

MBA Career Guide



Your MBA Career Guide

We are pleased that you have chosen to pursue an MBA from the USF College of Business. We have a proven track record of educating business leaders who have achieved success in a variety of fields.

This guide outlines steps you should take (preferably prior to graduation) should you choose to pursue a new career after you have earned your degree. It also provides information about the campus resources available to you from both the College of Business and the USF Career Center.

Here in the College of Business, our Office of Employer Relations hosts a number of events and workshops designed to help you further develop as a professional, craft your résumé, hone your interviewing skills, and build a network to help with your job search.

We strongly encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities and look forward to assisting you with your career search needs.



Pavla Ozkul
Director, Employer Relations
College of Business
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does **more than simply**
disseminate knowledge.

Our business school is
shaping business thinkers
and **equipping students**
with the **skills and knowledge**
to take **leadership positions**
in business and society.

Here, students begin
developing as professionals
from their very
first moments on campus.

We are **transforming minds.**



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Transforming Minds™

Campus Career Resources

College of Business
Office of Employer Relations
BSN 2202
(813) 974-8155
coba.usf.edu/services/career

The Office of Employer Relations facilitates career-related connections between business students and employers, **specializing in graduate business career services.**

College of Business, Office of Employer Relations

- **Graduate-level Career Advising**
Individual career planning and job coaching (by appointment), including a résumé review and other job search tips.
- **Graduate Business Career Events**
Both informal and formal student-employer networking events exclusively for graduate business students.
- **Corporate Information Sessions**
Face-to-face sessions to learn more about a company's culture as well as current or future employment opportunities for business students.
- **Graduate Business Internships**
Internships referrals and guidance.
- **Graduate Business Career Email Listserv**
Career advice, job postings, networking events, and more.
- **Graduate-level Job Postings**
Job postings and graduate business career listserv (*students must be registered with Career Connections to apply - see below*).

USF Career Center

- **Career Connections Online Job Board**
Register with Career Connections for access to current job and internship openings, where all job openings for USF students are posted.
- **Employer Résumé Search**
Upload your résumé to Career Connections for employers to view.
- **On-Campus Interviews**
Participate in on-campus interviews with employers seeking to hire.
- **Mock Interviews**
Videotape a practice interview and receive a professional critique.
- **Career Networking Fairs**
Meet companies that are hiring for internships and full-time positions.

USF Career Center
SVC 2088
(813) 974-2171
www.career.usf.edu

The USF Career Center is a central, comprehensive career planning and job search service for USF students and graduates.

CareerBeam

www.careerbeam.com/USFReg.asp

An online career success center providing:

- Self-assessment quizzes
- Résumé and cover letter tips
- Interview preparation
- Sample job search correspondence
- Networking tips and exercises
- Organization, industry, international databases
- Tools to track job search and networking contacts

Vault Online Career Library

A library of print resources such as:

- Industry guides
- Company guides
- Career advice
- Message boards – interact with other job seekers
- Employer guides
- Career topic guides such as networking, interviewing, résumés, etc.

Step 1: Conduct a Self-Assessment

Step 1: Know Yourself

Begin planning your career (or career change) with a self-assessment. Understanding your values and priorities, strengths, weaknesses, and workstyle will help determine your best career path and work environment.

What do you need to know?

Values and Priorities

Do you prefer to work in a team or as an individual? What type of compensation is most important to you? Do you want a flexible work place? Do you work best with direct supervision or hands-off management?

Strengths and Weaknesses

Having a clear understanding of your strengths will help you market yourself to employers. At which skills do you excel and which ones need improvement?

Career Expectations

What do you want out of a career? What field(s) interest you the most? Do you want to work for a large international firm or a smaller family-owned business?

Activities and Interaction

How do you interact best with people? What is your learning style? Are you a team leader or a team member?

Career Goals and Objectives

Understanding what you want and where you want to go will help you find the *right* job. Develop short-term (finish school, find an internship) and long-term (obtain a senior marketing position with a small company in the Tampa Bay area) goals, as well as action steps needed to achieve them.

Where do you find this information?

- Talk to people who know you well. Your family, friends, and co-workers can give great insight into your work personality, your values, and your skills.
- Use the web. A variety of self-assessment tools are available online.
- Use USF's resources. The Office of Employer Relations, the USF Career Center library, and Career Beam all have tools to assist with such assessments.

