

Yes, There are Still Entry-Level Jobs for Business Majors Out There –
But the Competition is Stiff
Knowing Which Employers are Hiring and What They Value Helps

The highest unemployment rate in 25 years welcomes the Class of 2009. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) 2009 Student Survey reveals that of the 60 percent of bachelor's degree level graduating seniors who applied for jobs, only 19.7 percent actually have one.

The good news for business majors is that even in times of economic jitters and job market distress, students with business degrees are a sought after commodity. They are the keepers of the flame. Business principles are the force that can drive every organization back towards prosperity.

Entry-level job outlook surveys are encouraging.

MonsterTRAK, a global online career and recruitment resource, report findings from their fifth annual *Entry-Level Job Outlook* survey that 54 percent employers surveyed still plan on hiring 2009 college graduates. CollegeGrad.com, entry-level job site on the Web, indicates that 2009 entry-level job opportunities remain stable with the second largest projected increase in entry-level hiring since 2005.

The questions are:

- What skills and candidate values do employers look for in a business major?
- Which companies comprise the top entry-level employers for 2009?
- During these tough economic times how can business graduates position themselves for success in procuring and in keeping their entry-level position?

What skills do employers want in entry-level graduates? National Association of Colleges and Employers JobWeb.com rank the top 10 important skills and qualities desired by employers as:

1. Communication skills
2. Strong work ethic
3. Teamwork skills
4. Initiative
5. Analytical skills
6. Computer skills
7. Flexibility
8. Interpersonal skills
9. Problem-solving skills
10. Technical skills

Thinking Outside the Box

Keegan Bonebrake, Managing Director of Sibley Partners, a real estate investment firm that acquires, renovates and operates multi-family assets in Chicago and Kansas City neighborhoods, terms what he looks for in recruiting business candidates as “Creative Initiative.”

Creative initiative—the ability to walk into an environment, project or workplace, assess the situation or need, and identify a more effective and more productive way of doing something; keeping it going; thinking outside the box; resourcefulness; going above and beyond.

Progressive Insurance, one of the nation’s top auto insurance companies, and ranked by CollegeGrad.com’s Top Entry Level Employers for 2009 as one of the best in class employers who are dedicated to the training and advancement of college graduates, also embraces risk taking and innovation.

Recruiter Patrick McQuillan of Mayfield Village Progressive says that the ability to think critically is one of the key skills that they look for in entry-level business majors. He calls it “intellectual curiosity”—an analyst who steps outside the box when a unique trend begins to take shape and examines the trend in detail not typical for that analytical process. Recruiter McQuillan is talking about the ability to put together a “story-line from the data,” explaining it with the phrase “Convert the quantitative to qualitative, the nonverbal to verbal.”

Characteristics such as enthusiasm and a driven personality, positive attitude and behaviors, dedication, career-mindedness, motivation and a desire to serve others through customer service are also highly valued. In hiring Real Estate Assistant Interns, Sibley Partners understands that a “demonstrated willingness to learn” is a needed component of a successful internship.

Enterprise Rent-A-Car, the largest rental car company in North America, was recently ranked by *BusinessWeek* Magazine as one of the “Best Places to Launch A Career” for the second year running. What drives Enterprise?

Natalie Johnson, Enterprise Rent-A-Car Recruiting Manager for Northern Ohio, agrees with the skills identified in the Job.Web survey. In addition, Enterprise Rent-A-Car is looking for individuals with the following qualities: goal oriented, highly social, good problem solving ability, leadership skills, sales and customer service skills, work ethic, flexibility, good communication skills, and self motivated, who are looking for an opportunity to build a career. The most desirable candidates are those who want to advance rapidly into management positions, and who are willing to work hard to do it.

Enterprise looks for people with a customer service attitude and the ability to think on their feet who want ongoing training, good benefits, and opportunity for growth and promotion early on in their careers.

Where are the Entry Level jobs?

The Top Entry Level Employers for 2009 survey conducted by CollegeGrad.com reveals a collection of 376 entry-level recruiting companies with Verizon Wireless calling in the number one spot with over 13,000-projected entry-level hires. Enterprise Rent-A-Car ranks at number two and 8,000 projected entry-level hires. Completing the Top 10 List are:

Internal Revenue Service
Progressive Insurance

AT&T
Delloite & Touche USA LLP

DDP Holdings
Teach For America

Hertz
Federal Bureau of Investigation

The Top Entry-Level Employers list presents the class of 2009 with nearly 158,000 job opportunities. For a full copy of the list go to http://www.CollegeGrad.com/topemployers/2009_entry_level.shtml.

Who Can Help Graduates Prepare?

Stop by or call to schedule an appointment with the CSU Career Services Center in Rhodes West 280 (216.687.2233). Trained, professional Career Coordinators and staff members are available to guide you through the job search process. Resume and other document review, mock interviews, and advising sessions to help students and alumni gather knowledge, strategies, and techniques to help prepare in demonstrating those skills, qualities, and values that employers look for in today's competitive job market of 2009.

Yes, it is a buyer's market; however, graduates are the new energy and spirit of tomorrow's business world. Progressive and other companies recognize that. What draws students to certain companies? Recruiter Patrick McQuillan says one thing that makes Progressive an employer of choice is that Progressive is built on core values of integrity, the Golden Rule, objectives, excellence, and profit. Always tell the truth, treat others as you would like to be treated, and demonstrate performance to the goals.

Hiring entry-level business majors? Now, that's progressive and enterprising and using creative initiative!