

Top 10 Career Strategies for Freshmen and Sophomores

by Bob Orndorff

You control your career destiny! Just going to class and picking up your diploma after four years doesn't cut it. You need to become active on and off campus. Becoming marketable to employers or graduate schools is a four-year job! Here are the top 10 things you can do during college to make yourself marketable at job-search time. In fact, if you do all 10, you'll be unstoppable!

- 1. Keep your grades up.**

Employers and graduate schools want candidates with good grades. That will probably never change. Doing well academically not only proves that you have a good knowledge base, but indicates a strong work ethic—a value that employers value, but that that seems to be less common every year.
- 2. Identify your interests, skills, values, and personal characteristics.**

As you could tell from the career counseling session, Anita didn't have a clear understanding of her interests and skills. Her interest in PR was pretty vague. The first step to clarifying your career goals is to go through a process of self-assessment. Visit your career center and take advantage of the self-assessment instruments that they have to offer.
- 3. Actively explore career options.**

This is something that very few college students do: actively explore career options. In fact, a study has shown that most freshmen and sophomores spend more time deciding on a video to rent than on what they might want for a career, even though a video only lasts two hours while your career can last a lifetime. Isn't your life after college worth exploring? You owe it to yourself to find a career that enriches your life, not one that brings you down. *Actively exploring careers* means talking with professionals in occupations of interest (called Information Interviewing) and observing professionals on the job (called Work Shadowing). Your career center probably has alumni and other volunteers who are willing to talk to you about their careers. Also, attend any career expos, career fairs, and career speaker panels that are offered. You can learn a lot about various career fields by attending these events. Finally, it doesn't hurt to begin the process by reading about careers of interest. One of the best Internet sites for exploring careers is *experience.com*—check it out!
- 4. Become active in extracurricular activities and clubs.**

Active involvement in activities and clubs on campus is highly valued by employers and graduate schools. Joining a club is fine, but becoming active within that club is what matters most. Become a leader, hold an office, or coordinate an event. You will develop your skills in leadership and teamwork—skills that are on the top of every recruiter's list!
- 5. Get involved in community service.**

It's important that you begin to understand and appreciate the importance of giving back to your community, and that you live in a larger community than your college or hometown. Typically, students look at community service as a chore. After they've served, however, it's usually one of the most rewarding experiences they've had! Recruiters love to see that you've volunteered to help in your community.
- 6. Develop your computer skills.**

Computers are changing the world of work in a big way! The days of secretaries typing your letters are over. Every worker must know how to type business letters using a word processor. That's a given. To demonstrate strong computer skills, you must learn how to use spreadsheets, design data bases, and produce automated presentations. Take advantage of the computer courses and workshops your college offers. But you can also learn a lot by just experimenting with different software packages on your own. For example, you could make yourself a mini data base that maintains mailing addresses and phone numbers of all your friends and family. Finally, you should learn how to develop your own web page or web-based

portfolio. There are many web-design editor software packages that make it real easy to develop your own web page! Contact your college's information technology office to see how to get started.

7. Develop your writing skills.

Over and over, company and graduate school recruiters complain about the lack of writing skills among college graduates. Don't avoid classes that are writing intensive. Work at developing your writing skills. If there is a writing center on campus, have them take a look at your papers from time to time. Remember, the first impression you give to recruiters is typically your cover letter or personal statement.

8. Complete at least one internship in your chosen career field.

More and more, internships are the springboards to employment and getting into graduate programs. Many recruiters say that when they need to fill entry-level jobs, they will only hire previous interns. In addition to making yourself more marketable, internships also are a great way to explore careers and determine whether or not certain careers are for you. When you work for a company as an intern for three to four months, you get a really good feel for whether the field (and company) is one in which you want to work day in and day out!

9. Gain an appreciation of diversity through study abroad, foreign languages, and courses.

The American work force is becoming more diverse every year. Also, we are now, more than ever, working within a global work force. For you to be successful at work and in your life, you must stretch yourself and learn about people and cultures different than yours. Because of civil rights laws, people today are forced to *tolerate* diversity. Winners in life and work are ones who *appreciate* diversity! The only way you can appreciate diversity is to open your mind and become more familiar with and knowledgeable about different cultures. Take advantage of the wonderful study-abroad opportunities and the courses relating to diversity. This is your time to travel! Most people find it harder to take time to travel as they begin their careers and start families. While it may be a little scary at first, traveling to foreign countries is the most life-changing experience you'll have in college!

