

What is Job Shadowing?

Job Shadowing is an opportunity for you to connect or “shadow” with a business professional (job shadowing mentor) who has specific knowledge about an occupation or career in which you are interested. You observe responsibilities and tasks associated with the mentor’s career and have the opportunity to ask questions about the knowledge, skills, talents, and level of education required for the job. While the purpose of job shadowing is to gather career related information and expand your networking contacts, it also allows you to build interviewing skills, become aware of trends in the field and see workforce technologies in action. Multiple job shadowing experiences may be arranged to allow you to explore a variety of career paths.

Does Job Shadowing Really Work?

Yes! Job Shadowing works because most people:

- Enjoy talking about their jobs and career fields.
- Are flattered that you ask their advice to assist with your career and future.
- Are empathetic about career transitions because they have experienced them.
- Like to assist others because it makes them feel like they are giving back.

Why Should I Participate in a Job Shadowing Program?

A job shadowing experience may:

- Present up-to-date facts about an occupation that can assist in your decision making.
- Inform you about the skills required for certain jobs so you can match them with your skills.
- Provide valuable networking contacts to utilize when conducting your actual job search.
- Assist in developing communication skills and self-confidence in talking with professional people in a more relaxed work environment.
- Expose you to occupational “buzzwords” unique to the career field of your choice.
- Give you an edge in future interviews by providing inside knowledge not known by you communication
- Develop basic skills similar to a targeted job search

4 Things to Make Your Day Awesome:

- 1) Follow Covid-19 mitigation protocol at your site.
- 2) Introduce yourself in a professional manner
 - Give your name
 - Tell them a little about yourself (i.e. where you are from, interests, etc.)
 - State your chosen career path (for example Accounting)
 - Tell them why you choose your major and/or Shippensburg
- 3) Use a Covid-19 appropriate greeting. Follow your host’s lead. Be aware that they might not be able to shake hands.
- 4) Make eye contact when engaged in any conversation or activity
- 5) Ask questions and show interest in your host and their company

Big Impressions During the Day:

- 1) **Appearance:** Did you dress according to the site's dress code?
- 2) **Attendance:** Did you show up at the prior arranged time?
- 3) **Oratory/Speaking:** Did you use appropriate language and friendly tone when talking with the host?
- 4) **Attitude:** Did you bring a positive outlook to the job shadow and sustain it throughout the day?
- 5) **Ambition/Initiative:** Did you communicate your career and college goals to the host?
- 6) **Verbal Communication:** Did you effectively express your ideas in a clear and logical manner?
- 7) **Active Listening:** Did you focus on your host's conversation and ask clarifying questions?
- 8) **Feedback:** Did you respond to conversation, thoughts, and/or ideas?

Helpful Tips to Follow:

- Know what you want to accomplish - The primary objective of job shadowing is to investigate a specific career field so you can make a more informed career decision.
- Identify your potential contacts - When you know what you want to accomplish, ask yourself, "Who has the information I need?"
- Arrange for the job shadowing experience - You will want to discuss this with your job shadowing mentor. Your experience could be arranged for a half hour to a day or a week. It will typically start with questions related to the job or specific career field.
- Prepare for your job shadowing experience - Plan what you want to discuss with your job shadowing mentor. Come prepared with specific questions. Even though you are looking for information rather than a job, this same organization might have an opening in the future in which you would be interested. Being prepared will assist making a good first impression.
- Day of job shadowing - Remember that this is a professional experience. You do not need to wear "interview apparel" however, you should dress appropriately; "business casual."
- Try to obtain additional contact names - Before you conclude the job shadowing experience, ask your mentor if they can think of other individuals that might be helpful to contact for additional job shadowing and career related information. By doing this you will gradually build your professional network.
- Follow up - Write your mentor a thank you letter as soon as possible. Mention some items that you found particularly interesting or helpful. Some contacts may ask you to stay in touch so they can monitor your career path.

