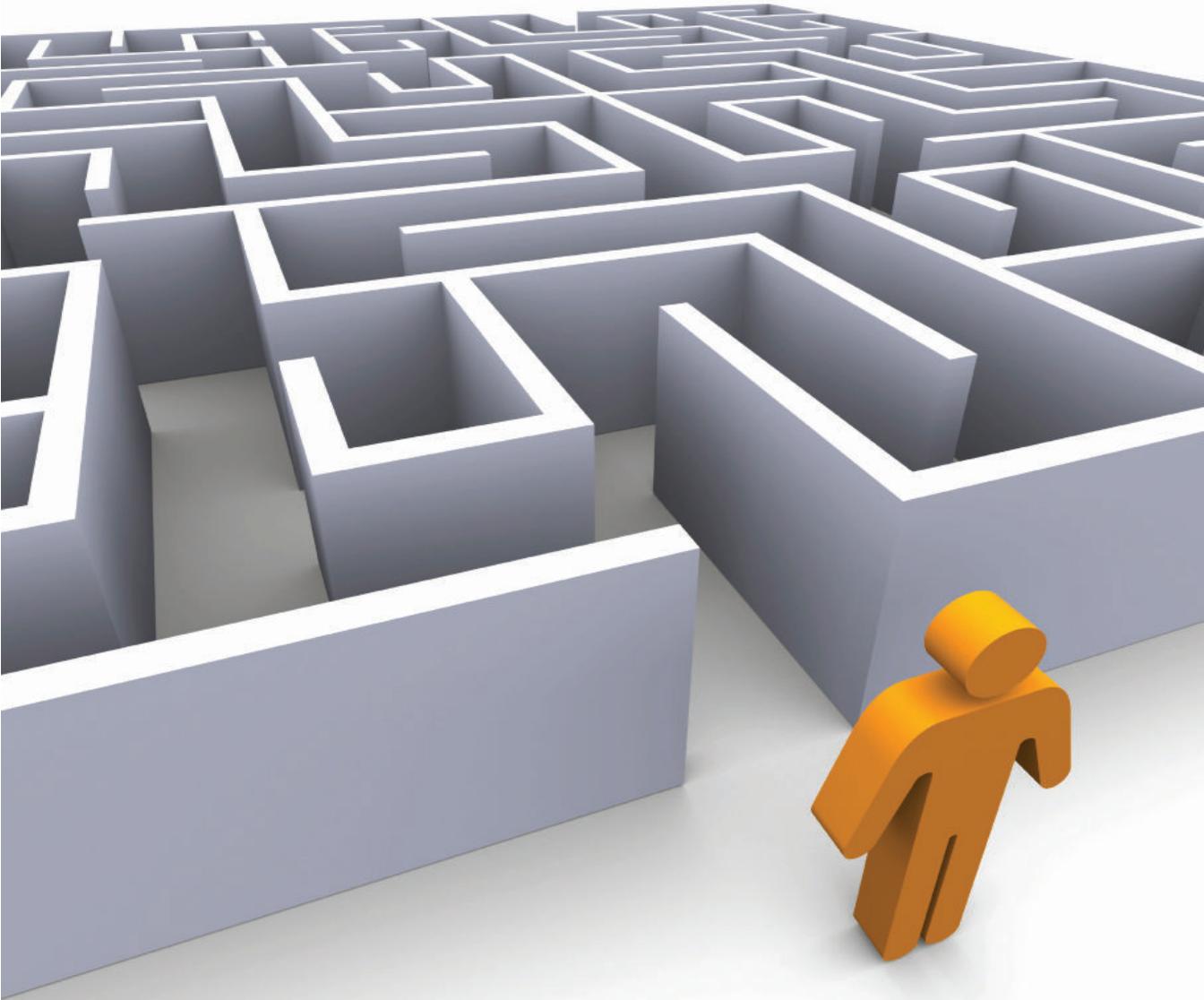


WORKING PAPERS

Everything you need to find and conquer your first job



snagajob.com[®]

