Strategies for Landing a Job or Internship in the US: A Workshop for International Students

Presented by:
SJSU Career Center and International Students & Scholar Services

sjsu.edu/careercenter
Orientation to US Job Culture
Vicky
BS Management Information Systems/Computer Science 2018

F-1 student attended:
• Intensive English institute
• Diablo Valley College
• San Jose State University

No internships, but worked on campus as
• Tutor
• Student Assistant
• Teaching Assistant
• Tech Consultant
Top 10 Visa Occupations

1. Software Developers, Applications
2. Computer Occupations, All other
3. Computer Systems Analysts
4. Software Developers, Systems Software
5. Computer Programmers
6. Computer Systems Analyst
7. Operations Research Analysts
8. Management Analysts
9. Accountants and Auditors
10. Mechanical Engineers
Top 10 Visa Industries

1. Computer Systems Design and Related
2. Management, Scientific, & Technical Consulting
3. Colleges, Universities and Professional Schools
4. Architectural, Engineering and Related
5. Software Publishers
6. Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping, Payroll
7. Scientific Research and Development Services
8. Securities and Commodity Contracts and Brokerage
9. Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses
10. General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 10 Visa Cities</th>
<th>Other CA Cities in Top 50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. New York, NY</td>
<td>18. Santa Clara, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. San Francisco, CA</td>
<td>24. Palo Alto, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Chicago, IL</td>
<td>25. Irvine, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Houston, TX</td>
<td>31. Fremont, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. San Jose, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Atlanta, GA</td>
<td>32. Menlo Park, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sunnyvale, CA</td>
<td>43. Pleasanton, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Seattle, WA</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Mountain View, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Dallas, TX</td>
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</table>
Language barrier-English is important. Need to be familiar, need to know the colloquial language/idioms (can i give you my 2cents=expression for share an Idea with you)
Cultural Differences-many factors, one is personal space. 18 inches apart from another person
Legal complexities-what type of work authorization do you have?
Uncertainty-corporate / political climate
Networking/Connections-most important especially master’s level. need to build professional network.
Competition-domestic students and other international students 1M international students in the US
H1-B caps UPDATE: On April 6, 2018, USCIS reached the congressionally-mandated 65,000 H-1B visa cap for fiscal year 2019. USCIS also received a sufficient number of H-1B petitions to meet the 20,000 visa U.S. advanced degree exemption, known as the master's cap.
Cost of sponsorship-investment on employers part, smaller companies may require you to bring in your own immigration attorney
Time pressure-you only have 1 year OPT
Pressure from home-pool resources to send you here and family may expect return of investment
While there may be a lot of obstacles one might encounter, international students have positive attributes that help them achieve success. Smart with multiple skills—at minimum bilingual, most graduate from top universities from their home countries. Having a different worldview and life experience brings in new perspective to the workplace. Determined and loyal—choose to grow with companies that give them opportunities to work in the US. Able to navigate different culture—international students could be cultural brokers.
• Be on time (even a few minutes early to events)
• Don’t waste people’s time (Americans are always very busy and so when you don’t acknowledge how busy they may be that could be considered offensive).
• Always be appreciative of people giving you time.
• Be proactive in communication to save time.
• Americans value confidence and in the job search, confidence is often viewed as competence.
• Confidence does not mean cockiness or overstating your value.
• Down-playing your strengths or being timid can cause an employer to have doubts about your abilities.
• When you interact with employers (handshake/ professional dress/ posture/ smile/ tone and loudness of voice says a lot)
• Image of resume hand off (or other more appropriate)
• The US employment system is not based on entitlement but rather the value one adds to the organization.
• Companies want to know what you are going to do for them.
• They don’t want to give you a job to help you out. They want to give you a job because you are going to add value.
• Think about what you bring to the team. Why would a company want to hire you.
• Replace with rainbow zebra pic from resume workshop
• America is an individualistic society and a high value is placed on the individual. Standing out positively is HUGE in getting a job; not all press is good press.
• What is your USP (unique selling point) and how do you communicate that to employers?
• Emphasis on the Unique. (ie: there are several thousand smart Computer/Software/and Electrical Engineering Graduate students at San Jose State alone (not counting other schools). You all do the same projects and have similar GPA’s. Why you over anyone else?
• Employers like people who make a good impression and have something else to bring to the table.
• Americans are taught from a very early age that they must be well-rounded to do well in life.
• Students play sports, learn a musical instrument, get involved in leadership opportunities, community service, do well in school, etc.
• Academics is important, but it is not the only important thing.
• The things that you are involved in demonstrate a lot about who you are as a person and that intrigues employers.
• Americans are very social and make a lot of their hiring decisions based off of how you would fit in with the team.
• If you don’t make a connection with them when speaking, even if you are a qualified applicant, you may get overlooked.
• Employers are looking for the best fit for their team beyond the qualifications (try to connect with people on a human level).
In order to make a strong connection, you have to be good at small talk!
Small talk is awkward and can be really difficult especially if English is your second language.

