HOW TO LAND A KILLER JOB OUT OF COLLEGE

Courses

A BANYAN TREE

STRATEGIES PUBLICATION

Welcome to my crash course on *How to Land a Killer Job Right out of College*.

I'm Drew Sanders, the founder of Banyan Tree Strategies. My goal for this course is to provide you with new techniques and approaches for jump-starting your career immediately upon graduation, while keeping them as actionable and succinct as possible.

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1. True Self

Lesson 1: What the last three years can teach you about your true self.

Look back at the last three years of your life. You had autonomy. You had choice. What you did with this time and freedom can give you valuable insight into yourself. Answer the following questions to get a better understanding of what environment may suit you best in your quest to make a living.

Circle the best fit for each:

What types of groups did you seek?

- Large
- Medium
- Small
- Avoid them all together

Look at your social circle, what would describe it best?

- Lots of friends (keep it light)
- A small tight group (8 or less)
- One on one (partnerships)

What role did you seek in these groups?

- Leader or organizer
- Go with the flow
- Rebel

What type of work did your major require?

- Lab work and projects
- Oration and negotiation
- Writing

What skills did you develop when in school that you enjoyed the most?

- Social (how to get along)
- Technical (How to make something)
- Philosophical (How to think and reason)
- Communication (How to persuade)

Chances are the last three years of your college life have afforded you more choices and autonomy than you have ever had in your life. This opportunity to go where you want to and do what you want to do at the age of 19-22 reflects well on your natural state.

This natural state allows your body and mind to work together to keep you healthy. Now that you are joining the workforce take these choices and combine them with some of the other lessons taught in this course to give you the best chance to get your career off to a fast start.

This email course will provide you with actionable tips on how you can jump-start your career now, before you even graduate. More on that later. For now, let's go to our first worksheet and get started on some questions that you can keep handy as you go through this journey.

Please complete the Lesson #1 Worksheet on the next page.

Next, we'll be delving into *Managing Yourself to Success*. If you have any questions in the meantime, please reach out at drew@banyantreestrategies.com. I will respond personally to every email.

WORKSHEET: SECTION 1

What types of groups do you seek out?

How big was your social circle?

What role did you seek in these groups?

What type of work did your major require?

What skills did you develop in school that you enjoyed the most?

2. Managing Yourself

In section 1 you reflected upon the last three years to learn about your *true self*. Today we're going to dive into managing yourself to success.

The workplace can be a big change from school. Schools are interested in what you have to say. They are in the business of helping you develop your skills, finding your voice and helping you feel great so that you tell others how great the school is so they can stay in business. Companies and their leaders are interested in what you can contribute to their cause. They are looking for useful people to pitch in and make a difference.

Companies expect their employees to have their act together. The basics are to show up early and stay late and to get along with others. You already know this, what you may not know is the company isn't' that worried about whether the job you are taking is a great fit for you.

Getting the **right fit** is mostly your job and that is where the following questions will help you articulate your interests and strengths to have the best chance of a good fit the first time.

What do I value?
An interesting way to get to this answer is the following exercise. This can also be done on the worksheet at the end of the section.

- Pick three people you admire and then pick three traits about each of them that you respect.
- Take the traits and stack them ranked in order of importance to you.
- Chances are the top traits will highly correlate with your values.

Where do I work best?

- Alone
- With a partner
- A small group (less than 8)
- A big group of 25+

What are my gifts?
Stack rank how much you enjoy the following tasks:

- Administration
- Organization
- Operations
- Communication
- Persuasion
- Compliance

With the combination of knowing thyself and managing thyself you are well on your way to having a good idea of your internal workings as a person. Much of this learning will now be relevant for you to share with others. However, it can be invaluable to allow you to make the right choice between two similar offers that have different environments, or roles for you to play.

To dive further into understanding the traits you admire and the traits that make you successful, complete Worksheet #2 after this section.

Next up, we'll learn about developing the character references you'll need to land that killer job.

WORKSHEET: SECTION 2

List out three people you value:

1.

2.

3.

Pick three traits you admire most in these three people:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

Rank the traits from top to bottom, picking at least four:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Where do you work best?

Of the traits mentioned, which three best reflect your gifts?

1.

2.

3.

3. References

Last section we learned how to manage yourself to set the foundation for success. Here we're going to dive into developing the character references that will help you land that killer first job after graduation.

In the past four years you have had a series of shared experiences. Your roommates, classmates, teammates, administrators, counselors, and teachers **all formed an opinion of you**.

Quick question: Did you wince when you just read that?

Most of us have burned a bridge or two in college. The lack of accountability that exists in many college settings makes it easy. Bailing on others, leaving before work is finished may seem like it has few consequences until you are left searching for someone to stand next to you and speak to your character.