THE #1 SOURCE FOR HOURLY EMPLOYMENT

Table of contents:

INTRODUCTION **3**

CHAPTER ONE: Finding a job **4**

Age issues 5

What's the right job for you? 6

Volunteering for experience 7

CHAPTER TWO: The hiring process **8**

Résumé, profile and application tips 9

Acing the interview 10

How much will I make? 12

CHAPTER THREE: On-the-job expectations **13**

Breaking down the paycheck 14

Tax break 15

Questions to ask once you're hired 16

Etiquette & Customer Service 101 17

Tips for balancing work and school 19

What's next? 21

Introduction

Finding a first job shouldn't be a job.

You're young. You've never worked before. But you want money, and you need money. You've got clothes to buy, a cell phone to pay for and you really don't want to arrive at prom in mom and dad's rusty mini-van.

We're here to help. And – lucky for you – our expert tips and advice are free.

As the number one source for hourly employment, SnagAJob.com knows a thing or two about helping teens across the country land their first part-time job. This year alone, we're aiming to help more than 400,000 job seekers land great hourly jobs. Plus, by working closely with national companies such as McDonald's[®], Party City[®] and Kohl's[®], we've learned what employers are looking for when hiring first-time workers. And we'll share those insider tips with you.

In this guide, we'll try to answer all the questions you have about working before you even ask them. It's like we're psychics – without the 1-900 number or crystal ball. This information will be broken down into three sections:

- 1) **Finding a job;**
- 2) **The hiring process; and**
- 3) **On-the-job expectations.**

So just think, by reading this guide, you're actually doing some homework that can pay you cash sooner than you could have imagined. Your folks must be pretty stoked, too. They can now put your allowance toward the “hot tub fund.”

Good luck in your job search!

CHAPTER ONE

**FINDING
A JOB**



Age issues

Just like driving and watching movies, working also comes with a few age restrictions. No one wants you to be overworked at age 9 like Oliver Twist, and if you don't know who he is, ask your English teacher. (Trust us, a day will come years from now when you wish there were laws stating you could only work a few hours a day.) Here are some general federal guidelines for the type and amount of work you can do, broken down by age:

- **18 years and up:** You can work any job for any amount of time. Lucky you!
- **16 – 17 years old:** You can work any non-hazardous job for any amount of time.
- **14 – 15 years old:** You can work outside school hours in non-hazardous jobs (restaurant and retail gigs are fine). But your hours are a bit more limited, especially on school days, when you can work a maximum of three hours a day. This increases to a maximum of eight hours a day on Saturday and Sunday. The maximum you can work in a week while school is in session is 18 hours, and this increases to 40 hours during the summer.

You should also know that while the U.S. government doesn't require you to have any special paperwork or documents saying it's OK for you to work, your state may. Some states require these documents (also known as "working papers" – the same name as this handy reference guide) for teens under 18. Ask your school guidance office or career center if they have the forms to fill out – and to provide you with assistance. You can also check with your state's labor department by typing in the following Web address into your Internet browser: <http://youthrules.dol.gov/states.htm>

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The U.S. Department of Labor has a number of helpful resources for teens on its website covering following topics:

- Agricultural employment
- What are “hazardous” jobs?
- Additional age restrictions and state labor laws

Simply type the following Web address into your Internet browser and you should be able to find answers to all of your questions:

www.dol.gov/dol/audience/aud-kidsyouth.htm

What's the right job for you?

Landing your first job can be tricky. How do you gain experience if an employer won't hire you due to lack of experience? Should you settle for a low-paying job just to get a foot in the door? How high should you set your expectations for a first-time job?

A first job can be just that – a way to make some money. It can also be more than that. For example, if you already know what type of career you'd like to start pursuing, it can be an experience-building stepping stone. If you know you want to go into business, working behind a register will give you practical business building skills. (And if you work in a restaurant, you might even get to wear a funny looking hat.)

