

LEARN THE CAREER VALUE OF GOING ABROAD WHILE STILL IN SCHOOL: The global workforce is competitive, and nowadays just about every industry operates internationally. This means that more and more employers and recruiters want to know that applicants have had international experiences, built international skills and have already had successes abroad. Below, you will find a brief introduction to *MyWorldAbroad's* four-part approach to global career success. The core of all our material is based around this progression from basic international skill-building, all the way to landing a professional position. Follow this outline, and prepare yourself for career success in the new global economy.



International Skills

People who have lived and worked abroad are different from people who have not traveled; and there is a universally recognized set of personality traits that defines the international person. These traits do not simply appear, but are developed over time, through ongoing cross-cultural interaction and engagement, and by having first-hand experiences abroad. International skills and perspective form what is called your International IQ; and it is this crucial benchmark that can get you hired for an internationally oriented position.

Firstly, your International IQ indicates your political, economic and geographic knowledge. Can you converse intelligently about world events, culture and politics?

Secondly, it indicates your cross-cultural knowledge and communication skills. Do you know how to be effective in another culture? Can you discuss belief systems, attitudes and working methods?

Third, your International IQ indicates your personal coping and adapting skills. Are you independent? Do you enjoy a challenge?

Last, but not least, it indicates your understanding of the international aspects of your field. Do you know the major home based organizations in your field and what job opportunities exist?

Building such skills and knowledge takes time and commitment, but is also one of the most exciting and rewarding elements of your international journey. If you haven't already started building your International IQ, now is the time to do so.

Getting Experience

If you want to build your International IQ, you'll need to acquire multiple types of international experience during your years at school. Internationally oriented employers want proof that you can work in a professional cross-cultural environment, and that you've demonstrated your skills abroad. This means going abroad early and often, being proactive and motivated, and stepping outside your comfort zone in order to stand out from your professional competition.

Keep in mind that "getting experience" isn't just about going abroad for one short-term backpacking trip, or joining one international club at school: it is about being dedicated to having multiple enriching experiences in as many different cultures and environments as possible. Studying, interning, traveling, working, teaching English, learning a language and volunteering are just some of the ways to go abroad and build unique skill sets. Once you have your first life-changing experience overseas, you'll start to see the benefit of having multiple different and unique journeys abroad.

In addition to undertaking programs abroad, there are things you can do at home in order to build your International IQ and stay globally connected. These include language learning, engaging with international students, connecting and collaborating with foreigners online, researching foreign cultures, and more.

Finding Work

International recruitment is different from domestic recruitment, regardless of whether you're looking for a volunteer or internship position abroad, or applying for your first professional job. First of all, international employers focus on your International IQ during recruitment. This means that being able to describe and sell your international skills is a key component of the job search; and that soft skills, such as cross-cultural communication and personal adaptability, are crucial to landing a great position.

One of the biggest mistakes that young people tend to make when they're on the hunt for a professional internationally-oriented position is that they try to conduct a country-specific job search. This strategy will waste your valuable time, since it's almost impossible for entry-level students to obtain work visas. (Country-specific job searches only work for low-skilled work such as teaching English, or casual jobs where you work under the table or on working holiday or student visas.) International job searches for professional work should be done with home-country employers and by using an industry-specific approach. This means opening yourself up to the possibility of going anywhere in the world with a North American employer or to doing an internationally focused job at home, where the largest number of international jobs are actually located.

In short: get good at describing your international personality and get smart about targeting your job search with North American employers. Follow these guidelines, and you will succeed in the job market.

The Professions

There are international jobs in just about every field of specialization. International development, health care, international law, business, government and engineering are a few of the most popular fields for young people hoping to work internationally. But every field, from urban planning to museum curation, has international opportunities. Each industry has specific global networks and approaches for international employment. You will first need to target and research your chosen industry as you begin planning your job search strategy. This is the final phase, in which all of your international skills and experience pays off in the form of a concrete job.

By the time you reach this stage, you will hopefully have developed a rich array of international experiences, and built professional connections both at home and abroad. Now is the time when your years of cross-cultural engagement, targeted networking and enthusiasm really pay off. Once you've made it to this point, you deserve many congratulations!

Conclusion

We hope this overview of the four parts to acquiring global career skills has been helpful, and that it gives you a structure within which to begin building these all-important skills. Check out the rest of our Quick Guides for in-depth information on specific aspects of this journey – and good luck!

WANT MORE INFO ON GOING ABROAD?

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