Transitioning from one environment to the next will often make people aware of the need to have a few character references. Moving from a college setting to a work environment is especially poignant. Your employer has a perception that recent college graduates are flaky and slow to follow up and close out task loops.

Side Note: Even if a task isn't complete or isn't going to get finished, communicating to the other person a status update speaks volumes to your character as an adult.

Look back at the experiences you had with people of influence in college, could they write you a letter of recommendation? The more significant and meaningful the shared experience the more relevant the recommendation will be.

A good formula to use when looking at your past is that shared experiences (SE) allow others to have a window into your character (C) which then let's them know that they can trust (T) you which allows you to partner with them on projects in the future. **SE=C=T= Opportunity**

Here are some questions to help you identify potential recommendation sources.

- Who were your favorite teachers?
- What projects and activities did you work on?
- Who leads these efforts?
- What summer activities did you have when working with people that a future employer will respect?

Take the answer and then consider writing the following email.

Dear Matt,

I hope email finds you getting ready for a great fall. (insert current season)

My most recent efforts have been focused on (insert industry) (getting a job in tech) and it made me think of the (insert shared experience) and how much I appreciated your leadership.

It is important to my potential employers that I can be trusted to be dependable and to make a positive impact.

I was curious if I might list you as a character reference as I seek to start my career in (insert industry) technology.

Thanks in advance for your consideration,

Drew

Quality references can make a difference when you are competing for a job. Proof that you are dependable from a person of influence is earned and becomes a kind of currency that you will find most adults covet. Take the time to build out a series of adults who can speak to your character and then don't be surprised when they help you. You have earned it. Let's explore in our next worksheet some of these possible character references so you can have them handy to start reaching out.

Now that you understand how important character references can be, the next installment will dive into building your network.

WORKSHEET: SECTION 3

List the three best experiences you had in college with others:

1.

2.

3.

List the people who you most enjoyed being with:

List the roles you were filling:

List out the three people you met in college or in recent interactions that can write you a character reference:

1.

2.

3.

4. Your Network

Now we're going to discuss the importance of developing a professional network.

Chances are your social world has been online for years. The network effect of Facebook and Snapchat has changed your life when it comes to how you socialize and your behaviors after you meet people. The transition from college to the workplace creates a compelling call to establish a presence on a new social channel for working professionals: LinkedIn.

LinkedIn can be the place where you store all your past shared experiences, follow the influencers that you find interesting, and join groups of like-minded people. When you join LinkedIn, you will want to first create as complete a profile as possible, and then to connect with your peer group and the peer group of those older than you. The peer group older than you is especially relevant now that you are seeking employment.

All of the professors, administrators, and coaches have networks that are mature and powerful. When potential employers are vetting your resume, they will want to see how well connected you are to their world, and this only works if you have done the work of connecting with both your peers and the older groups.

Building your network and then finding your voice with your posts and likes are key steps to landing the best job you can. LinkedIn has a culture of “will this help me advance in my work.” Focus your insights on alignment with that mantra and you will find a welcome audience.

Side Tip: Clean up your Facebook and other social media channels. College is over, and most employers don’t have a sense of humor nor the allegiance to your future that your college did. The Dean may look the other way, the Human Resource department will not.

Let's do some research on who you may want to include in your network, and start thinking about where you can provide value by completing worksheet #4.

Next we'll take an in-depth look at why you should look for a company that is growing quickly.

WORKSHEET: SECTION 4

Who are the 10 most influential people you know that are your parents' age?

1. 6.
2. 7.
3. 8.
4. 9.
5. 10.

Who are the 10 people you know that you most respect, regardless of age?

1. 6.
2. 7.
3. 8.
4. 9.
5. 10.

What insights can you bring to people on LinkedIn that have come from being in college the last four years?

List out four topics you found interesting in college and then share them on LinkedIn as posts.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5. Look For Growth

We're more than halfway through the course, and you're well on your way to landing that killer job right out of college!

Today, we're going to explore what types of companies are best for launching your career.

Think about being on a zodiac raft in the middle of the Maui channel with 3 friends and a full allotment of water and rations. You are free diving and looking for fish and hoping for no sharks. Your pleasant day with supplies in abundance turns upside down when your friend knocks all the supplies and water overboard as he goes to start up the outboard motor. Worse yet is that the motor won't start because you forgot to fill the gas tank and now you are at least a six hour paddle ride back to shore.

Side note: Did you just get thirsty?

Jumping back to the story, you all do a quick inventory of your bags, and a lone bottle of water is found. Outside it is 80 degrees and at 2 pm you have four hours of daylight and plenty of paddling ahead of you. At this moment scarcity and all its issues reign.