But a first job can also expose you to experiences you never thought you'd enjoy. You may think you'll hate flipping burgers for a few hours a day, then find yourself applying to culinary schools. Another added bonus is that you might meet some of your best friends at work – and get your first experience with networking. Sometimes a job might not be exactly what you're looking for, but it puts you in contact with people or organizations that might help you in the future. Who knows who you might meet who will either help you out with a job down the road or benefit from your help.

As you search for jobs, you'll probably find a few age restrictions eliminating you from some employers' consideration. Jobs demanding previous experience and those requiring you to drive, operate dangerous machinery or work late hours may be reserved for those 18 years and above. But there are still plenty of employers out there hiring people younger than 18 years old.

At SnagAJob.com, we've gone to great lengths to single out some jobs ideally suited for teens – including cashier, cook and clothing store associate positions – and we offer you tons of details and fun facts about them. We call this feature JobBuddies, and we invite you to check them out here www.snagajob.com/job-buddies/

When you're finally applying to specific companies, it's a good idea to conduct your own background check on that business, especially if it is unfamiliar to you or your family. Check with the Better Business Bureau (www.bbb.org) to see if any complaints have been registered about the company.

Volunteering for experience

If you've found out you're not quite old enough to pursue the part-time job you had your heart set on, don't worry. There are other ways to build your résumé.

One of these is by pursuing volunteer work. By its definition, volunteer work doesn't pay cash. But it does pay in other ways. Not only will you earn experience for your résumé, applications and future employers, but you'll also earn real working world skills and knowledge. And don't forget that warm fuzzy feeling you'll get when you see a smile on the face of someone you're helping.

Some prime resources for scoping out volunteer opportunities include church and civic groups, local animal shelters, hospitals and nursing homes, your guidance counselors and career center, as well as school organizations such as Key Club and student council. Also, a great website to match your interests to the right volunteer opportunity is www.volunteermatch.org.

CHAPTER TWO

**THE HIRING
PROCESS**



Résumé, profile and application tips

Many first-time job hunters don't have résumés prepared – because they don't have a lot to write down on them besides their name, address and phone number. Your working life is still a blank slate ready to be filled with jobs, skills, education and objectives.

Because of this, it's usually sufficient to simply fill out a company's online or paper application when applying for a job. Many websites such as SnagAJob.com will ask you to fill out a profile with basic contact info and other details so that you can apply to multiple jobs quickly and easily.

So whether you're writing your first résumé, completing an online profile or filling out an application, here are a few tips for making a positive impact with employers:

- **Be PG:** This may go without saying... However, SnagAJob.com still comes across the occasional job seeker whose email address lacks the necessary tact and professionalism. Email accounts are free and easy to obtain, so create one that is dedicated to your job search. Remember: You can be unique and creative without making Snoop Dogg blush.
- **Spelling counts:** Don't trust your gut or your computer's spell checker to determine if you mistakenly used "their" instead of "there." Read it over. Read it again. (You might even want to dust off that old dictionary if you can find it). Also, show the documents to someone with a good eye for detail. After all, you don't want potential employers reading about your volunteer work in a "soap kitchen." That's just weird.
- **Update, update, update:** Every so often, take time to make sure your contact info is accurate, add new employment and skills, and include any applicable outside interests and hobbies. (You probably want to omit your passion for "Guitar Hero" or your old school break dancing skills.)

- **Be honest:** If you include a bunch of skills and experience you don't really have, it's going to end in embarrassment. Either you'll get busted in the interview or when the employer sees first hand that you really don't know how to juggle bowling pins – or whatever the skill you fibbed about was.

Acing the Interview

You've sent in your application, ironed a shirt and waited. And then one day, the phone rings. It's one of the employers you applied to – and they want to talk to you.

Take a deep breath and relax. You'll do terrific, at least if you follow the guidelines we've laid out below.

