Running Header: Informational Interview

Informational Interview with Joshua Drury

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West Virginia University

For my informational interview, I chose to interview West Virginia University alum Joshua Drury. Joshua was a graduate of West Virginia University in May of 2009, earning degrees in communication studies and international business. Josh is a friend of one of my roommates and I had talked to him a few times in the past, learning about his time in West Virginia University and what steps he took to enter the workforce after graduation. After having talked to him a few brief times in the past, I learned that Josh works in the sales field, a field I am very much interested in entering after graduation. After learning a little information on what exactly Josh did throughout school and in the workforce, I decided he would be the perfect person to interview and to possibly gain valuable information for the future. During our interview Josh gave me valuable information on what steps he took to acquire a job after graduation, what he did during his time in West Virginia University and he also offered suggestions to me so that I can better understand what to do once I graduate.

Joshua Drury is originally from Rocky Hill, Connecticut. He graduated high school in 2004 and attended West Virginia University from 2005 to 2009. Josh currently works and lives in Manchester, Connecticut. I met Josh through a roommate and when we talked briefly, I learned that Josh works in the sales field and I decided he would be the perfect person to interview. During spring break, I was in Connecticut visiting Josh’s friend, so I decided it would be a perfect time to interview him face to face and learn about what he currently does. Josh and I sat down and talked at his place in Manchester last week and he gave me what I felt was a lot of valuable information.

Josh is currently a licensed insurance agent for a company called Insphere Insurance solutions. The particular branch he works at is located in Cromwell, Connecticut and he has worked at Insphere since June of 2009. Insphere deals in selling insurance to small business owners as well as middle income families and individuals. The main types of insurance the company deals in selling are Life, and Health care, as well as insurance in retirement, long term care and supplemental insurance. In selling insurance, Josh has to set up interviews with potential clients whether it is a middle income individual or a small business owner looking to buy insurance. He stated it is important to be able to read into what the customer’s needs are and choose an insurance package that suits their needs and budget. Josh spends a lot of time on the phone setting up appointments, talking with clients about multiple insurance packages and he also spends time at the office communicating with employers. Josh serves as a consultant to clients to help them set up an insurance package that fits their needs. Josh said depending on how hard he works, he can make up to 2,000 dollars in a week. He said when consulting with clients, it is important to use all your communication studies coursework.

Next, Josh and I talked about his time at West Virginia University and what he felt was important to do during school and right after leaving school. Josh told me that he after being in the workforce for almost a full year now; he looks back and sees many important things to consider while in school. He told me in sales two of the most important things to have are good communication skills and a competitive drive to work hard as well as enthusiasm in what you do. Looking back at his coursework, he believes that mostly every communication class was vital. Josh stated to me that, “in selling insurance, you are required to communicated effectively everyday to many different people and in many different settings. Classes I took such as Business Communication and Institutional and Organizational Communication gave me valuable knowledge to help me succeed in the sales field.” He also told me that classes such as interpersonal communication and mass media communication helped him too because he learned to relate better to his customers and he was able to speak more towards their wants and needs. Another course he recommended was public speaking. While Josh does not speak in front of large audiences, he does spend a lot of time talking to co-workers, employers and to customers. He believes being able to speak clearly, concise and effectively are vital to not only those looking to enter the sales field, but to people looking to find any job after graduation as well. Josh also believes that the communication studies field is a very important field to pursue in college, even if that is not your main area of study. Josh told me that, “even if you are not in the sales field, you have to communicate effectively on some level in almost every job field.” Josh felt it was very important to study in the communications field, even if only as a secondary area of study. Josh also studied in international business and economics and he felt that all his coursework was vital to the sales field. He told me courses like business law, accounting and economics was very beneficial to him entering the sales field because you are doing business everyday in sales and it is important to know laws and tactics involving sales.

After talking to him about what coursework he felt was important, it lead us perfectly into a conversation about newly hired employees. He said it is very important as a new employee to be confident in your abilities and to use what you learned in school to help you in your job. He said that new employees should know how to communicate effectively with everyone from family and friends to co-workers, clients and employers. He then told me that what you learn in communication studies coursework is important. He said that even if you are not a communication studies major, communication is a necessary field in the workforce, especially sales. Public Speaking he also feels is a very important skill for a new employee to have. He told me he believes much of what goes into getting hired and getting promoted revolves around your ability to communicate effectively. He said an employer likes to see employees who are confident and that it shows through your ability to speak confidently and effectively. Other things he felt are important as a new employee is to keep up on current events. He felt that it is important to know what is going on in the world, such as knowing about Barack Obama’s health plan. He said in selling health insurance, it would probably be bad to not know the intricacies of the health plan. He said knowing what goes on around you on a day to day basis is important because it makes you look educated and like you are interested in keeping up with the important decisions the government makes involving our day to day lives. He believes that reading about current events, watching the news, reading the newspaper and learning a little about the history of your field is important. He stated that, “even when you graduate, you should not stop learning. You can learn valuable information and it helps in being able to communicate more effectively with employers.” Josh gave me an example that if you are talking with your boss, you most likely will not be talking about your favorite television show. Knowing about politics, current events and history is very important and it makes you look educated and an effective communicator who is sure about what they are talking about.

Josh was also very vocal in giving advice for undergraduates beginning their job pursuit. He told me patience and endurance is very important. He said, “You are not going to find a job in one day, you have to keep looking, keep being active and work hard. What you are looking for may not come up in one day but if you keep at it, you will eventually find a job that suits you and your skills.” He also told me not to be closed minded or keep your job search narrow. Josh said, “If you are looking to enter sales, do not just look in one particular area such as cell phones only. Broaden your search to all types of sales areas because selling is basically the same in all areas. You have to sell your product no matter what it is you are selling. If you do that, you may not get your dream job at first, but you will build contacts and connections to eventually land your dream job.” He was very passionate about building connections with multiple people and organizations because he felt it is one of the most important things you can do when looking for a job. He spoke about being active in the job search. He told me his girlfriend Lacey started in a job and she did not really like it but while she was working she kept looking for a job that suited her abilities and what she wanted to do. He said even if you have a job that should not stop you from looking for something better. He believes being active is very important and that I should look everywhere from the internet to the newspaper; however, he did say you should be careful in looking on the internet and to research every company you are looking into thoroughly.

My overall impressions of Josh were that he was very confident in himself and his ability to communicate. I interviewed Josh on Friday and we talked for about 45 minutes and he had a lot of valuable advice for me. The main point he reiterated in the interview over and over was the fact that you need to be able to communicate effectively and use your communications coursework, even if you are not in the communications field. He also believes the being educated in current events is important and also knowing the history of your company and clients is important as well. I felt the interview was very informative to me and I believe what Josh told me will help me when I enter the workforce. Josh was very sure in what he said and very confident in his abilities as sales representative.

In conclusion, the communication studies field is a very important field to know and understand. Unless you are a mortician, it is very important to communicate effectively in every job field. It is also important to work hard and be consistent and active in your job search. Communication studies provides very valuable information on how humans interact in every type of interaction and it is important to know how to read and react to other people when communicating with them and that helps in landing you a job and being successful at that job.