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Creators: Fletcher, William Leroy, 1890-

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Getting a Job When You Graduate

William L. Fletcher, as president of William L. Fletcher, Inc., is one of the ablest men in the country to give students advice on how to obtain a position. As head of one of the most unique concerns in the country, he has a very deep insight into a student's troubles in seeking a position. Mr. Fletcher handles only high class men of executive and managerial calibre usually drawing from \$5,000 to \$15,000 a year. When such a man desires a better position, he consults Fletcher and his abilities and past record are thoroughly investigated. Fletcher then recommends him to some larger corporation and in return for placing such a man, receives commission from the corporation rather than from the man placed.

This is the first of a series of articles which will appear simultaneously in all members of the Engineering College Magazines Associated, of which this publication is a member, and as such, will be read by some 35,000 engineering students. All of these articles will emphasize matters of humanistic interest to the readers of engineering publications.

Mr. Senior, have you got your life's job yet? If not, are you directing your energies toward that end according to any system, or are you merely being directed by your intuition and your sense of propriety? You would not consider passing a final examination by your intuition and why go after the greatest thing in life—your life's job—in a less systematic way than you go after a mere final exam? There are a very few principles which may guide you in your search for a job and you cannot afford to be without them. A mere cognizance of them will place you head and shoulders above the man who is seeking his job blindly.

When you start hunting for a position you will probably feel like a marble sliding around and around on a polished surface unable to stop or to control your destiny in the slightest degree. This is a natural feeling so it won't help any to worry about it. The way to get over this feeling is to appreciate that getting a job is a sales problem and start work as a salesman to sell your own services.

The most important thing in the world to you is "you" and the most important thing to your employer is "himself." The man who hires you will do so because of what he thinks you can do for him. To get a job you must find out exactly what your prospect must think before he will hire you and then lead him to think those thoughts. This getting over on to the prospects' side of the fence is called getting the "you" attitude.

Do not waste any time and money hunting for the ideal job or some kind employer who is going to push you ahead in business. The thing to hunt for is an opportunity to render a service. All any good man needs is one foot inside of the door—just one opportunity to demonstrate his value to an employer. Money comes as a reward for service rendered. Looking at a job in this light means to an employer that you have the right mental attitude.

If you will remember this and act upon it, you will avoid one of the greatest misfortunes which can happen to any man starting in business—having his heart broken by an unscrupulous employer. Some companies have a policy of trying to get their work done by young men for very little money. These companies go to the college men upon graduation with beautiful word pictures of the things which come to their faithful employes. As the graduate sees the situation after the officer of one of these companies has talked to him, he has only to take the job offered to find his life work and be happy ever after.

The man who takes one of these jobs finds himself at the end of two or three years in an undesirable position. If he is single and has money in the bank he faces the necessity of quitting his job and starting all over again with some other company. If he is married and has been unable to save any money, he cannot gamble with a new job.

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His life is ruined. You probably know men in this position. The least said about them, the better. They are the fellows who never show up at their Class reunions or Commencement. The way to avoid being one of them is to disregard whatever an employer tells you about your future with his company. No employer can guarantee your future, and if he could there is no reason why he should.

In looking for a position you should proceed in constantly widening circles. Approach first your nearest neighbor. Tell him exactly what you want so far as you know. Do not ask him if he knows of any such job but if he will help you find one. Get him to thinking about your problems, and working for you. Ask all your friends to help you. Get them at work on your problem. Then scour the following list of sources of prospects to find prospects for your services:

1. Co-operation of friends and business acquaintances.
2. Help-wanted advertisements in newspapers and trade journals.
3. News items, magazine articles and general advertisements.
4. Directories and mailing lists.
5. Schools, colleges, clubs and business associations.
6. New corporations, and companies being organized.
7. Situations-wanted advertisements in newspapers and trade papers.
8. Employment agencies.

If you find it hard to think of prospects among your friends and acquaintances, go over old scrap books, address books, correspondence files, family albums—everything you have. You will find many prospects in this way. Of the sources of prospects which I have given, three, outside of friends and acquaintances, are particularly worth while. These are "Help-Wanted" advertisements in newspapers and trade papers, "Situations-Wanted" advertisements in the same papers, and direct mail campaign.

If you were an officer in your class or a member of the football team or a good debater or an active fraternity man, this means that in some ways at least you are above the average man. In trying to get a position you should always use as a sales argument everything you did in college which tends to prove that you have ability as a leader of men. If you have managed an athletic team or a musical club or a dramatic club successfully this is always a good point to bring out.