ON THE PHONE

Before getting a face-to-face interview, it's likely you'll be initially judged by your phone etiquette. When an employer calls you, stay professional and courteous – and try not to answer the phone with a “What up?” when the incoming phone number calling isn't familiar.

DAY OF THE INTERVIEW

We hope this goes without saying, but don't be a “no-show” to an interview. If you are unable to make an interview or if you are no longer interested in the position (or already landed another job), make sure you give advance notice to the interviewer so that he/she has time to change plans.

Here is a checklist of things to remember on the day of your interview:

- **Dress to impress....**but don't try too hard. (Leave the crazy high heels and bow ties at home.)
- **Use common sense:** Do not smoke, apply strong perfume/ cologne, or start chewing gum before the interview...or during the interview. And turn your phone off – or better yet, leave it in the car or waiting area.

- Arrive 15 minutes early to the interview location.
- Mentally rehearse possible interview questions while you wait for the interview to begin or practice answering questions with someone who has gone through the job interview process before.

THE INTERVIEW

There are numerous things to remember during your interview, and nerves can get the best of all of us. However, remain calm and confident, and follow these tips to make the best impression in your interview:

- **Give a firm handshake:** Give the interviewer a firm, professional handshake. Save the fist bump for your friends.
- **Maintain eye contact:** Look at the interviewer when talking or listening. This shows that you are interested in the conversation and have respect for the other person. (But don't give creepy eye contact. You know what we mean.)
- **Take your time answering questions:** If you are unsure of how to answer a question, take a minute to think about it and formulate the best response. It is better to wait before answering and then answer intelligently rather than immediately jumping at the question with a poor answer.
- **Thank the interviewer:** Don't forget to thank the interviewer(s) for their time. Also, regardless of whether you thought the interview went well or not, be sure to send a handwritten thank you note to the interviewer expressing your gratitude for the opportunity as quickly as you can. Within a day is preferable. If it has been over a week since the interview and you have not received word from the company, call the person with whom you interviewed. Remember to speak only with that person, since he/she is the one who knows the particulars of your situation. On the phone, keep the same professional attitude that you had in the interview.

HOW MUCH WILL I MAKE?

Because you're looking for your first job, you need to be realistic about what you expect to make as an hourly wage. We're not saying you can't hope to make more than minimum wage or even negotiate when given an offer, but you need to remember that there are 70 million Americans making a living as hourly workers who have a bit more experience than you do. Stay realistic with your pay request.

But don't be discouraged. In fact, here are several reasons to get excited about the hourly wage you'll soon be making:

- In 2006, nearly 98 percent of all hourly workers made more than the federal minimum wage of \$5.15, which has since been bumped up to \$5.85 and will continue to increase to \$7.25 by 2009. And this statistic couldn't come from a more official source: the Bureau of Labor Statistics. (Also, many states have minimum wages set higher than the federal minimum wage. Check out your home state's minimum wage here: www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/america.htm)
- Because of the constant need for workers in the hourly job market, great work is rewarded quickly with raises, bonuses and promotions. Distinguish yourself early on and your paycheck is likely to grow.
- Many employers offer benefits above and beyond a paycheck, including employee discounts (and even free food or merchandise), as well as flexible hours and an outdoor work environment. (You can't beat a free tan!) Be sure to factor these perks into the pay.
- Work experience is priceless. By accepting a job that doesn't pay your ideal hourly wage, you're setting yourself up to make more next time. Take advantage of the opportunity by doing the kind of work that will land you a positive employer reference.

CHAPTER THREE

**ON THE JOB
EXPECTATIONS**



Breaking down the paycheck

Below you'll see a sample paycheck and a detailed list of what all those strange numbers mean. This is just a guide; depending on which payroll company your employer uses, these fields could be a bit different. If you have additional questions, ask your manager or Human Resources department or hiring manager.

Period end date:
The last day of the pay period your check is for.

Exemptions:
Your # of withholdings (See "Tax break" chapter.)

