HOW TO LAND YOUR FIRST JOB - FROM A TO Z

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WHAT IS RIGHT FOR ME?

- What kind of practice setting makes me:
  - *Feel good about what I am doing*
  - *Feel as if I am making a difference*
  - *Excited about all the possibilities*

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WHAT IS RIGHT FOR ME?

- Know your own needs
  - How much supervision do I need or want?
  - Am I confident & competent enough to work solo?
  - Do I need opportunities to bounce ideas off another OT practitioner?
  - Do I require encouragement or reinforcement in my clinical decision making?

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WHAT IS RIGHT FOR ME?

- Fully explore the practice environment for a "good fit"
  - Does it match my skills?
  - Does it match my interests?
  - Does it stimulate me intellectually?
  - Will I need to "stretch"?

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WHAT IS RIGHT FOR ME?

- How important is the $$$
  - Does $$ outweigh other considerations?

  - Is a big sign on bonus worth being in a setting that is not a good "match" for me?
  - Should I keep looking for $$ + "fit" ?

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NEEDS VS VALUES

- Needs can feel overpowering
  - Re-pay student loans
  - Rent or mortgage
  - Contributing to family income
- When your values lead the way, you never forget who you are.
  - It is easier to stand up for yourself
  - Easier to make the right decision.

The ADVANCE for Occupational Therapy Practitioners Student & New Grad Center August 20, 2012

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WHERE TO LOOK FOR A JOB

- OT Specific Magazines
  - *OT Practice*
  - *Advance for Occupational Therapists*
- On-Line
  - AOTA OTJobLink
  - Monster.com
- Talk to other therapists/networking
  - Social media
- State Association web sites
- FW site

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COVER LETTER

- Brief
- State your objective
- State your unique qualifications for the job
- State a specific reason why you are interested in **this particular** job
- Use spell/grammar check!

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RESUME

- Your resume is a prospective employer's first look at you as a qualified candidate.
- Make your resume clear and concise.
- One size does not fit all. It is crucial to tailor your resume to each job you apply for.
- Generic resumes do not stand out in the crowd.
- Communicate why you want the job. Let employers know why you are the best fit for their particular position and what about their organization inspired you to apply.
- Be specific and succinct. Communicate your experience and skill sets in concise, thoughtful terms.
- Highlight major accomplishments.
- Use keywords. Highlight your relevant experience to match qualifications an employer is seeking by thoroughly reviewing the job description.

The ASAE CareerHQ.org Team
www.CareerHQ.org

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Resume

- Use action words and phrases to highlight achievements
- Lack of experience/no experience
  - Expand your definition of experience to include paid, non paid, community service, volunteer, membership, political, and tutoring activities.
- Quantify your experience
  - How many? How much? How often?
    - The key to landing an interview is to answer those questions as you describe your previous professional accomplishments. Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/5230820 Jessica Holbrook

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Resume

- 2 pages max
- Objective *
  - Gather as many details as possible about the job you are interested in.
  - Tailor your objective to include the critical components of each position you are applying for.
    - Qualifications mentioned in ad
  - It conveys to the potential employer that you are focused on fitting in at their organization.

**Advance for Occupational Therapy Practitioners e-Newsletter: December 7, 2010*

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RESUME

- Education & degrees earned
- Fieldwork Level I and / or II
  - List any advanced learning experiences or skill set
  - List any specific standardized assessments utilized
- List prior work experience
  - The basic rule to follow is to write brief, impactful statements outlining your measureable achievements.

** Advance for Occupational Therapy Practitioners e-Newsletter: December 7, 2010*

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Resume

- Be specific about what you have done and quantify whenever possible*
  - List special skills (e.g. foreign language; ASL)
  - List any awards or publications
  - List related volunteer experiences
  - List any leadership experiences or participation in professional organizations

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BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Do your research– demonstrate you know something about this facility / company / setting
  - Organization's mission
    - Be able to use the organization's own language in interview
  - Ask questions that relate to the organization's vision and mission
    - This shows you cared enough about the interview and potential job to do a little homework
  - Use social media
    - FB, LinkedIn, Twitter
    - Chat with former employees

Associations Now August 2012

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BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Brush up on specific interventions relative to the setting
- Brush up on type of clients most likely to be seen in this setting
- Be prepared to discuss any related experiences

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HOW TO PRESENT YOURSELF AT AN INTERVIEW

- Dress professionally, yet be true to your personality.

- Arrive 15 minutes early for the interview.
  - You may have an application to fill out.
- Make eye contact.
- Greet the office staff and others warmly.

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HOW TO PRESENT YOURSELF AT AN INTERVIEW

- Do not chew gum or suck on lozenges – can be distracting to interviewer

- Turn off your cell phone!

- Be yourself. Remember you are interviewing them too.