The allocation of water in the next six hours and the accompanying challenges aligns well with how companies that aren't growing look at new hires. You get as little as possible, and no one wants to share.

When seeking employment as you are just starting your career it helps to overlap your distinctive strengths on top of a company that is growing quickly. When the company challenge is focused on how they will meet hiring goals, you benefit from the principles of abundance, and humans are more apt to be generous.

- "Make it Happen!"
- "Let's get Going!"
- "Just get it Done!"
- These are the mantras of growth.

When you find those companies as a young professional it will lift your spirits in a way that is akin to having your school football team start out the season 6-0!

Do your homework on Google. Typically, a business publication will be tracking the companies that are growing rapidly. There will be competition for the job, but there will be jobs. With your new tools from this course, you will have a plan for how to win the job and start helping the

company win with your focused efforts.

Consider taking a page from Sheryl Sandberg, the current COO of Facebook. Here is her story about career advice.

Sandberg had just received a job offer at Google with the title of Business Unit General Manager, one of many job opportunities at the time. "But there were no business units to manage," Sandberg said. "And I was just like, 'Eric, I- I love Google. I want to take this job. But I don't know what this job is.'"

At the time, Sandberg was chief of staff to then Treasury Secretary Larry Summers. "First he said, 'Sheryl, don't be an idiot.' Which is excellent career advice," Sandberg said.

The year was 2001. Schmidt had just become CEO of Google, when the company had fewer than 1,000 employees. "But the next thing he said was, 'If you're offered a seat on a rocket ship, get on, don't ask what seat.' I tell people in their careers, 'look for growth.' Look for the teams that are growing quickly. Look for the companies that are doing well. Look for a place where you feel that you can have a lot of impact."

Sandberg became Google's vice president of Global Online Sales and Operations.

When looking at companies, remember the laws of scarcity and abundance. Get on a rocket ship and then find a way to be invaluable to those in charge. To end our lesson today don't forget to complete the Worksheet #5.

Just a few lessons left! Up next we tackle the topic of problem solving.

WORKSHEET: SECTION 5

Which companies are growing the fastest in your area?

Who do you know at that company (LinkedIn helps in this)?

What do you think the company's biggest problem is currently?

How could you help them solve that problem?

6. Problem Solving

Lions don't appear to have a problem in the world. They are the king of the beasts; that is until they get a thorn in their paw and then the mouse comes along and is invaluable.

You may feel like a mouse in a world full of lions as you apply for these jobs, but remember they are hiring because they don't have anyone to do the work currently. The job requirement is a form of a thorn.

Do your research on the fastest growing companies and see if you can find out who is in so much pain that they are ranting about it in the elevators. If they are growing, then there will be growing pains. With pain comes frustration and often communication. Get ahold of people who just left the company or are there now and ask for 15 minutes of informational interviews.

Ask about the plans that are getting the most heat and action. Find out who has the big budgets and what they are trying to accomplish. You have hit the jackpot if you can fill the hole that causes the rants and the pain.

Think about the man on the side of the road choking on a piece of food. Does he care if you are a doctor? No! Just hit me on the back or perform the Heimlich maneuver and save my life!

Chances are you won't get this lucky (if you do please email us with the story) which will require that you learn how to articulate how your distinctive strengths overlap with their market realities. That topic is our final lesson on finding a killer job right out of college.

Remember, look for growth and listen for pain, then present your solution in the context of that pain. Don't forget the last step today - complete the worksheet for lesson #6.

Just one lesson to go and then a summary. We put it all together, so that you have everything you'll need to land a killer first job right out of college.

WORKSHEET: SECTION 6

Look up on LinkedIn who recently left one of the fast-growing companies you identified in worksheet #5. List them out.

What should you ask them about the company?

Which departments are having the most success?

How can you position your skills in the context of the company's pain?

7. The Five Keys

Every door that stands between you and your goals has locks that, with the right key, will open with ease. The five keys you need to land the killer job right out of school are:

- The Entrance Key
- The Prioritization Key
- The Performance Key
- The Get-A-Long Key
- The Game Sense Key

Here are the ways to acquire the keys you need to move forward and land the job you really want.

The Entrance Key

The Entrance key is also referred to as the technical key. Many sought after jobs have competency or skill associated with them. This used to be a major roadblock. If you didn't have the right degree, you were on the outside looking in. However, with the rise of online learning platforms today you can show proficiency through online courses from MIT, Stanford, Udacity, and a multitude of other online institutions.

Don't back down if you are interested in a technical role. Remember the four other keys. You can't fake technical skills. That is why we call it the entrance key; it gets you to the other factors that lead to landing the job. If you have the skills, show it. If you are building them, show that as well. Above all else you want to show passion and drive followed up by focus and action.