Earnings:
Work performed.

Rate:
Your hourly pay.

Current:
Hours worked X hourly pay rate.

YTD:
Total amount due to you before deductions.

This section outlines any costs paid for by employers, for example, if they're assisting you with any benefits or other costs.

If you've set up your pay, or a portion of it, to be directly deposited into account(s), you can find the account and amount details here.

Here you can see how your total pay due (called "gross pay") is decreased by taxes and other deductions to become your take-home pay, which is called your "net pay." This should be broken down by both your current pay period and year-to-date pay (YTD).

This section lays out any leave you have, including your absence record.

This section outlines benefits and other costs subtracted from gross pay (total pay due) to calculate net pay ("take-home" pay).

ABC Restaurant Earning Statement

Check Date: 06/04/2008 **Period End Date:** 05/28/2008 **Check #:** 422432
Employee: Jane Smith **Marital Status:** Single **Exemptions:** 1 **Employee #:** 223430011

Earnings	Date	Hours	Rate	Current	YTD	Deduction/Contribution	Amt	YTD

Totals	Gross Pay	Taxable	Deducts	Net Pay	Vac/Sick Hrs	This Period	YTD
Current							
Year to Date							

Direct Deposit Bank	Acct. Type	Acct. #	Amount	Plan	Begin	Absence	Balance

ABC Restaurant
100 Company St.
Any Town, USA 12345

Check Number: 1234567
 Pay date: 01/01/2008
 Social Security # 111-11-1111

Pay to the order of: _____

This amt: _____

Authorized Signature

Tax break

You don't have to be a math-lete to discover that the amount written on your paycheck is less than the number you get when you multiply your hourly wage X the hours you worked in a given pay period.

Something is fishy, right? It's called taxes.

Let's start at the beginning. After you're hired but before you start working, your employer will ask you to fill out some paperwork, asking for your name, contact, info, social security number and the number of dependants you have. This last question refers to the number of people who depend on you as their primary source for income, and most often includes children and spouses. Your answers to these questions will determine the amount regularly withheld from your paycheck – an amount based on what you're anticipated to owe in taxes each year. This large chunk of change goes to the federal and state governments, and pays for everything from roads and bridges to tanks and schools.

But these state and federal taxes aren't the only reasons that the amount on your paycheck is less than what you actually "earned." There's also some money taken out for Social Security, the program that helps older Americans with their cost of living. In addition, it's possible that some of you might get additional income taken out for benefits, such as medical and dental, or garnishments, such as back taxes and child support owed.

You might feel a little overwhelmed right now. That's OK. (And that's also why you've probably heard people yell and complain about having to pay Uncle Sam every year.) But here's the most important thing to remember: File your taxes each year – or make sure your parents/guardians are filing them.

If you're responsible for filing taxes, you might not even earn enough to have to file. (www.irs.gov can answer more questions than we can.) But it's important to file anyways, because you might be due a refund check. Remember when we mentioned earlier that the government

is already taking money from your paycheck? Well, this is just an estimated amount of what you owe. And the government often over-estimates. So when you receive your employer's W2 tax form in the mail sometime after Jan. 1, put it in a safe place. And then sometime before April 15 – the deadline for filing your federal taxes – fill out the proper IRS paperwork. You've got a lot of options, including printing off the basic 1040EZ form and sending it in via snail mail or filing online, which is faster and free unless you're making the real big bucks. Of course, there are always tax prep companies, but that's probably overkill for teens working their first jobs.

Also find out when your state tax filing deadline is – yes, you have to file taxes twice – and be sure to make a copy of your taxes and keep them somewhere safe. Again, for more information, check out www.irs.gov.

Questions to ask once you're hired

After accepting a job offer and signing all that paperwork on the first day of work, it won't be long before you realize getting the job was the easy part.

