

BRAINSTORMING

YOU CAN BE
WHAT YOU WANT



6.2 Are you interested in the function of the heart, stomach, lungs etc?

6.3 Are you interested in medication?

7.1 Do you like to play piano, viola, guitar or other musical instruments?

7.2 Can you feel and follow the rhythm and dance to the beat?

7.3 Do you like to sing?

ANSWERS:

2. Architect / Mechanic / Telecommunication systems engineer / IT specialist / Economist / Accountant

3. Teacher / Translator / Interpreter / Journalist / Writer

4. Vet / Farmer

5. Professional sports player / Athlete / Coach

6. Dentist / Doctor / Pharmacist / Nurse

7. Musician / Dancer / Singer

School's finished... Now what?

It's probably the most difficult question any young person faces once they finish their studies. So you went to school, maybe to college after that, got a diploma and **BAM**... All of a sudden you're on your own, no exams left, nothing to learn, no project to prepare. You're all alone in the quest of giving your life a purpose. Because that's what a job is meant to be, isn't it? A passion, something you enjoy doing rather than a boring means to survive and pay your bills. Something you *chose* to learn, study and prepare for.



Unfortunately, too many people end up doing jobs that have nothing or too little to do with their studies. This can be frustrating and counterproductive, damaging both your personal wellbeing and the economy. So why does this happen?

As always, one of the main causes of this unfortunate situation is a lack of communication and understanding between the youth and the employers. Another cause is the students' lack of information about the job's requirements, the labour market's requirements and different opportunities for self-development. As you well know, most young people complain about this vicious cycle of "experience gathering". Employers ask contestants for a certain number of years of experience in the field, while you clearly need to get a job first in order to obtain experience. It's a dead end for any graduate. However, that's just one side of the story. We here at Brainstorming asked employers what they consider to be the problem with the young people today:

"They don't even know what's exactly going on: theory, theory, theory... but no practice. It doesn't really have to be years of experience. Not even an internship, no. I asked one of them to show us what he can do. *Show*. Just like that, on the spot. All he could do was show us his CV. How do you expect us to hire someone like that?" "They expect too much. It's like, they just got out of college, good grades indeed, but some of them don't have any kind of work experience. And they just expect a full payed job in a higher position, well undoubtedly based on their final mark, but it doesn't work like that. You need to start from the bottom, like everybody else, and than grow."



"What all these *can't-get-experience* complainers don't seem to understand is that *experience* doesn't necessarily mean that you must have worked full time before. What matters to us actually is to have proof that you can apply in real life the skills your diploma claims that you achieved. Today there are many opportunities for

young people to prepare for *field work* other than getting employed, such as internships, that you can make during college. The important thing is to make yourself noticed and get some good recommendations.

"Here's a piece of advice: there are also other things that can actually count more than your grades in college. I'm talking here about communication skills, the ability to work in a team or to talk with a client, depending on your field. Flexibility, thinking *out of the box* or problem solving skills. These are the types of skills that you cannot obtain just by studying. You have to actually *be* there and face the problems head-on. However, what you can and *should* do is involve yourself in activities that require and develop these skills. There are many projects for students and graduates that focus on self-development."

"Do you know what youth lacks nowadays? Dedication. I get so many young people who limit themselves to studies and want an easy job. If you want your company to work properly and evolve, you need ambitious people. People who are willing to push themselves over the limit in order to make things work. You should show us that you're interested, that you're meticulous, motivated, that you're driven by passion. That you believe in what you're doing, but also that you're willing to learn and improve. That you have initiative. How can you show us that? Just by going places, doing things, learning. You can take specialisation courses, you can volunteer. Show us that whatever you do, you put your soul in it. Go work for free as a fireman for a while and tell us how you risked your own safety for another. Then we'll know for sure that you can work under stress, that you can make quick decisions, that you're capable of making sacrifices for a greater cause. Even if it's a totally different field, that's the type of person I, as an employer, would be chasing after. Because, after all, we need you just as much as you need us, isn't it?"

As you can see, what most employers seek in young graduates is initiative, seriousness, dedication, the patience to start from the bottom and learn as well as the availability to get out of your comfort zone and risk. So if you find yourself struggling with getting the job you want, sometimes you just have to jump into the first "train" that comes along. Be flexible, try something different, develop yourself on a personal level while also evolving in regards to the career you want. Don't waste your time doing nothing. You can take a new specialisation course, find a related job to do in the same field and then search for ways to "do the flip". Make yourself noticed. Look up for other job opportunities, internships and projects such as the ones provided by Erasmus, for example. Don't limit yourself, but also don't expect the impossible. Some may find their way easier while others may stumble across the road. You can never take into account all variables. The most important thing to do is to keep yourself informed and open, to keep trying. If you love what you chose to do, staying motivated won't be a problem. If not, then maybe it's time for a career change.



Preparing for future jobs

The decision about future employment is not easy. This is due to many reasons: globalization interconnecting us all, technology leading to more efficiency, industries rising, the world changing as fast as it is... So the question on every young person's mind is: How do I prepare for the future? With so many graduates on the market, what do employers look for and what can make my CV stand out from that of the rest of the applicants?