Student Responsibilities:

- To contact the job shadowing mentor selected by telephone or email, and to arrange a meeting date. This meeting will be at the mentor's place of work or virtually to comply with Covid-19 mitigation protocols.
- To become familiar with the job shadowing process and prepare in advance the questions that will be asked during the meeting.
- To arrive at the agreed upon time and dressed appropriately.
- To follow up the interview with a thank you note.
- To complete and submit a Job Shadowing Program Evaluation Form to the Career, Mentoring, and Professional Development Center.

Questions about a Specific Career Field:

1. What are the main responsibilities associated with work in your field?
2. Please describe a typical day, week, and month.
3. What interests and skills are needed for successful employment in this field?
4. What are the advantages of working in this field? Disadvantages?
5. What salary and benefits can I expect?
6. What education and experiences will I need to break into the field?
7. What type of work schedule does this field require?
8. Have standards or licensing requirements been established for this field by national professional organizations?
9. Are jobs in this field limited to any particular geographic area(s)?
10. How do people find out about openings in your occupation?
11. What opportunities exist for advancement and/or lateral movement?
12. What are the emerging jobs in this field?
13. What is the current outlook for new college graduates in this field?
14. Are you satisfied with the career field you have chosen?
15. What do you see happening to your profession in the next five to ten years?

Questions about a Specific Organization:

1. Please tell me more about your organization and its purpose.
2. Is your organization growing, diminishing, or maintaining its size?
3. How does your organization compete or cooperate with other organizations within this field?
4. How do you think your job would be different if you were working in a larger or smaller organization?
5. How is your organization funded?
6. What is unique about your organization?
7. In the future, do you think your organization will be needing more employees in this field?
8. What is your job security within this organization?

Questions about Personal Insights and Experiences:

1. What field did you prepare for and expect to enter originally?
2. How did you get where you are in your field?
3. If you needed to leave your present job, to what other jobs could you apply your skills?
4. Would you advise someone to enter your career field?
5. What would you have done differently in your career?
6. What do you like most about your job?
7. What would you identify as the top two personal rewards from the work you do?

Dressing to Impress: Appropriate Professional Attire

The Importance of Proper Attire

Even though we would like to think that our skills and abilities help us get the opportunity, appearance does count. First impressions are made within five minutes of meeting someone and help shape all future impressions, so it is important to dress professionally.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) surveyed 457 employers who recruit new college graduates, and an overwhelming *92 percent believe a candidate's overall appearance influences their opinion about that candidate!* When meeting potential employers, dress appropriately. It is helpful to dress for the job you want.

Business Casual Attire

Business attire suggests formal, conservative dress style. It is expected when interviewing with an employer, unless stated otherwise. Attention to detail, impeccable grooming, and a well-fitting clothes are vital to make a lasting good impression. **When in doubt, ask the employer about dress code!**

Clothing should be a combination of a dress slacks, chinos, a shirt with or without a tie, dark socks, and dress shoes. Avoid wearing polo shirts to an interview, even if they are acceptable for the job in question. Think about skirt length, dress slacks, blouse, sweater, twinset, jacket (optional), and hosiery (optional) with closed toe shoes. Sandals or peep-toe shoes may be permissible in some offices; flip-flops are never considered part of business casual.

- Khaki, corduroy, twill, gabardine, wool, or cotton pants, or skirts (neatly pressed /skirts should not be short)
- Solid colors work better than bright patterns
- Cotton long-sleeved button-down shirts, pressed
- Sweaters (temperature can always a variable)
- Leather shoes and belt
- Tie optional

*The Career, Mentoring, and Professional Development Center has a **FREE Professional Dress Closet for ALL students to use.** Hours of operation are Mondays from 2-6pm, Tuesdays- Thursdays from 2-4pm in CUB 108. If you have questions or would like to schedule an appointment, please call 717-477-1484 or email career@ship.edu.*

Checklist of what to bring:

- Padfolio, notebook, or folder
- A pen
- Extra copies of resume
- Business cards (if you have them)
- Lunch (if indicated by employer)
- Questions prepared in advance to ask (see below to capture thoughts)

Elevator Pitch

How to answer, "Tell Me about Yourself"

1 PAST; *What brought you here?*

- Personal and Professional
- Desire to work in the field based on personal interests
- Your research that led to this field or interest

2 PRESENT; *What are you doing to prepare right now for the future?*

- Professional (and relevant personal) interest
- Education and/or experiences that have prepared you for the interviews and jobs
- Other additional interest that show your personality for company culture

3 FUTURE; *What are your goals for the future?*

- Educational, professional and personal goals

4 WRAP UP; *What's the point?*

- Why are you excited about the specific employer and position?
- How do you see yourself as an asset to their team?