From remembering everyone's name to learning a new skill set and routine, a first job can be overwhelming in the beginning. Don't panic and don't worry – and don't be afraid to ask your bosses and co-workers a ton of questions. They'd rather have you ask a question than to do something wrong that creates even more work.

Here are some general questions you should ask sooner than later. Of course, pick a time that's convenient for you and your boss before firing away questions:

- When do I get paid and how often?
- How will I get paid? Is there a direct deposit option?
- How do I keep track of my hours?
- If applicable, how do I keep track of tips?
- What should I do if a customer complains about the company and/or wants to speak to a manager?
- What should I do if I have an accident on the job?

- What do I do if I need to call in sick or miss a shift for any other reason?
- For full-time hourly / summer jobs, you'll want to ask how much time off you get off and how much notice you'll need to give. You also want to find out how much notice you need to give before you leave for the summer/school year. And if you want to be able to come back to the job for summer or seasonal work, set the ground work early and let them know you're interested.

Etiquette & Customer Service 101

WHAT'S IT MEAN TO BE "PROFESSIONAL?"

You've probably heard the phrase before, "Act professional." So what's it mean, anyways? It really boils down to exercising common sense at the workplace. You don't hold a 9-volt battery up to your braces in tech ed class, and you don't prank call your boss' cell from the office phone. Enough said.

- **Dress for success:** How you dress at work obviously depends on your company's specific dress code; you might be supplied a uniform or wear your own business casual threads. Nowadays, every work environment has a different dress code and what you wore to your previous job might not necessarily carry over to your new one. (Especially if that previous job was at a waterpark.) When you accept a new job, your employer will inform you of the appropriate way to dress. Take mental notes when on the job of what your managers or co-workers are wearing. And if the dress code is confusing, don't be afraid to ask the hiring manager or the human resource department for more details.
- **Missing work:** Everyone gets sick. Everyone takes a day off. The smart people call their employers to report their absence. The dumb people take the day off and still go to their regular lunch spot at the diner next door to work. Doh.
- **Things we shouldn't have to tell you:** Trust us, we feel stupid telling you these things. And we really shouldn't have to

say them, but there are always a few people out there who ruin it for the rest of us. So here we go: Would you accept a personal cell phone call in the middle of a customer transaction? What about neglecting to wash your stinky uniform for an entire week? Or regularly arriving 30 minutes late to work each day? And oh yeah, what about parking in the boss' favorite spot. Odds are if someone has to tell you the answers to these questions, it's while you're getting fired.

- **The 'H' word:** Harassment happens. It's unfortunate, but it's true. The key is to learn what harassment includes, and what to do if you're a victim of it or see it going on at the workplace. Don't worry, your management will definitely cover this issue in greater detail during your training. Just remember that it all comes down to respect. Treat people like you want to be treated.

THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS...STUPID?

Wait, that's not how the phrase goes, but that's how it may feel sometimes. Like when a customer sends a steak back to the kitchen because it's not rare enough – but it's still mooing. Or when you've done everything you possibly can to satisfy a frustrated customer, and nothing seems to work.

It may be naïve to go through a day at the workplace always believing that “the customer is always right.” Just realize that difficult customers exist in every workplace, in every capacity. Down the road, difficult customers may be replaced by difficult clients. Difficult bosses get replaced by, well, other difficult bosses.

Remember this: People talk. One disgruntled customer can lead to the loss of six others. That one customer might be impossible to please, but those six others could be swell folks that you – and your company – can't afford to lose.

Patience and understanding aren't abilities you develop over night; they're important job skills that take years to master.

Tips for balancing work and school

Teens don't get enough credit. They get up early, go to school, whip through an endless list of extracurriculars, work part-time jobs and attempt to squeeze in a social life, a.k.a., sending texts, instant messages and MySpace notes.

Many high school students leave out that whole part-time job thing (But not you, right?) They're easily identifiable as the ones who are also bumming money off their parents, staying in on the weekends and showing up to proms and formals in a tuxedo T-shirt (the guys, anyways). You don't want to be in that group.