Step 2: Research Fields, Firms

An effective career plan goes beyond searching job openings. Create a target list of companies where you would like to work after you have researched the market, industries, and the community.

There are other reasons to do a little research early in your job search process because:

- Research will help you tailor your résumé and cover letter.
- Employers expect that you have some knowledge of their firm and industry prior to the interview.
- Advance research will help with salary and benefits evaluation and help determine growth opportunities.

What do you need to research?

Research Occupational Fields

Occupational research can help you determine if you need to change career fields, as opposed to simply changing employers. Such research can help you discover interest areas and jobs you may not know about, as well as help find entry-points. Occupational research will reveal details about advancement opportunities.

Research the Job Market

Research the job market to determine which companies and industries are hiring now. You might also determine and compare salary ranges for the geographic markets you are considering.

Research Individual Companies

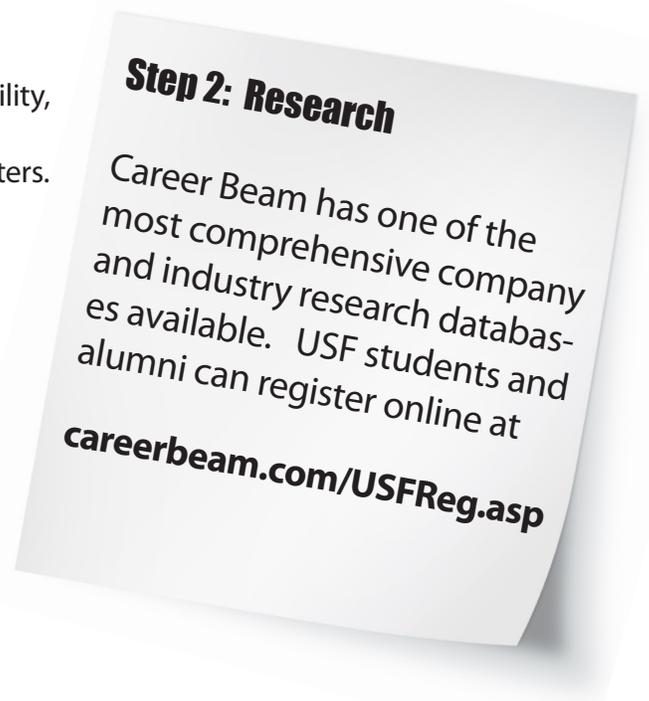
Your research should ultimately lead you to a target list of 15-20 companies. Learn about the company's leadership team, look at its financial statements (if available), and evaluate the benefits (both tangible and intangible) of working for each firm.

What do you need to know about your target companies?

- Products and/or services sold/produced.
- Ownership (publicly or privately owned), financial stability, whether the company is a subsidiary or a division of a national/international firm, location of firm's headquarters.
- Number of employees locally and corporate culture.
- Industry and company trends.
- The firm's major customers, competitors, and market position.

Where can you find this information?

- Online databases: Career Beam, Hoover's Online
- Print media: Fortune, BusinessWeek, American Business Journals, local newspapers
- Social media: Twitter, message boards
- Career resources: Industry guides
- Company websites: Annual reports, investor sites



Step 3: Develop a Career Action Plan

A Career Action Plan is very similar to a marketing plan, except in this case, the product is you. Key parts of a marketing plan include:

Target Position(s)

List the jobs you desire.

Situational Analysis

Similar to a business SWOT analysis, your personal analysis should list your key strengths and talents that might make you more marketable to employers. Think about the competencies and skills needed for your chosen career field and identify any skills gaps.

Brand/Position Statement

Summarize your past experiences and describe what is unique about your brand (you). Note your values, your interests, and your future goals.

Target Market

Detail the type of company you aim to work for, including geographic area, size, and corporate culture.

Strategy/Promotion

List the skills you will gain while in the MBA program. List specific career events and programs you will use to promote yourself and steps you will take to accomplish your career goals.