Some tips for success:
- Find something in common
- Match the other person’s energy
- Don’t overshare
- Respect personal boundaries (Americans don’t like to have their personal space invaded!)
- Don’t get too personal.
- Ask questions back.
- Smile and be aware of body language
- Don’t let the conversation go on too long.
- Have some questions prepared.
- Be interested in what the other person is saying.
- Engage a topic but don’t tire it out.
- Don’t be glued to your phone.
INTEGRITY: A key ingredient for success in the workplace

- Present information about yourself honestly and accurately
- Demonstrate business-like conduct
- Promptly acknowledge an invitation from an employer for an interview
- Prepare in advance
INTEGRITY: A key ingredient for success in the workplace

- Notify employers if you have to cancel or reschedule an interview
- Respond promptly to an offer of employment
- Professionalism and good ethical behavior are keys to your success!
Policy on Job Offers

Withdrawing Job Offer Acceptance

- After a student has accepted a job/internship offer, they should cease seeking or considering other positions, even if a more appealing offer is received later.
- Withdrawing a verbally accepted offer can create negative repercussions that may lead to an employer ending on-campus recruiting, which affects the whole campus.
Policy on Job Offers

Withdrawing Job Offer Acceptance

- If a student withdraws an accepted offer, the opportunity to apply with that employer at a later date may also be threatened.
- A student who withdraws an accepted offer of employment and/or internship may have their access to Career Center services suspended.
- Student will be required to professionally resolve the situation with the employer, and is recommended to meet with a Career Counselor for assistance.

www.sjsu.edu/careercenter

Students > Student Rights & Services Guidelines sjsu.edu/careercenter
• Join student organizations that engage your interests and/or help you learn more about your field of interest.
Develop a Strategy

✓ Develop your people skills
✓ Identify your professional goal
✓ Practice your English skills
✓ Build relationships with your professors, classmates, alumni, career counselor
✓ Customize your job applications
Shrey Mehta, MS Software Engineering 2014
Hear what an SJSU International Student Alumni did to land an internship and a job in the US

https://youtu.be/gepHJFFiRH4
• Visit the sites and experiment with them.
• Create profiles, upload resumes.
• Visit YouTube and search for instructional videos.

TIPS:
1. Check posting & closing dates
2. Check employment qualifications, especially Visa status/sponsorship
3. Understand the expectations of employers
• Keywords: Use words, terms you already know are important in that field.
• If you don’t know, visit onetonline.org and look up that career, or a similar one, to find common words and phrases associated with that career.
• On last bullet, discuss what “professional” connection means and brainstorm topics that wouldn’t be appropriate in a professional relationship (e.g. politics, religion, domestic issues, personal habits, etc.).
Many Ways to Network

1. Join SJSU student organizations
2. Attend networking events on and off campus
3. Conduct informational interviews
4. Attend career fairs and events
5. Volunteer on campus / community
6. Join professional associations
7. Build your LinkedIn network
8. Get to know your classmates, instructors, advisors, counselors, other staff

Quality over Quantity

Shorten this list
Networking Do’s:

1. Research the company and/or individual
2. Prepare relevant and interesting experiences and/or stories
3. Focus on quality vs. quantity
4. Have reasonable, realistic expectations
5. Be genuinely interested in what the other person is saying
6. Respect others’ time and boundaries
7. Say “Thank you” and follow up

1. Use social media, company websites, people who are familiar with that company/individual.
2. Remember your purpose when networking (it’s not dating, so don’t talk about your family or hobbies or qualities not relevant to your professional purposes).
3. Better to make a positive impression on five employers than simply drop your resume off with twenty.
4. Don’t ask for favors (e.g. don’t ask a mid-level manager to pass your resume to the CEO)
5. Maintain eye contact and offer nonverbal feedback with appropriate facial expressions.
6. Be aware of US culture’s concept of time and personal space.
7. Follow up with an email a day or so later.
Networking Don’ts:
1. Don’t be over-eager or desperate
2. Don’t pester people, especially after the allotted time
3. Don’t just ask people for jobs
4. Don’t think about who you are going to talk to next when you are talking with someone
5. Don’t just pass out resumes
6. Don’t waste people’s time

1. This can be very off-putting, like going on a first date with someone who talks about marriage and children.
2. Respect the end times on events; don’t follow people out of the venue, to their car, to the restroom.
3. OK to express interest in working where they work; ask how you can know of opportunities; but don’t outright ask to be hired.
4. Focus on the person in front of you.
5. Distributing resumes without making personal contact first is a waste of time and paper.
6. Again, be aware of US work culture time concepts.
**Employers want to know:**
1. Your major
2. Career interests
3. Type of position you are seeking
4. Relevant work experience
5. Class projects
6. How your background and future goals will fit their organization's needs

**Don’t forget!**
1. What is your goal?
2. What makes you unique?
Good examples for use at a networking event, conference, industry meet-up, informational interviews

**Sample questions to ask:**

1. What do you like most about working at ‘X’ company?
2. What does ‘X’ company look for in their new hires?
3. What advice would you give to someone who is interested in working for ‘X’ company?
4. What would you say is the biggest challenge facing your department right now?
5. What led you to get a job at ‘X’ company? What was your background and experience before working at ‘X’ company?

