

## Job Shadowing

Job shadowing offers you an opportunity to observe a professional currently working in a career field of your interest so that you can actually experience what it's like working in a specific job. Job shadowing will allow you to learn firsthand if an occupation is a good fit for you, and help you to clarify your career goals. Job shadowing is an extension of the informational interview. Where an informational interview typically lasts no more than a half hour, a job-shadowing experience can be anywhere from a few hours, to a day, to a week or more, depending on what you arrange with your job shadow mentor. It is a good idea to utilize your time during summer and/or college breaks to take advantage of opportunities to job shadow.

Steps to job shadowing:

### **1. Identify an occupation(s) for job shadowing**

- Read all you can about the field before the job shadow experience.
- Find out as much as you can about the mentor and workplace before the job shadow day.
- Decide what you would like to learn about the occupation, and prepare a list of questions that you would like to have answered.

### **2. Identify people to job shadow**

- Start with people you already know: Parents' friends, friends' parents, neighbors, fellow church members, past and present instructors, etc.
- Expand out: Alumni (career services), professional organizations, the yellow pages, and guest speakers from your classes are good resources.
- You may also call an organization and ask for the name of the person by job title. Remember that people like to help students out with job information. One student whose dream job was to run a Fortune 500 company called the president of Levi Strauss & Co., asked for an interview, and got it.

### **3. Scheduling the job shadow**

- Contact the resource person by telephone or email. You can also have someone who knows the mentor make the appointment for you.
- Briefly introduce yourself, and explain why you are contacting this individual.
- Briefly explain your interests or experiences in the person's field.
- Be straightforward and tell him/her you are seeking information and advice.

See below for sample introductions.

**4. During the job shadow**

- Dress appropriately and look your best. If you aren't sure about the dress code, don't hesitate to ask your job shadow mentor.
- Arrive 10 minutes early.
- Observe the individual at work. Be mindful of their need to work while you are there.
- Offer to help out in any way you can.
- Ask questions and take notes.

**5. Follow-up with a thank you**

- Thank them for the experience, for sharing their time and expertise.
- Outline the benefits the experience had for you.

Sample letter:

“Thank you for taking time out of your schedule to serve as a job shadow mentor for the afternoon. I learned a great deal about how an engineer uses computers, and I really enjoyed taking a tour of the facility.”

## Sample Introductions

Email:

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

I am a student at Baylor University, and am currently majoring in \_\_\_\_/undecided about my major. \_\_\_\_\_ has been of interest to me since I took a class in that subject during my first semester at Baylor. Your company has an outstanding reputation in the field.

I believe that a job shadowing experience would help me to determine if this field would be a good fit for me, and I would appreciate the opportunity to observe you at work. Would you be open to me shadowing you for (*insert time frame here*)? If so, what day and time would be most convenient for you? I am available\_\_\_\_\_.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Joey Baylor

Phone:

“Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I’m a student from Baylor University. I got your name from \_\_\_\_\_. You’re in the line of work that I’m interested in, and I was hoping that you could help me gain insights into the profession. I believe that a job shadowing experience would help me to determine if this field would be a good fit for me, and I would appreciate the opportunity to observe you at work. Would you be open to me shadowing you for (*insert time frame here*)?”