Sample Career Action Plan

Target Positions

Financial Analyst, Budget Analyst,
Business Operations Specialist

Situation Analysis

Key Strengths:

- Excellent analyzer: financial data, budgeting, business operations; able to analyze complex issues and resolve problems
- Recognized for positive work ethic
- Effective, experienced team member
- Excellent communication skills

Skills Gaps:

- Leadership, supervisory experience
- Specific industry experience
- Presentation skills

External Environment

The Tampa Bay area has a wide range of opportunities in the financial field. Several large organizations are headquartered here, and the overall economy is service-oriented. Within the next few years, service industries are expected to grow, which will create new job openings.

Brand/Position Statement

I am an enthusiastic, self-motivated professional with a strong desire to succeed in any position. In my work, I value integrity, variety, recognition, and a positive environment. I work best in a position that allows me to utilize my creativity and talents while contributing to the overall success of the organization. I am known for my interpersonal skills and my ability to communicate effectively. In my next role, I would like to be known as a savvy business leader who understands all financial aspects of a corporation and can interpret data efficiently and effectively.

Target Market

- Geographic area: all of Tampa Bay, including Tampa, Clearwater, St. Pete, Bradenton, Sarasota, Lakeland
- Industries: financial services, telecommunications, information technology, banking
- Size of organization: Fortune 100; multi-national scope
- Culture: high degree of integrity; involved in community and displays corporate social responsibility; encourages creativity

Target Companies

Raymond James	Tech Data
Jabil Circuit	Verizon
Bank of America	AT&T
Wachovia	AGEdwards
American Express	Capital One
JPMorgan Chase	SunTrust
Franklin Templeton	Nielsen
Morgan Stanley	

Strategy/Promotion

1. Schedule an appointment with an MBA career counselor in the Office of Employer Relations to review goals.
2. Attend Graduate Business Association tailgate party to network with other MBA students.
3. Register with USF Career Connections and search the database weekly for open opportunities.
4. Read trade publications weekly to keep up-to-date on industries and trends.
5. Contact former co-worker who now works for Raymond James.
6. Talk with finance professor to discuss potential referrals.

Step 4: Craft a Résumé

Your résumé should convey your unique skills and talents and convince the reader that you are worthy of an interview. Frequently, outstanding candidates are overlooked because of a poor résumé.

Format

Most MBAs use a chronological or functional résumé (or a cross between the two). Most people use a chronological résumé, where job and educational experiences are listed separately in reverse order, when they want to advance in the same field.

A functional résumé may be more appropriate for those desiring to change fields. This format emphasizes skills over specific experience. Experience is included but is listed according to skill, rather than job; education is included but is in a separate section.

Document Settings

- Use a minimum .5" margin and at least 10 pt. font.
- Use standard, easy-to-read fonts such as Times New Roman or Arial.
- Ignore the one-page rule if you have significant work experience *but do not exceed two pages*.
- Use **bold** or underlining sparingly, just to provide emphasis. Do not overuse *italics*, which can be difficult to read.

Sections

- *Contact information*: Should be at the top of the résumé, easy to find and read.
- *Objective*: If you use one, it should be clear, focused, and tailored to each company and position.
- *Qualifications summary*: Catch the employer's attention with short, bulleted phrases noting specific skills and strengths that directly relate to the position.
- *Professional experience*: Describe work experience, but don't just describe what you did; detail the outcome. Demonstrate what you accomplished at each position, what you learned, and what you added to the company. Also include relevant internships and part-time positions, too.
- *Education*: List degrees in reverse chronological order (do not include specific coursework unless you are applying for an internship).
- *Other categories*: Categories such as computer skills, international experiences, affiliations and memberships, or volunteer work can help showcase your skills.
- *References*: List references on a separate page or note they are available upon request.

Tips

- Use keywords culled from the job description for which you are applying.
- Avoid personal pronouns (I, me, my).
- Use phrases instead of complete sentences or paragraphs.
- When possible, use bullet points.
- Proofread your résumé multiple times and ask someone else to proof it as well.
- When identifying your past accomplishments, emphasize and quantify your work.
- Avoid empty words such as "responsibilities included" and "duties consisted of."
- Begin phrases with an action verb.

Step 4: Create a Résumé

People seeking to advance in the same company or career field typically use a chronological résumé. MBA grads seeking to change career fields often find a functional résumé is a better way to emphasize skills and knowledge.