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HOW TO PRESENT YOURSELF AT AN INTERVIEW

- SMILE – be engaging!!!!
- Show your passion for occupational therapy!!
- No tats / body piercings showing

- Articulate why you want this specific job

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HOW TO PRESENT YOURSELF AT AN INTERVIEW

- You need to stand apart from the rest of the interviewees – "*stand out from the herd*"

- Attitude is as important as aptitude

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Skills Employers Are Looking For

- Interpersonal skills
- Communication
- Problem solving
- Flexibility
- Organizational skills
- Leadership potential
- Team oriented

Advance for OTs (electronic) July 20, 2010

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Personal Attributes

- Self-confidence
- Professionalism
- Positive attitude
- Self Motivation
- Honesty & integrity
- Willingness to learn

Advance for OTs (electronic) July 20, 2010

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Survey to Middle Managers

1. How important is your first impression of the applicant?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Very important	**94.4%**	**17**
Somewhat important	5.6%	1
Not important at all	0.0%	0

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2. Which of these issues do you take into account for your "first impression" (Please select all that apply)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Dressed appropriately & professionally	**100.0%**	**18**
Groomed appropriately	83.3%	15
On time to appointment	88.9%	16
Able to articulate reason for wanting the specific position	94.4%	17
Presence of tattoos and / or multiple body piercings	38.9%	7
Chewing gum	55.6%	10
Ability to listen and show interest	94.4%	17

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3. Would you hire someone with a visible tattoo?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	**88.9%**	**16**
No	16.7%	3

4. Would you hire someone with visible multiple piercings?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	**50.0%**	**1**
No	**50.0%**	**1**

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Key Traits per Survey

- Professional communication skills
- Flexibility
- Self motivated
- Confidence
- Ability to listen & reflect
- Articulates passion for OT
- Friendly
- Compassionate
- Loyalty
- Willingness to learn
- Ability to accept feedback
- Accountable
- Open minded

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Key Knowledge Points per Survey

- Strong FW experience in setting
- Ability to reason
- Able to discuss challenging patient
- Basic knowledge of the environment
- Client centered approach
- Ability to set goals
- Understand the OTPF
- Willingness to have a mentor
- Willingness to learn
- Cultural competence
- Understand how to use evidence & research
- Understand outcomes

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Most Irritating per Survey

- Arrive late
- Arrogance
- Dress casually
- Chew gum
- Not ask questions
- Ask about $$ first
- Interrupt
- Not being fully engaged
- Not know anything about facility
- Speaking ill of another profession, professor or company
- "*Wasting my time & not having enough respect to look and act like a professional*"

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Get a 'Leg Up" on Competition per Survey

- Come prepared re facility
- Professional writing skills & communication skills
- Clear career goals
- Asking relevant questions
- Passion!!!
- Confidence to learn
- Team player evidence
- Be specific when responding to questions
- Balance between confidence & deference
- Open body language

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Advice from Middle Managers

- Be authentic
- Be confident
- Review total benefits package - not just salary
- Be ready to work hard
- Adopt a professional bearing
- Show your passion for your profession
- Look for the right organization vs position – be open to all the possibilities
- Know what you want & be prepared to discuss it

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INTERVIEWS: WHAT YOU'LL BE ASKED

- Why should I hire you?
- Problem solving/reasoning skills
  - Tell me about a difficult situation….solve problem

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INTERVIEWS: WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED

- Strengths & areas for improvement
- Special skills
- Your own personal & professional goals

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EXPLORE THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

- When you select an employer, you are choosing a way of life.
- What patterns of behavior are encouraged and rewarded
- The organization's shared values and beliefs
  - *What's it like to work here*?
  - *What do you like most about it?*

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Be Observant

- Fully explore the environment for a "good fit"
  - How do practitioners use evidence in their everyday practice?
  - Are interventions you observe occupation based?

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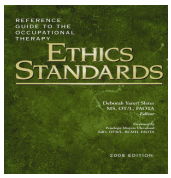
THINK ABOUT….

- Confidentiality
- Professional conduct
- Ethics
  - the organizational culture
  - my values



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INTERVIEWS: WHAT YOU SHOULD ASK

- Meeting with staff/observation time
- What is a typical day?
- Productivity expectations
- How do you deal with fluctuating caseloads/staffing?

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MORE QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK

- What is the orientation process?
- What are the company's expectation of an entry level therapist?
- What are the opportunities for career growth

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MORE QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK

- Supervision: how often and by whom?
- Is mentoring available?
- Performance review process and raises (ask to see a copy of the performance evaluation form)
- Dress code?
- When will you make your decision?

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ASK ABOUT THE PERKS

- Support for continued professional development
  - Learning community with other staff
  - Setting based CE / in-services
  - Is CE funded?

APPROVED PROVIDER of CONTINUING EDUCATION by The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.

  - When does an employee become eligible?

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ASK ABOUT THE PERKS

- Support for AOTA & / or state membership
- Support to take an active role in professional organizations
- Support for Board or Specialty certification

The American Occupational Therapy Association Board Certification Specialty Certification

- Support for advancing academic education

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ASK ABOUT THE BENEFITS

- Health care

- Retirement plan
  - 401K (matched by company?)

- Vacation time – maintain occupational balance!!
- Health club, parking, etc.

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Salary

- OT median Salary: $78,693
- OTA median salary: $53,015

Data Source: HR Reported data as of November 2013
Salary.com

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REFLECTIONS POST INTERVIEW

- Chemistry with supervisor is critical
  - Trust your gut about this

- Did other practitioners appear professional & collegial
- What did client – therapist interactions look like?
- Environment – is there room for some fun!

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FOLLOW UP POST INTERVIEW

- Send a hand written note thanking the employer for the opportunity to interview.
  - Include others who were part of the interview process
- Don't leave a message on voice mail as a thank-you.

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At the End of the Day

- You are at the beginning of an exciting, rewarding life long career

- Anything is possible

- Occupational Therapy is a wonderful profession and you are part of it! Be proud, be confident, be passionate!!

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