

Top 5 Career Tips from UF CJC Alumni

Recently, we asked UF CJC alumni to share advice they had for recent graduates. Here are the five valuable tips that were most commonly shared:

1. Be flexible

The communications industry is universal. Avoid limiting yourself to one particular job or role! Don't assume you only fall into one career category based on your degree and past experiences. Be open to opportunities outside of your core focus. Explore other industries and look for transferable skill sets when evaluating positions.

Remote work has become the new normal in many companies and industries. Do not let the work schedule or delivery method scare you away from a position. Instead, look at it as a learning opportunity. Trying out a new experience or task is a chance to develop new skills and to become more valuable to your employer. Consider all opportunities as you work towards your dream career.

2. Network

Networking is an essential skill and resource for career development. Now more than ever, it is important to seek out opportunities that allow you to expand your network. Reach out to professionals at companies you're interested in and ask to chat. Set up an informational interview to gain insight into the real-life, day-to-day experience of someone working in a field or company that interests you. Other ways to network include joining LinkedIn groups, sending cold emails, and reaching out to friends and family.

3. Build Your Resume and Portfolio

A great way to make the most of this time is to review your resume and portfolio. When applying for jobs, it is important to find a way to set yourself apart from the sea of resumes. Discover what it is that makes you unique and let that shine through in your portfolio.

Create content on your own and build a professional looking website and resume. Reaching out to mentors or professionals for a resume critique can be beneficial in improving its overall quality. Be sure to proofread your resume before submitting it! You'd be surprised to learn how many people submit their resumes with grammar errors.

4. Gain Experience

Use this time to expand your skill set and try new things. Reach out to nonprofits or other organizations that may need assistance throughout the pandemic and volunteer to help out in any way. This can include writing stories, running their social media accounts or updating their website. Opportunities like this allow you to help others during a tough time while simultaneously building your skill set.

Utilize free videos and certification programs such as LinkedIn Learning and YouTube to master a new skill that can be valuable in your future career. Starting your own project such as a YouTube channel, blog or podcast can be a great way to build your experience as well. Tell the story of what is happening in your own community.

5. Stay Positive

Particularly during a challenging time like this, it's helpful to stay positive. While our lives may seem like they're on hold at the moment, remain optimistic. By embracing the changes impacting journalism and communications, you may uncover new career opportunities. Also, don't be discouraged if you aren't selected for a position. Learn from the experience and trust that something greater will come along. Your optimism and positive attitude will come across to potential employers. You've got this!