Rocky D. Bull

4202 Stampede Way • Tampa, FL 33620
(813) 974-0000 • rdbull@usf.edu

Professional Profile

- Achievement-oriented quick learner with advanced skills in database design and management
- Three years project management experience in the information technology industry, focusing on end-user results
- Productive team member with ability to work independently with minimal supervision
- Proven leader with ability to manage and facilitate change, and work effectively with diverse personalities and interests
- Track record of setting goals and reaching them in a timely and effective manner

Education

Masters in Business Administration Expected 2011
University of South Florida
Specializations: Management Information Systems, Management, International Business

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration 2004 - 2009
Major: Management Information Systems
University of South Florida

Experience

Database Analyst, XYZ Corporation May 2001 - August 2008

- Developed and implemented an innovative solution for managing all database workstations for maximum data transfer efficiency
- Analyzed technology utilization reports and made recommendations to senior management
- Assembled, tested, and led troubleshooting projects for various new software programs
- Worked in teams of 5 - 6 people to develop new information technology plans

Sales Associate, ABC Retail Establishment May 2000 - April 2001

- Honed interpersonal skills while assisting customers with selections
- Performed daily cash and credit transactions

Computer Skills

<u>Operating Systems & Hardware</u>	<u>Software</u>	<u>Programming Languages</u>
Windows 95/98/NT/2000	Microsoft Office Suite	Oracle, SQL
Mac OS	MS Access	Visual Basic
Linux/Unix/Ethernet	MS PowerPoint	HTML

References available upon request

Rocky D. Bull

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Objective

Experienced professional with excellent skills in communications, coaching, and research seeking a position in the marketing field with a progressive, growing company.

Skills Summary

- Data Analysis
- Competitive Analysis
- Coaching
- Consumer Research
- Public Speaking
- Problem-solving

Professional Experience

Leadership & Coaching

- Results-driven team member who motivated others to achieve company objectives.
- Coached and mentored children and teens with behavioral issues.
- Routinely dealt with individuals at varying levels of professionalism.
- Taught classes of up to 50 students and provided out-of-classroom academic coaching.

Interpersonal Communications

- Routinely handled customer complaints with high level of satisfaction and resolution.
- Managed accounts for Fortune 500 financial services companies, specifically focused on debt collection and customer management.
- Developed strong relationship-building techniques to maintain client satisfaction.

Research & Marketing

- Worked with team of six students in the development of a market research project designed to measure the effects of advertising campaigns on teenagers.
- Conducted extensive research regarding human behavior analysis.
- Developed and implemented tracking system for case study management.

Employment History

Account Manager, LMN Corporation, Tampa, FL, January 2002 - July 2008

Case Worker, ABC County Health Services, Brandon, FL, June 1998 - December 2001

Teaching Assistant, Universal Psychology Department, Tampa, FL, May 1997 - May 1998

Education

Master of Business Administration, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL
August 2009

Bachelor of Science in Psychology, XYZ University, St. Louis, Missouri
December 1991

Computer Skills

Microsoft office suite with extensive knowledge of Excel and Access
SPSS Statistical software program

A Few Action Verbs

Addressed	Guided	Performed
Applied	Handled	Planned
Assisted	Identified	Prepared
Balanced	Implemented	Produced
Built	Initiated	Proposed
Compiled	Joined	Reduced
Completed	Learned	Represented
Contributed	Led	Resolved
Coordinated	Maintained	Revamped
Demonstrated	Managed	Scheduled
Developed	Offered	Streamlined
Edited	Operated	Strengthened
Established	Organized	Supported
Expanded	Participated	Tested

Transferable Skills

If you are making a career change, your résumé should emphasize transferable skills. These are skills developed in previous jobs or experiences that may not be directly related to the sought-after position, but are still valuable. When developing your plan, you should have identified the skills necessary for your desired job. Make sure your résumé reflects that you possess them. Such skills include:

- Research and analysis
- Interpersonal communication
- Persuasive speaking skills
- Negotiation
- Planning, organization, meeting deadlines
- Problem solving
- Generating ideas/solutions

Step 5: Draft Cover Letters

Your cover letter is a chance to highlight your skills and accomplishments while convincing the hiring manager that you are worthy of an interview — and might be the perfect candidate for the job.

