



## Getting the Most Out of Job Shadowing

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### Career Planning for Employees

#### Why should you job shadow?

It's an interactive experience in the field

By job shadowing, you get to see for yourself what takes place and relate that to how you would handle it.

It's flexible and in-depth

Job shadowing can take place between a typical workday to a typical workweek, so you can really get a good look at how things work and span out over a small chunk of time.

It gives you a chance to get to know the people in that company or department

Job shadowing not only allows you to get to know the job but allows the people you're interacting with to get to know you. The ability to interact with an institution on this level is rare, so don't let it go to waste.

#### What is job shadowing?

Job shadowing involves observing someone in their job in order to learn what the in's and out's of a particular job and organization are like. It can be a valuable career development tool for everyone, such as students who are considering a specific field, employees who are considering a job or career change, and managers who want to learn more about his/her particular unit.

#### What is the process of job shadowing?

How to get your shadowing appointment

- **Reach out.** Are there certain people whose jobs look really good to you and that you would love to know more about? Contact them. Use your network find interesting individuals that you might benefit from learning from.
- **Keep your options open.** Try shadowing different jobs and the same job multiple times. Multiple appointments can show you a different perspective on a job(s), allows you to compare and contrast jobs more comprehensively, and broadens your network.

How to prepare yourself for the appointment

- **Have questions ready for the person you're shadowing even if you've spoken with or shadowed them before.** Consider the following starter questions:

- What is a typical day like for you?
- What factors enables one to succeed in this type of work?
- What challenges are you, your department, and/or your organization currently facing?
- Dress in appropriate business attire. If you aren't sure what is appropriate, just ask.
- Be ready to take notes. Have a notepad, tablet, or laptop at the ready.

#### How to job shadow successfully

- Go over the expectations for the day. Should you plan on observing or participating in meetings? Are there moments when you may need to step out, such as for certain phone calls? Should you primarily interact with the person you're shadowing or mingle more broadly? Confirm how long you plan to shadow them that day.
- Take notes. Notes are important for your reflection over your experience and for comparing this particular experience to other appointments. Note the important aspects of the job so that you can use them to map out your next steps - i.e. training and the types of assignments you'll want to take on afterwards.
- Be aware. The company culture and atmosphere can be just as important as the job itself.
- Wrap-up. At the end of the day, make sure to touch base with your appointment. Ask any unanswered questions that you have and if they have any feedback for you. Go over the things you felt were important and see if you missed anything. Discuss other advice your appointment might have on how to further your knowledge of the field.

#### What to do after an appointment

- Follow up. You learned a lot from your appointment—make sure you thank them for their time.
- Reflect. Sit down and sort through all your new found knowledge. Compare and contrast with other appointments and your current job. What did and didn't you like? Can you incorporate any of those job aspects into your current job? Where do you go from here?