

Job Shadowing

CandidCareer video - [Career Exploration 101](#)

What Is a Job Shadow?

Job shadowing can be a great way to learn whether a career of interest is right for you. By observing the life of the professional, you'll get a sense of what that job is really like. A job shadow provides a snapshot of a day in the life of an experienced professional and can help you decide whether you think you would enjoy working in that career field.

A job shadow experience can also help you decide if your skills match that career field and how your education and past experiences might translate to this job. Job shadowing can also provide opportunities to network with professionals and gain valuable insights. You're likely to only job shadow for a day, so you must make the most of your time!



Tips For Job Shadowing

Remember these tips to get the maximum benefit from job shadowing!

Connect with Professionals:



- Make a list of potential companies where you would like to job shadow and see if anyone in your network works at those companies. You may want to check with your family, faculty, career coach, or alumni office
- If you don't have a personal contact at the company, call or email someone in the Human Resources Department or a contact in the department you are interested in
- Some large organizations and governmental agencies offer job shadowing programs, so check out their website first
- Prepare a professional email or phone script that explains you are a student interested in that career field and would love to shadow someone in the company

Understand the Details:



- Before you arrive for your job shadowing experience, confirm the details
- Miscommunication before you start job shadowing can reflect badly on you
- Remember to ask where you'll job shadow, what time you should arrive, and what you should wear | Required dress depends on the workplace; suits may be required while business casual might be more appropriate for another

Job Shadowing



Do Your Homework:

- You'll be much better prepared to job shadow if you're informed about the company and the person you're shadowing
- Visit the organization's corporate website and LinkedIn profile of your contact(s)
- Write down questions you would like to ask as this creates a good impression and will help you learn more from the experience



Define Your Career Path:

- Your host is likely to be interested in what brought you to the company and where you hope to head in your career
- Reflect on this before you arrive; it will ensure you give an articulate answer that creates a positive impression
- Bring a copy of your resume, if you have a professional version created



Take Notes Throughout the Day:

- Hopefully, you'll learn a lot during your time job shadowing, so it may be difficult to commit it all to memory
- Taking notes during job shadowing is a good way to retain this information
- Remember to bring along a notepad and pen to write down your observations and insights and jot down questions that may arise



Professionalism Matters:

- Focus on making good impressions: shaking hands, maintaining eye contact, addressing with formal titles. Be attentive, enthusiastic and participate appropriately throughout the job shadowing experience
- During your time, you might love your job shadowing or realize this career path isn't for you. Regardless of your experience, make sure you maintain a positive demeanor



Follow-up:

- Job shadowing often is done as a favor by established professionals. Be sure to write a thank-you note to the employee for giving you the opportunity to learn from them, even if you decide this career field isn't the right fit for you
- If you are interested in this career field, stay in touch with the person you shadowed — they will be invaluable to your network as you begin to search for jobs and internships