Robert Half Canada

Burning Questions Facing the Class of 2017

Not Meeting All Job Requirements, Negotiation, Rejection Among Top Concerns; Recruiting Expert Gives Tips

Read the infographic text.

Toronto, ON -- With graduation season upon us, members of the Class of 2017 are planning their entry into professional careers. Many resources exist to help new grads craft a resume or prepare for an interview, but not all questions have simple answers. How people address these gray areas can affect their early career success. Staffing firm Robert Half outlines six questions facing the Class of 2017, with tips for how to approach them.

Question #1: I don't meet all of the requirements listed in the job description – should I apply anyway?

If you meet three-quarters of the requirements, apply for the job. Some firms write job descriptions for a "perfect" candidate – one who may not exist. If you show solid skills and are eager to learn the rest, you may land an interview.

Question #2: I have a great internship. How can I approach the firm about parlaying this into a full-time role?

Talk with your manager sooner rather than later. Express your interest in staying and note how you'd contribute moving forward. Be flexible as to what the entry-level position may look like. If your manager doesn't have the budget to hire you, ask for referrals to other departments that might.

Question #3: The career I'm interested in has nothing to do with my major. How do I start my search?

Read the infographic text.

Branch out to gather the information and resources you need. Tap your professors for ideas and use the resources at your career centre. Ask your classmates if their older siblings or parents can advise you. Reach out to people who graduated last year for their input and referrals. Research local firms online to see if they hire new grads. Build your LinkedIn profile and join professional groups in your field of interest.

Question #4: I can't get a job without experience, yet I can't get experience without a job. What should I do?

Highlight the experience you do have, especially roles that show your soft skills and customer service abilities, as employers place a high value on them. Restaurant and retail jobs, volunteer work, internships and student activities provide great experience, and show you can balance schoolwork with other priorities.

Question #5: The well-known firm I want to work for just turned me down. Should I keep trying to get in there?

Thank the hiring manager for considering you and ask if he or she will keep the door open in the future. But expand your horizons; don't limit yourself to working for the biggest brands. Many organizations can offer a solid career path to you. The first job is just that – it doesn't set the course for your entire professional career.

Question #6: The salary for my first job offer seems low. Do I have any leverage to negotiate?

Yes. Research market rates for similar roles, and emphasize your ask based on these findings. The2017 Robert Half Salary Guides are one resource.

Paul McDonald, senior executive director at Robert Half and national advisory board member forEnactus, offers these points to help people find success early in their careers:

- **Focus on soft skills.** Your degree, work experience and GPA are good indicators of your technical abilities. However, hiring managers are more focused on soft skills than ever before. Be sure to highlight your communication and collaboration skills to show you're a good fit with the team.
- **Help future graduates.** Keep in touch with classmates entering their senior year and be a resource to them as they plan their careers. Also keep ties with professors. Let them know what's been most valuable to you as you've started your career. The feedback can help them prepare current students.
- **Don't focus on perfect.** Your first job may not be the ideal fit with your major or what you thought it would be. Focus instead on getting solid work experience working for a boss you respect and coworkers you can learn from.

About Robert Half
Founded in 1948, Robert Half is the world's first and largest specialized staffing firm. The Menlo Park, Calif.-based company has more than 325 staffing locations worldwide and offers online job search and management tools at roberthalf.ca. For career and management advice, follow our blog at roberthalf.ca/blog. Follow Robert Half Canada on Twitter at@RobertHalf_CAN for additional workplace advice and hiring trends.

For further information contact: Naz Araghian, (416) 865-2140,naz.araghian@roberthalf.com

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