The Prioritization Key

Prioritizing tasks, responsibility, and distractions to deliver results is the mark of an adult. Companies and their customers require you to have these skills. Your challenge is that it is assumed that you don't have them!

Getting a letter of recommendation to go along with your story of how you have prioritized things in the past will open this door. After that it is up to you to prove it week after week. Customer requests are like rust and termites, they never rest.

The Performance Key

The door of performance requires you to show that you can perform under pressure. The

customer is always right and the process of meeting their needs can lead to heated moments. Bosses demand performance because it is often their job on the line when things go poorly.

What in your background can you reference that shows you have performed under pressure? Deadlines, uncertainty, confusion, and changing expectations are commonplace. The customer is fickle, the marketplace is fierce, and performance matters.

The Get-A-Long Key

The door of comportment stands before you asking, how easy are you to deal with when the game is on the line? Do we want to see you day after day, on the plane ride home and at the holiday party?

Leaders set culture, and few things get you fired faster than being a culture killer on a team. You will want examples of how you participated in a team as a follower and a leader. It is important that you can lead yourself, but you also need to be able to follow at the right moments. Unlocking the door of comportment is based upon you showing a sense of what is going on around you.

Think back to lesson 1 and the social aspect of school, this is where it pays dividends. How others feel when you're around impacts team performance.

The Game Sense Key

The game sense door isn't always in front of new hires. Many companies aren't looking for you to understand how they make money just yet. Can you do the job? Will you be an adult? Will you be easy to deal with? These are the first level questions.

However, for the killer job this door will be there, and you want to be able to open it. Game sense comes down to understanding how the company makes money and who might be able to become a customer.

This is where your network and curiosity can work in your favor. The VP, MD, or C level person is thinking of how the company is going to grow all the time. They are building networks of influential people who can help them achieve their targets. The pressure to perform and win is acute, and in many cases, it isn't that hard to think what the company needs.

Think of your favorite sport team. If they didn't win the title last year, why? What was missing? Chances are they need a top player at a position, and you can put your finger right on it.

It is the same way in business. Who are our biggest customers? Who is the like them that are not buying from us? Who do I know at that company? Could you make an introduction to start a dialogue between that person and your boss? What key people do you know that might want to come to work with you that could have the biggest impact?

All of these thoughts are like moving without the ball in sports. It requires insight and second level thinking. You don't need a letter of recommendation to open this door. Rather you need to spend a few hours on Google and LinkedIn searching and being curious.

Bring your findings as questions to the interviews. Don't make assertions, just have these thoughts in your back pocket so that as you go up in the food chain in the company you can stay in the conversation and be relevant at the highest levels. Some important and thoughtful questions about these topics are what we have for you to complete in worksheet #7.

That wraps up *How to Land a Killer Job Right out of College*.

WORKSHEET: SECTION 7

How are you technically competent for this job?

If you aren't, what are you doing to get up to speed?

What have you done in the past that shows you can prioritize your time?

What have you done in the past that shows you can perform under pressure?

Who can vouch that you are easy to work with under pressure?

How can you articulate that you understand the broader game of business that is being played out at this company right now?

8. Summary

Thank you for taking my 7-part course on *How to Land a Killer Job Right out of College.*

Some closing thoughts and words of encouragement:

- You are at a key inflection point in your life.
- You are moving from a time of thinking to a time of doing.
- Much of the thinking about the job functions will have been done for you, and a big part of your role will be fitting into the culture and doing the job as it is described by the company.
- You are also going from a place of empowerment and seniority to the bottom of the pile. This is where most people at the company started.
- Don't expect empathy or even compassion.
- Work on your self-understanding so you can have confidence in your decisions, not so that you can share it with the company.
- Work on understanding their needs and how your strengths can help them win.
- Spend time understanding the context of the game the company is playing and finding the people that are making the largest impact on that game. Seek to help them.
- Packaging and presentation matter, watch how they do it at the company you are interested in joining, and then hopefully you will feel comfortable matching their style.
- Don't forget to keep your game sense hat on. Always be thinking about new partnerships, clients, and potential key hires that you can help connect.
- The change isn't the hard part, it is the transition. Once you have landed and found your new crew and a cool project to work on you will be fine.
- There is a lot for you to do, but you can handle it. The sense of accomplishment from landing a killer job feels great. Now get going and share your story with us here.

Now, go out and land that killer first job!

Drew

WORKSHEET: SECTION 8

What do you value?

Where do you work best?

What are your strengths?

What companies are growing quickly?

What are their biggest problems?

How can your strengths help solve their problems?

Who do you know that knows someone at the company?

Why should they take a risk on you?