Cover Letter Tips

- Never submit your résumé without a cover letter. It is your chance to call attention to specific items on your résumé and provide more details about your skills.
- Tailor your letter, but be brief. Cover letters should not exceed one page and should be (when possible) addressed to a specific person.
- Avoid including too many details about your work history; instead, highlight a few of your best accomplishments.
- Research the company and include something specific about the firm in your cover letter.
- If you send a hard copy, send your cover letter on the same quality and color paper as your résumé.
- Limit the number of times you use the words “I” and “me.”
- Proofread your cover letter and have someone else proof it as well.

Cover Letter Content

Paragraph 1: State the position title and how you heard about it. Include something that you learned about the company when doing your research, and indicate why you want to work there.

Paragraph 2: Include one or two highlights of your education and/or experience that sets you apart from the other (possibly hundreds of other) applicants. Explain why you believe you are the best candidate for the job and how your skills align with the skills the company is seeking. If there are specific skills listed in the job description, be sure to mention them here. If specific skills are not cited, list those you think a successful employee would need.

Paragraph 3: This optional paragraph can be used to point out qualifications not included on your résumé, or provide detail about particular successes (for example, a relevant project you tackled on the job).

Paragraph 4: Ask for an interview. State if/when you plan to follow up. Note the best way to contact you.

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November 1, 2010

Ms. Jane Doe
XYZ Company
123 Company Way
Tampa, Florida 33333

Dear Ms. Doe:

Enclosed is my résumé in response to your ad for an Operations Analyst, listed on CareerBuilder.com. I am eager to discuss this opportunity and feel I am a strong candidate for the position.

Your ad emphasizes leadership, productivity, and ability to manage change as key skills for this position. I have excelled in these areas over the course of my career and my work experience includes stints in production management, research and development, and other functional areas within operations. Having led both operational and managerial teams, I know how to change, design, and implement efficient systems appropriate for a variety of organizations.

As my résumé reflects, I recently earned an MBA from the University of South Florida where research and hands-on learning are key elements of its business curriculum. Given XYZ Company's excellent reputation for cutting-edge research, I know my education and personal drive will make me an asset to your team.

Again, I am eager to learn more about this position. I will follow up with you via email next week. In the meantime, if you would like to speak before then, I can be reached at (813) 974-0000 or via email at rdbull@usf.edu.

Sincerely,

Rocky D. Bull

Rocky D. Bull

Step 6: Network and Identify Contacts

Networking is one of the most important parts of the job search. It has been said that 80% of jobs are never advertised. Applicants learn of these “hidden job opportunities” through networking.

Step 6: Build a Network

Open-ended questions (ones requiring more than a simple yes or no answer) help spark conversations. Asking questions that begin with who, what, when, where, and how open dialogue and serve as a cue for others to share more.

Build A Network

- Attend USF career events and functions, even if you are not quite ready to change jobs. Events are listed online at the College of Business Office of Employer Relations website and are posted to the listserv.
- Join professional and social organizations.
- Tell everyone about your job search (family, friends, professors, fellow students, current and former co-workers). One might introduce you to a contact or company that you never considered.
- Use social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter) and start by following various USF accounts (the College of Business, USF News, the Career Center, etc).

Tips for Networking Events

- Arrive early and enjoy the drinks or the buffet, but do not spend too much time doing so.
- Do not dominate the conversation.
- Ask open-ended questions and show interest in others.
- Maintain eye contact and pay attention to non-verbal cues (yours and theirs).
- Avoid only talking to people you already know.
- Collect business cards from everyone you meet and jot notes on the back.

Step 7: Strengthen Interview Skills

Every job-search site or guide will tell you to dress professionally, arrive early, and bring extra copies of your résumé to the interview. Most will suggest you research the company prior to the interview and arrive prepared to ask questions about the firm. They are right, but there is more to it.

Strengthening your interviewing skills is about more than following common-sense guidelines. It is about preparing for the actual interview and the questions you should expect.

Most interviews for MBA-level jobs are behavioral interviews. Employers want to determine if you have the skills and knowledge for the job, of course, but they also want to evaluate fit with the company culture. Behavioral interviews allow employers to learn more about your actions in a particular setting and give you a chance to demonstrate your ability to be creative, learn from mistakes, and handle/manage change. Such questions give employers a glimpse into your work style as well as your communication style.

Practice answering behavioral interview questions. If you cannot think of a specific work-related example, pull one from a classroom experience or volunteer work. Give honest and thorough, but concise, answers. Expect to answer a question about mistakes you have made. Describe what you learned from the experience and how you would do it differently in the future.