Combining school and work is certainly a tough balancing act. But when you add up all the benefits – from learning time management skills to early career development and cold hard cash – it's easy to see why a part-time job is an elective you shouldn't pass up on.

Here are some tips for successfully managing the challenge:

PICK A JOB WITH FLEXIBLE HOURS

There are plenty of cool part-time gigs out there that can accommodate a schedule stuffed with classes, club meetings, sports practice and even a little downtime to catch up on your favorite MTV show. In particular, restaurant jobs are prime territory for students looking to make a few extra bucks. And both quick service and casual dining restaurants offer after-school and weekend hours. Retail gigs can also fit into an already tight schedule. There are also a bunch of other industries with flexible jobs you would never think of, such as product demonstrators. If you choose to work on school nights, just be sure to save plenty of time to catch some Zzzz's before that first morning bell chimes. The amount of sleep you need to lead a productive day varies depending on the individual, but most experts recommend getting at least seven hours a night. Odds are you won't be getting any nap breaks at your job.

Also, be make sure you don't over-commit to working more than you're comfortable with, or your life could become a slippery slope of missed classes, broken promises and caffeine dependency. It's better to target a lower number of hours to work in the beginning, and if you get in a groove and are comfortable taking on more, ask your employer if there are more shifts available.

MAKE A SCHEDULE AND STICK TO IT

You're not going to successfully juggle work with your other priorities unless you exercise a little discipline. This doesn't have to be as painful (and no fun) as it sounds. Before you take on a new job, sit down and write down all of your priorities, followed by about how much time they take up each week. Estimate on the high end. Then figure out how much time you need to chill out with your best bud, upload Facebook pics, etc. Now crunch the numbers and see how much time you'll have to work. Even if it's only enough for a shift or two a week of work, that's fine.

Once you have your schedule sorted out, it's important to stick to the rules. If you decided the only way to make it all work is to devote one weekend night each week to doing school work, use this time efficiently and don't get distracted by a "Flavor of Love" marathon. By developing these time management skills now, you'll be ready down the road when life throws even more responsibilities your way.

REMEMBER THE MONEY (AND THE OTHER STUFF)

For every morning you reach for the snooze alarm, but can't afford to push it. For every night you get to see your friend – but it's on the wrong side of the drive-through window. And for each time you mistakenly show up to class with your trainee nametag on or drop your assignment pad in the deep fryer, remember one thing: money. Cash. Dinero. Moolah.

While your friends are rolling quarters, playing paddy cake and toilet-papering the neighbors, you're earning money that can be used for senior week at the beach and the old college fund.

And while it doesn't sound like as much fun, you're also absorbing skills and experience that will come in handy down the road, such as customer service, real world math and conflict resolution.

Balancing school and work is never the ideal situation, and requires patience and accountability. But trust us: It all gets easier once that first paycheck is in the bank.

What's next?

Once you get that first paycheck, and treat yourself to a tank of gas or a burger and fries, a good feeling will start to sink in. There's something about that initial feel of financial independence that motivates you right away. At first, you might be motivated just to keep your job. Then you might be motivated to get a raise for a new car. Then there's the promotion that would look great on your college applications.

One of the best pieces of advice SnagAJob.com can give you may be a cliché and corny, but it's true: Don't burn any bridges. (And don't cave in any tunnels). By maintaining a positive and professional relationship with your boss and co-workers, you not only put yourself in better position for raises and promotions, but you're also building solid references for your next job search. We're not encouraging you to kiss up – most bosses hate that – but to be respectful and honest. To be yourself.

While your first job almost certainly won't be your last job, it will make a lasting impression on the rest of your working life. And it's likely that the attitudes and opinions you form about employment may also linger longer.

All that's left for us to say is, good luck! And hopefully, America's 70 million hourly workers will be welcoming you to the working world very shortly.

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THE #1 SOURCE FOR HOURLY EMPLOYMENT