Tell me about yourself: Consider your thoughts to the above questions and ideas and complete your statement of response below. You could write full sentences or just write topics and ideas you want to discuss. Then practice it aloud, in front of a mirror, with friends, etc. so that you can say it easily and comfortably!

Sample: Hello, my name is _____ and I am a _____ year student at Shippensburg University studying _____. I've had some experience with _____ (relevant story), which is why I'm so excited to be here today talking with you about _____.

COVID -19 Job Shadow Helpful Hints

In-Person Job Shadow

1) Don't rely on employers to have figured everything out.

Ask ahead of time about COVID-19-related precautions so you're not caught off guard once you get there and so you're able to ask for any accommodations you might need. When you're setting up the experience, you can broach the topic by asking, "Do you have any COVID-19 policies that I should know to follow when I arrive?"

2) Wear a mask.

Be prepared and considerate. If you show up without a mask while your interviewer is wearing one, you're going to look inconsiderate and out of touch with public-health advice. While you are in the job shadow program, you still have to follow our experiential learning policy regarding Covid prevention and have to abide by all CDC, PA Department of Health and Shippensburg University recommendations.

3) Handshakes are out for now.

Follow the lead of your Job Shadow Site. It's perfectly socially acceptable right now to skip a handshake. When you first meet your interviewer, say in a warm tone, "I know we can't shake hands right now, but it's great to meet you."

4) Pay attention to what you learn about the employer.

When in doubt as for clarification – remember this is NEW for everyone! Follow the lead of your Job Shadow Site.

Virtual Job Shadow

- 1) Test your technology(s)** — Make sure your internet connection and video conferencing program are both working well prior to your interview.
- 2) Dress appropriately (if video conferencing)** — Dressing for success is no less important for remote interactions. Dress smartly, like you would for an in-person interview, and ensure your surroundings are tidy.
- 3) Do your homework** – Prepare just as you would for any other professional encounter, preparing questions in advance, researching the organization, etc. Do some research on the company so you know what line of business they are in. It would be great to have a few questions for your host regarding their career path or the workplace culture at your site.
- 4) Be personable** — Make eye-contact and generally engage with the site host to demonstrate your enthusiasm for the role (if video teleconferencing).
- 5) Remove distractions** — Ensure you're fully engaged with the interviewer by removing all distractions, including your cell phone.

Follow Up after your Job Shadow:

Thank You Letter/ Email

Emily Smart
412 Gardiner Hall
1200 King Street
Shippensburg, PA 25443-5000

February 2, 2011

Mr. Eric Bradley
Chamber of Commerce
217 Grace Street
Shippensburg, PA 25443

Dear Mr. Bradley,

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy work schedule to provide me the job shadowing experience on February 2, 2011.

I found the tour of the facility and the career related information you shared to be extremely valuable. Being able to talk to other accountants helped me realize my career goals and the kind of company I would like to work for someday. I specifically enjoyed attending a staff meeting to experience some of the everyday issues that can arise in an office setting. Thank you for answering all of my questions; the information was very educational.

I thank you again for your generosity and patience in helping me explore my career path.

Sincerely, Emily Smart

For more information, please contact:
Career, Mentoring, and Professional Development Center
CUB 108
career@ship.edu – 717.477.1484

Love your experience? **We want to hear about it!**

Tag the CMPDC in your posts and tweets:



ShippensburgCareer



@ShipCareer

And use #SUJobShadow to showcase all the awesome things you're learning!