Typical Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why did you choose this career field?
3. Why are you a good candidate for this position and company?
4. Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?
5. What do you like about your current job? Dislike?

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

1. Give me an example of when you had to juggle several different priorities at the same time.
2. What was your most significant leadership experience? What did you learn from it?
3. What was the most challenging decision you ever made?
4. Tell me about a time when you worked with a team and it did not go well.
5. What major problem did you come across in your most recent job, and how did you solve it?
6. Tell me about a time when you had to convince someone of something and how you did it.
7. What qualities do you admire most in co-workers? In supervisors?
8. Describe a situation when you had to work with ambiguity and how you dealt with it.
9. What is your most significant professional or personal accomplishment?
10. Tell me about the best boss you have ever had. The worst?

After the Interview

Smart candidates send thank you notes or follow-up letters within 24 hours to each interviewer. Doing so not only demonstrates professionalism and courtesy, but also provides another opportunity to indicate interest in the job and your ability to communicate.

- Handwritten notes are preferred, but email notes are acceptable.
- Be brief and concise, and reference specific points discussed in your meeting.
- As with a cover letter, avoid the use of the words “me” and “I.”

Step 8: Evaluate and Negotiate Job Offers

Do not ask about salary unless it is mentioned by the employer first. Salary is best discussed after you receive a job offer. You should never mention a salary number or range without having done some prior research to back up your figures.

When evaluating offers, consider both monetary (salary plus other benefits) and intangible benefits.

Start by looking at the salary:

- **Base salary:** Ask about the firm’s salary review cycle and when raises are given to determine if this is a flexible, structured, or based on performance.
- **Signing bonus:** A one-time payment used by companies as an enticement to accept the offer, bonuses are sometimes negotiable.
- **Short-term incentives:** These vary according to the performance of the company, department, or individual. They are commonly

Step 8: Receiving An Offer

When receiving an offer, be enthusiastic and gracious, no matter what the details.

Get all of the terms so you can make an informed decision.

Ask how much time you have to evaluate the offer.

in the form of cash or stock and do not impact base salary.

- Long-term incentives: These link the employee to the success of the company and include things like stock ownership programs.
- Insurance: The amount the employer contributes to medical and dental, as well as disability and life insurance plans can significantly boost the offer.
- Retirement/pension plans: The amounts companies contribute or match varies greatly.
- Leave: Some firms offer modest sick and holiday pay, others have generous vacation and leave plans.
- Other incentives: Many larger companies offer tuition reimbursement programs, dependent care assistance, employee assistance programs, and on-site health clubs or amenities that should be considered when evaluating offers.

Consider Intangibles:

- Business/Products: Are the company's business activities in line with your own interests and beliefs?
- Size: Does the size of the company allow for your desired career path and advancement?
- Culture: Does the management take a "hands-off" approach with its employees, or is there constant supervision?
- Public vs. Private: Is it family-owned or publicly traded? Does this make a difference to you?
- Location: How far are you willing to commute to work?
- Work/Life Balance: Does the company support and enrich employees' personal lives?
- Stability: How long has this company existed and how long is it expected to be profitable?
- Quality Management: Bad management can lead to turnovers and low employee morale.
- Prestige: Do you desire to work for a company that is a "big name" in its industry?

Evaluate the Position:

- Skills: Will this position allow you to utilize your skills?
- Interests: Is the job in line with your career goals and interests?
- Travel: Does the job require too much or too little travel?
- Work hours: Do you prefer working a 40- or 50-hour week?
- Professional Development: Does the company allow you to grow and develop professionally?
- Autonomy: Does this company/job provide the level of autonomy that you need/desire?
- Responsibility: Does the position offer you the level of responsibility you are seeking?

Negotiate the Offer:

- Be Conversational: Make sure both you and the employer have the opportunity to talk and to be heard.
- Understand Timelines: Do not expect a resolution during the first discussion as the company will likely need time to get back to you with answers to your questions, and possibly, a revised offer.
- Be Honest: Do not imply that you have other offers unless you really do have other offers.
- Be Aware: Some companies simply do not negotiate offers.
- Be Prepared: Research ahead of time to determine if the offer is in line with industry standards for candidates with your skills and experience.

USF College of Business Office of Employer Relations

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