Good examples for use at a networking event, conference, industry meet-up, informational interviews
Never, EVER ask anyone how much money they make!!!

Not every interaction is about getting a job. Sometimes, you can get valuable information to help in your search. These are sample questions you can ask in those situations:

**About the Organization/Industry**
- How did you get into this organization/industry?
- Describe your work environment.
- How would you describe the work/life balance in this career field?

**About Future Growth/Salary Information**
- What is the growth and promotional potential in your field?
- What areas are growing/changing in this field?
- What is a typical starting salary range in this field?
To sum it all up:

- Form genuine, professional connections both in person and on social media.
- Respect US work culture concepts of time and boundaries.
- Ask relevant questions, stick to appropriate topics.
- Use online resources such as Handshake and LinkedIn to find jobs, internships, and opportunities to connect with employers and career counselors.
Writing an Effective Resume
Agenda

- Purpose of a Resume
- What Employers Want
- Developing Strong Statements
- Resume Format
- Cover Letter
- Resources
How long does the average employer look at a resume?

- 5 minutes
- 1 minute
- 30 seconds
- 10 seconds

Click to reveal the correct answer. The average recruiter will take between 7-10 seconds to review a resume.
What Does the Employer Want?

Review the job description

Identify keywords & phrases

Review required & preferred qualifications

Highlight keywords, phrases, and qualifications that apply to you
Just as you researched the company, and studied the job
description and highlighted its key terms and qualifications, do the
same for your own qualifications, skills and interests. List those
down, and review them as you search for internships or jobs.
Highlight your strengths/skills in your resume.
Before displaying the answers ask the audience what they think are the top skills employers seek on a resume?
Some of the other skills employers seek on a resume are…
- Strong work ethic
- Communication skills (verbal)
- Leadership
- Detail-oriented
- Technical skills
- Flexibility/adaptability
How can you **STAND OUT** from the crowd?

Accomplishment Statements (Resumes)
Always review your work; nothing is more annoying to a recruiter than having a resume that is filled with mistakes. Also, make sure your resume actually fits the job description--this is another pet-peeve of recruiters (that’s why you should review the job description, and highlight key terms).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Resume Mistakes</th>
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</table>
| **Common mistakes made on resumes according to recruiters:** | **“Demonstrated ability in multi-tasting”**  
**“Costumer service”** |
| Spelling errors | **“A job at IKEA”** |
| Not targeted to a specific job or field | **“Made coffee”**  
**“Served customers”** |
| Responsibilities rather than accomplishments that demonstrate use of specific skills |  |
## Accomplishment Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did you do?</th>
<th>How did you do it?</th>
<th>What were the results?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Situation</td>
<td>• Action verbs</td>
<td>• Quantifiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Task</td>
<td>• Strong, specific</td>
<td>• Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Problem</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Experience:

Software Engineer
Technology, Pune, India

- Developed a user interface application
- Worked on team projects
- Produced client-facing work

Ask “What’s wrong with these statements?” “How can they be improved?”
The finished product and examples of accomplishment statement following the 3 question method.
Explain to students why the first two statements are past tense: they are projects/tasks that have been completed.
The last statement is in present tense because it is an ongoing task.
The finished product and examples of accomplishment statement following the 3 question method. Explain to students why the first two statements are past tense: they are projects/tasks that have been completed. The last statement is in present tense because it is an ongoing task.
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The finished product and examples of accomplishment statement following the 3 question method.
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The last statement is in present tense because it is an ongoing task.
Writing for ATS:

- Load in requested format. If not specified, PDF is recommended.
- Keywords in context.
- Search the company.
- Standard formatting.
What is Vmock?

Online resume tool that provides you with instant and personalized feedback to help you improve your resume.
Keep in mind...

- Upload resume in **PDF format only**
- Format resume into **one column**
- Do NOT add images, tables, or graphics
- **Use standard font** (e.g. Arial, Calibri, Verdana)
- VMock’s scoring is strict. **Don’t stress about your score**; focus on making needed improvements.
- Review feedback, **make edits to your resume, and re-upload**!
- When reviewing Vmock’s feedback use **your best judgement**
Cover Letter

Purpose:
- Address the WHY? Why this job, field, or organization?

1st Paragraph
- Who you are. How you heard of the position. Why are you interested in the company and position.

2nd Paragraph
- Pick your key skills as they relate to the position and provide specific examples.

3rd Paragraph
- Thank you and look forward to interview process.
• For more info on resume and cover letter format and content, go to sjsu.edu/careercenter > Launch Your Career > Resume/Cover Letter Guide

• Put your resume to the test! See how it matches up to the job description in terms of keywords and skills at Jobscan.co

• For additional help, attend Career Center drop-ins, Student Success Center drop-ins or ISSS drop-ins
Connect with the Career Center

www.sjsu.edu/careercenter

Access Internship/Jobs
Database: SJSU Handshake

http://www.sjsu.edu/careercenter/docs/Calendar.pdf

Meet with a career professional:
- Drop-In Sessions
- Appointments

Career Center:
Administration Building, 255
Phone: 408-924-6031
Email: careerhelp@sjsu.edu
Thank you!

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