job always email or ring the employer and ask for feedback. This will help in future interviews.

When you come out of the interview, write down as many of the questions as you can remember. Many questions come up again and again and this will help you to formulate some answers before you go to your next interview. By doing this you will be better prepared.