It's easy to fear the unknown, and any plans are subject to drastic change. Yet, it cannot be denied that it's an important survival skill. How can this be achieved? Sometimes talking about doubts and worries and discussing important decisions with friends and family is enough. Another important step is to identify the skills that employers look for the most and work on developing them. Here are some of the most important!



Ambition

Cultivating ambition and an eagerness to learn and do well is the first step towards a solid future. Young people who are hungry, interested and engaged are infinitely more employable, and when they have a passion for achievement, there are no limits to what they can do.

Presentation skills

At the most fundamental level, soft skills like interpersonal communication, the ability to speak and write correctly and present ideas clearly is one of the employer's top priorities.

Resourcefulness

Learning to be solution-driven and self-sufficient rather than easily deterred by failure, renders more valuable individuals. When people are resourceful, they will always entertain new ideas, approaches and possibilities. Entrepreneurial education and experience is an excellent way to achieve this.

Team work

Being a team player is elemental. Being able to work well in a group as well as being able to manage and take responsibility are highly sought-after skills! It's the secret to building positive working relationships that help everyone to achieve their goals.

Getting involved. Finding yourself!

As a young member of the European Union you come across many opportunities for self-development.

"Unity in diversity" is the well-known motto of the European Union. Currently there are 28 countries in the union, each one having its own unique culture, history and folklore. Not only that, each one has its own social and economic situation, as well as a different educational system. With all these differences, however, all countries in the EU should consider themselves as equals and be open towards the others, in order to be able to work together and evolve. That implies getting young people such as yourself to accept differences and collaborate on an international level. In order to achieve this, the European Union has implemented several projects dedicated especially to the youth that you can try out.

EURES

One of them is, of course, EURES, or the European Employment Services. It's a cooperation network meant to facilitate the free movement of workers and students within the European Union, plus Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Switzerland. It's addressed both to people who are looking for a job abroad and employers. So if you can't find the right job for you in your own country or you're looking for a cultural change, you can make a "My EURES" account, upload your CV into the database and search for vacant job places.

This platform also provides you with valuable information about the country, such as living costs for example. For more information about EURES you can access <http://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/en/homepage>.

Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is an European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport managed by the UK National Agency. This programme has three Key Actions, all focused on youth training and education. These Key Actions are the ensemble of activities and projects that can be funded under Erasmus+. There are also two separate areas of the programme, besides the three Key Actions: the Jean Monnet activities and Sport.

What exactly are these activities? Well, Key Action 1 for example offers young people three types of activities: youth exchanges, voluntary work in a foreign country, as well as training and networking activities.

Youth exchanges allow groups of young people from different countries to meet and work together for up to 21 days.

Another activity is EVS, the European Voluntary Service, which allows young people to take part in full-time voluntary work for up to a whole year in a foreign country, be it within or outside the European Union.

The training and networking activity includes seminars, training courses, contact-making events, study visits and even job shadowing experiences in a foreign country.

If you're interested in what other activities and projects Erasmus+ has to offer, you can visit [#">http://www.erasmusplus.org.uk.#](http://www.erasmusplus.org.uk)

As you can see, there are many opportunities for young Europeans to gain experiences and to develop themselves. So if you feel like trying something new, for any reason, be it curiosity or maybe a desire to learn other methods of doing things from other countries in order to be able to improve, do yourself and the European Union a favour and just jump into a project, involve yourself, get out of your comfort zone and strive to become the best version of yourself. There are too many great opportunities for you out there, you just have to be open!

So good luck on your quest for self-development and always remember that you should

BE WHAT YOU WANT!



Travelling to another country; Do's and Don'ts; Tips and Tricks

Surely, the expression that the world is your oyster is not a new one. We are definitely lucky to be living at a time where it's easier to look beyond the borders of the homeland for study or work opportunities, but it cannot be denied that leaving the comfort of our own home brings up several challenges and difficulties. Here are some tips and tricks.

1. Do be courageous and take a leap of faith. It might seem hard at the beginning but it will gradually become easier. Remember :

‘Courage is not the absence of fear; it is acting in spite of it’

~ Mark Twain

2. Don't leave everything for the last minute. Start doing homework early and make sure that details concerning the new job and other important elements such as accommodation are settled. A list of things that you must take with you will definitely come in handy!



3. Do make a budget. Check the cost of living of the new country, make a list of expenses and plan accordingly. This can be on a weekly basis or on a monthly one.



4. Don't hesitate to learn the new language. Sign up for some lessons to start gaining the basics and working your way up. It will also be a good opportunity to meet people who are in a similar situation as you!



5. Do embrace the culture. Take time to learn the intricate details and customs of the new country by spending time with locals and observing their mannerisms. This will also come in handy at the workplace.



6. Don't take the law lightly. Know your rights and discuss the topic with residents or colleagues to ensure that there aren't any particular details that you're not aware of.



7. Do as the locals do. Don't be scared! Go to local events and festivals to learn learn and feel part of the new community!



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