If, in analyzing yourself, you find that you have

not excelled in any way, use this fact as an argument. Generally speaking, business men are not looking for "boy wonders;" they won't want men to revolutionize their business. What they desire are men of average intelligence, with open alert minds, who have some appreciation of the importance of discipline and are willing to work and study hard to get ahead. The man who has not excelled in college should tell prospective employers that he possesses only average ability, but that he can and will accept suggestions and will work hard to get ahead. In other words, turn every objection into an argument when you can possibly do so.

Probably more men secure positions by answering "Help-wanted" advertisements in newspapers or trade journals than in any other one way. It is important, therefore, that you know how to answer an advertisement. The first point to keep in mind in answering an advertisement is that you are not applying for something. A letter of application is a sales letter. You are trying to sell your own services. In your answer to an advertisement you should try to do only one thing—get an interview with the employer. To do this the employer must say to himself when he has read your letter, "This is the kind of man I want." You must lead him to think this thought.

You create this thought in his mind by doing five things: Giving in your letter all the information asked for in the advertisement; making your letter clear, concise, correct and courteous; using strong first and last paragraphs; keeping the employer's interests in mind all the time you are writing to him; giving definite information (facts, not generalities) about what you have done, can do and want to do. The first and last paragraphs of your letter are particularly important. Do not begin your letter with a statement to the effect that you have seen his advertisement and are convinced that you are exactly the man he needs. The employer knows this without your telling him. If this were not true you would not answer his advertisement. Don't "tune up in the presence of the audience." Start right in to tell him why you are the man he wants. If you find it hard to do this, write your letter as you naturally would write it—and then throw the first paragraph away. Always end the last sentence with a period. A simple statement such as "You can reach me by telephoning Main 4000" is a good ending. Don't try to force the employer into taking action.

In writing a letter you should never use any expressions which you would not use if you were talking to your prospect. This means that you

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must eliminate all such hackneyed expressions as "Beg to remain." Don't use the words "beg," "state," or any of those other expressions which are so common in business letters but mean so little. The stationery which you use is very important. The quality of paper and envelope should be as good as you can afford. Do not under any circumstances write a letter applying for a position on ladies' note paper. Use a sheet $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ or gentlemen's note paper, which should measure not less than $6\frac{1}{2} \times 9$ inches. The envelopes for this size are $4\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$. In reading answers to advertisements nine employers out of ten will select and read first the letters which come in the best-looking envelopes. Unless an employer states in his advertisement that he desires all answers written with a pen, your letter should be typewritten. See that the type is clean and that the letter has a neat appearance.

If you are going to run a "Situation-wanted" advertisement to secure a position, you should place it in the paper or papers which are read by the people you wish to reach. In a large city, the papers which carry the largest amount of advertising are the best mediums. A fifteen or twenty line advertisement is much more likely to pull a good job than a small advertisement. Many employers follow "Situations-wanted" advertisements in newspapers very closely. These men reason that the men who advertise for the positions they desire have more initiative than the men who try to secure positions simply by answering help wanted advertisements. Situation-wanted advertisements in the trade papers are very well worth while because these papers are read by intelligent, progressive employers. If the paper in which you are advertising permits display head lines in its classified columns you will do well to use one. If you start advertising for a position, don't expect results from your first advertisement. Run your advertisement three times during one week and check up the results. If you think it advisable, change your copy and run the new advertisements on the days when your medium has its largest circulation. Advertisements run on holidays, however, are probably not extensively read.

Under normal business conditions a direct mail (circular letter) campaign to get the job you want is almost certain to produce satisfactory results. All you have to do to get a job is to keep at it

until you win. For the man who has a weak personality or who finds it hard to talk to strangers or has some other weakness, direct mail campaigns are worth very careful consideration. Through letters, you can anticipate and overcome objections. If you cannot write a good letter, you can always get a trained advertising man to help you.

The principles which you should observe in running a direct mail campaign are the same as those you follow in answering an advertisement. One good way to run a campaign is to prepare a letter carefully and then send out ten copies. When your answers are received, you will probably be able to determine the value of your letter. If the first ten letters do not pull satisfactory results, have an advertising man check up your letter to see if it is a good one. Don't mail letters so that they will be received by prospects on Saturday or Monday. Letters received by business men on these days do not receive the consideration given to letters received in the middle of the week. The days just before and after holidays are also bad days to have your letter reach prospects. Telegrams and night letters can sometimes be used instead of letters. They always get attention.
