

Reading 3

You are going to read a magazine article in which five career consultants give advice about starting a career. For questions 1-10, choose from the consultants (A-E). The consultants may be chosen more than once.

Are you a graduate trying to plan out the best career path for yourself? We've asked five careers consultants to give some tips on how to go about it.

Consultant A

A university degree is no guarantee of a job, and job hunting in itself requires a whole set of skills. If you find you are not getting past the first interview, ask yourself what is happening. Is it a failure to communicate or are there some skills you lack? Once you see patterns emerging it will help you decide whether the gaps you have identified can be filled relatively easily. If you cannot work out what the mismatch is, get back to the selection panel with more probing questions, and find out what you need to do to bring yourself up to the level of qualification that would make you more attractive to them: but be careful to make this sound like a genuine request rather than a challenge or complaint.

Consultant B

Do not be too dispirited if you are turned down for a job, but think about the reasons the employers give. They often say it is because others are 'better qualified', but they use the term loosely. Those who made the second interview might have been studying the same subject as you and be of similar ability level, but they had something which made them a closer match to the selector's ideal. That could be experience gained through projects or vacation work, or it might be that they were better at communicating what they could offer. Do not take the comments at face value: think back to the interviews that generated them and make a list of where you think the shortfall in your performance lies. With this sort of analytical approach you will eventually get your foot in the door.

Consultant C

Deciding how long you should stay in your first job is a tough call. Stay too long and future employers may question your drive and ambition. Of course, it depends where you are aiming. There can be advantages in moving sideways rather than up, if you want to gain real depth of knowledge. If you are a graduate, spending five or six years in the same job is not too long provided that you take full advantage of the experience. However, do not use this as an excuse for apathy. Graduates sometimes fail to take ownership of their careers and take the initiative. It is up to you to make the most of what's available within a company, and to monitor your progress in case you need to move on. This applies particularly if you are still not sure where your career path lies.

Consultant D

It is helpful to think through what kind of experience you need to get your dream job and it is not a problem to move around to a certain extent. But in the early stages of your career you need a definite strategy for reaching your goal, so think about that carefully before deciding to move on from your first job. You must cultivate patience to master any role. There is no guarantee that you will get adequate training, and research has shown that if you do not receive proper help in a new role, it can take 18 months to master it.

Consultant E

A prospective employer does not want to see that you have changed jobs every six months with no thread running between them. You need to be able to demonstrate the quality of your experience to a future employer, and too many moves too quickly can be a bad thing. In any company it takes three to six months for a new employee to get up to speed with the structure and the culture of the company. From the company's perspective, they will not receive any return on the investment in your salary until you have been there for 18 months. This is when they begin to get most value from you - you are still fired up and enthusiastic. If you leave after six months it has not been a good investment - and may make other employers wary.

Questions

- 1) Keep your final objective in mind when you are planning to change jobs.
 - A. Consultant A
 - B. Consultant B
 - C. Consultant C
 - D. Consultant D
 - E. Consultant E
- 2) It takes time to become familiar with the characteristics of a company you have joined.
 - A. Consultant A
 - B. Consultant B
 - C. Consultant C
 - D. Consultant D
 - E. Consultant E
- 3) You should demonstrate determination to improve your job prospects.
 - A. Consultant A
 - B. Consultant B
 - C. Consultant C
 - D. Consultant D
 - E. Consultant E
- 4) Make sure your approach for information is positive in tone.
 - A. Consultant A

- B. Consultant B
- C. Consultant C
- D. Consultant D
- E. Consultant E

5) It is not certain that you will be given very much support in your job initially.

- A. Consultant A
- B. Consultant B
- C. Consultant C
- D. Consultant D
- E. Consultant E

6) Stay optimistic in spite of setbacks.

- A. Consultant A
- B. Consultant B
- C. Consultant C
- D. Consultant D
- E. Consultant E

7) Promotion isn't the only way to increase your expertise.

- A. Consultant A
- B. Consultant B
- C. Consultant C
- D. Consultant D
- E. Consultant E

8) Ask for information about your shortcomings.

- A. Consultant A
- B. Consultant B
- C. Consultant C
- D. Consultant D
- E. Consultant E

9) Some information you are given may not give a complete picture.

- A. Consultant A
- B. Consultant B
- C. Consultant C
- D. Consultant D
- E. Consultant E

10) It will be some time before you start giving your employers their money's worth.

- A. Consultant A
- B. Consultant B
- C. Consultant C
- D. Consultant D
- E. Consultant E