10. Use your career center all four years.

Your college career center can help you throughout your entire college career. Here is just a sampling of what your career center can help you do:

- choose your major and career direction,
- explore career options,
- obtain an internship,
- write a resume and cover letter,
- develop your interviewing skills,
- identify your skills, interests, and values,
- develop a job search or graduate school plan,
- connect you with prospective employers (career fairs, on-campus recruiting, etc.), and
- connect you with alumni mentors.

Remember, you control your career destiny. Don't wait until your senior year to start realizing your goals. Your career train is on the move. Jump on board now so you can reach your destination!

JobWeb.com—Career development and job-search advice for new college graduates.

Copyright © National Association of Colleges and Employers

62 Highland Ave • Bethlehem, PA 18017-9085

Phone: 610/868-1421 or 800/544-5272 • Fax: 610/868-0208

Top 10 Careers for the New Millennium

by Leslie Acosta
World Wide Learn Columnist

Whether you're pondering a career change or entering the workforce for the first time, you might want to do a little homework. Choosing a career is a big decision, and it can be hard to narrow down the possibilities. To help you out, we've compiled a list of the top 10 U.S. industries--those that will add the most jobs in the coming years, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Maybe one of them is right for you.

1. Home Health Care Services

Individuals who are injured, disabled, mentally or physically ill, or elderly often require directed medical care in their home. If you'd like to provide this kind of dedicated, one-on-one care to someone in need, consider training as a [licensed practical nurse \(LPN\)](#), [nurse \(LVN\)](#), or [patient care technician](#).

2. Software Publishing

Software is the key component in making computers work, and software publishers oversee the design, distribution, installation, and technical support of both application and systems software. Demand is on the rise for software in the areas of operating systems, games, graphics, data, Internet business, Internet security, and word processing. Good college degrees for a software publishing career include [game design](#), [computer programming](#), and [information technology](#).

3. Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services

Consultants provide expert advice to domestic and foreign businesses, governments, and other organizations. Management consultants generally focus on operations, marketing, human resources, distribution, and security or focuses on specific industries such as healthcare. Scientific and technical consultants provide expertise on technology, environment, or specific scientific fields such as biology or chemistry. If you're interested in becoming a consultant, consider earning an [MBA](#) or a degree in [information technology](#), [engineering](#), or [the sciences](#), depending on your field of interest.

4. Residential Care Facilities

Residential care facilities offer continuous medical care to patients whose conditions aren't serious enough for a hospital stay, and assisted living services to seniors. If you want to work in this booming field, you'll want a [registered nurse \(RN\)](#) or [licensed practical nurse \(LPN\)](#) degree, or a [bachelor's of science degree in nursing](#) (BSN). For a non-clinical career in this expanding industry, consider training as an [assisted living administrator](#).

5. Facilities Support Services

A facilities manager oversees the planning, procurement, and maintenance of buildings for businesses, government agencies, and other institutions. While some facilities managers are responsible for [engineering](#) or [architectural](#), many facilities managers handle the business aspects such as operations, real estate, finances, technology requirements, and personnel. Career training in [administrative assisting](#) or [business management](#) provides a good foundation for this widespread industry.

6. Employment Services

Employment services assist people with job placement on a temporary or permanent basis, and sometimes provide HR management services for a business. If assisting with job recruiting, employment service professionals should have experience in the particular field of placement and a degree in [business administration](#) and [management](#). A certificate or degree in [human resource management](#) will train you in such areas as payroll, benefits, workers' compensation, and labor laws.

7. Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers

Artists can be found in a variety of specialty sectors, including art direction, fine art, craft art, multimedia, animation, and graphic design. If you're looking for a creative career in this sector, go for a degree in [art](#), [visual communication](#), or [graphic design](#). [Freelance writers](#) produce fiction or non-fiction material for print, movies, television, or advertising and often have degrees in [English, communications, or journalism](#).

8. Office Administrative Services

Office administration professionals include executive secretaries, administrative assistants, and even legal and medical secretaries. Performing a variety of clerical duties using multiple office technologies, office administrators ensure that office operations run efficiently. Career training programs for office administration include degrees and certificates in [administrative assisting](#), [office administration](#), [business management](#), and [associate's degrees in business administration](#).

9. Computer Systems Design

The role of computers in businesses is constantly evolving, as companies' needs and technologies change. Computer systems designers, programmers, analysts, and engineers work to plan, design, and maintain computer hardware, software, and communications technology. To get involved in this lucrative industry, you'll need a college degree in [computer science](#) or [computer information systems](#).

10. Outpatient, Laboratory, and Other Ambulatory Care Services

An enormous portion of U.S. medical care does not involve an overnight stay in a hospital. Physicians' offices and other outpatient facilities are staffed with [registered nurses](#) or [licensed practical nurses](#) (to move up, you'll want a [Bachelor of Science in Nursing](#)). Other career training programs for this fast-growing industry include [clinical laboratory technology](#), [pharmacy technician](#), [radiological technology](#), and [respiratory therapy](#).

Sources

- [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), Occupational Outlook Handbook
- [The College Board](#)

About the Author

Leslie Acosta has a BA in modern European studies and an MA in art history. She has taught college courses and is currently a freelance writer.

"The one real object of education is to leave a man in the condition of continually asking questions."

-- Bishop Creighton

Online Video Game Design Degree Programs

In 2004, video games produced more revenue than movie theater box office receipts. As audiences continue to consume computer and video games, the demand for skilled game designers is likely to increase. A degree in game design and development can provide the skills you need to cash in on this rising demand.

People who are interested in technology and design often find it challenging to take their interests to a professional level. A degree in game design and development can be the crucial first step. While degree programs in graphic design focus only on the creation of graphics, degree programs in game design and development teach all the phases of game creation, from writing the design to marketing the final product. Coursework for a game design and development degree may include:

- Graphics and multimedia
- Programming and implementation
- Gameplay and level design
- Preproduction
- Animation for gaming

Students can pursue the basics of game design through a certificate degree program, or go more in-depth with an associate's degree or bachelor's degree in game design and development.

Though no degree can guarantee employment or a particular salary, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that software publishing will be the third-fastest growing industry over the next decade. Experienced game designers may earn salaries of \$65,000 or more with large software companies.

Hottest Careers for College Graduates

Experts Predict Where the Jobs Will Be in 2016

Government economists estimate which occupations will have the most job openings between 2006 and 2016. Openings occur because new jobs are created and because workers retire or leave the field for other reasons.

Check out these top 10 lists of occupations, sorted by the level of education typically required:

- [Graduate degree](#)
- [Bachelor's degree](#)
- [Associate's degree or postsecondary vocational award](#)

Occupations with the Most Job Openings: Graduate Degree

Occupation	Total Job Openings 2006-20016
Postsecondary teachers	662,000
Lawyers	228,000
Doctors and surgeons	204,000
Clergy	130,000
Pharmacists	95,000
Educational, vocational, and school counselors	84,000
Physical therapists	68,000
Mental health and substance abuse social workers	62,000
Rehabilitation counselors	60,000
Mental health counselors	50,000

Occupations with the Most Job Openings: Bachelor's Degrees

Occupation	Total Job Openings 2006- 2016
Elementary school teachers, except special education	545,000
Accountants and auditors	450,000

Secondary school teachers, except special and vocational education	368,000
Computer software engineers, applications	300,000
Computer systems analysts	280,000
Middle school teachers, except special and vocational education	217,000
Network systems and data communications analysts	193,000
Securities, commodities, and financial services sales agents	161,000
Network and computer systems administrators	154,000
Construction managers	152,000

Occupations with the Most Jobs Openings: Associate's Degrees or Postsecondary Vocational Awards

Occupation	Total Job Openings 2006-2016
Registered nurses	1,001,000
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	393,000
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	309,000
Automotive service technicians and mechanics	265,000
Computer support specialists	242,000

<u>Preschool teachers, except special education</u>	187,000
<u>Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists</u>	151,000
<u>Real estate agents</u>	115,000
<u>Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers</u>	107,000
<u>Fitness trainers and aerobics instructors</u>	107,000

Source: [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

TRUSTe Certified Privacy