

Book Review EditorJoanna Schreiber, *Georgia Southern University****Start Your Career: 5 Steps to Finding the Right Job after College****Author*
Susan KatzC&M Online Media, Inc.
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Susan M. Katz, Ph.D.

Reviewed by Jessica Lauer*Michigan Technological University*

Planning ahead may not be the first (or second) thing on the mind of a typical college student, but having a guide such as Susan Katz's e-book *Start Your Career: 5 Steps to Finding the Right Job after College* can help them do so. In a convenient e-book format, students can use Katz's book to help make the most of their university experience by planning ahead for each year of their degree, thus making the transition from college to the workplace happen more smoothly. Not only for students, this book is a useful tool for program administrators who want insight into current job search and internships trends, as well as access to a comprehensive resource to provide students with this information to help guide them through each step of the process. This book is not just for advanced undergraduate students ready to graduate and enter the job market; rather, the advice in the book parallels the progression of an undergraduate, from identifying skills early on to more practical advice related to a job search, such as resume and interview advice. Katz's book has strong aspects; however, like any career-related advice, it is not static. Because *Start Your Career* is offered as an inexpensive e-book at \$10, it lessens the sting of knowing

some of the information risks becoming outdated in years to come (I'm particularly thinking about the section on social media), as well as the probability that many of the hyperlinks included in the book may not remain active or accurate.

FKatz's expertise comes from her years of experience coordinating the internship program in the English Department at North Carolina State University. She has organized the book so that students can easily search key words related to their specific questions, or advice catered to stages during the progression of their degree ("early stages", "before you graduate", and "after you graduate"). This e-book is budget-friendly for students, and it is a text that students will refer to more than once; it is a guide that can be used throughout a students' entire college career—not *just* when they are ready to graduate and look for a job. The e-book format adds the convenience of being able to click on active hyperlinks that automatically direct the reader to useful resources online.

For program directors or instructors, the appendix will be valuable because it contains sample documents, such as resumes and cover letters for a variety of majors (though none in STEM fields), that students can be directed toward rather than the instructor or program director having to compile these sample documents. Likewise, the appendix section is equally beneficial to students who would like job search resources compiled in one place that they can continually refer to.

As the title suggests, the book is organized into five steps, with several tips outlined within each. In "Step 1: Identify your Skills and Strengths," Katz begins with a tip about utilizing aptitude tests, giving feedback on those she has tested herself. After taking the test Katz found to be the most accurate (the "Color Test" via Careerbuilder.com), my results included the suggested "occupational categories" of both Organizer and Researcher, with suggested jobs ranging from teacher to underwriter, making the results indeed not far off from reality. Another useful tip under Step 1 is the importance of conducting information interviews, which not only allows for students to get a sense of what happens in a particular job position but also provides them with a contact within the specific field who can provide them with useful feedback on resumes and other aspects of their job search.

"Step 2: Envision a Satisfying Worklife" includes researching and comparing costs of living, ideal work environments, and the importance of understanding job benefits, such as health insurance and retirement plans (despite the fact they are probably the *last* thing you want to think about!). "Step 3: Research Potential Jobs" builds from this advice, providing some

practical guidelines for investigating potential jobs or for considering graduate school. Katz lists several websites for job seeking but also highlights the critical (and sometimes underused) resources a university has to offer students, whether a career center or an alumni network.

“Step 4: Create a network” in part covers the age-old adage: it is not what you know; it’s who you know. Katz offers networking tips in this chapter, including the suggestion of creating and perfecting the ever-important “elevator speech” before you graduate. Networking can be both online (e.g., LinkedIn) and via university and community organizations, and Katz also stresses the importance of maintaining contacts you already have (such as professors and advisors). Volunteering is a great way to gain experience in a career area you are interested in pursuing; for example, if a student is interested in a career in publishing or technical writing, working on newsletters to gain writing and editing experience has twofold benefits: volunteer work can be added to a resume and is also a relevant career skill.

In “Step 5: Prepare for the application process,” Katz writes that “it is never too early to take a close look at any of your social media sites” (p. 116). This chapter gets at the “meat” of the job search process; it primarily focuses on preparing job application materials, navigating interviews, and asking critical questions when considering a job position (salary, for example). This information itself is critical, but having it all in one place is invaluable not only for students but also for instructors teaching career preparation courses or program directors guiding students into the job market. The appendix itself is worth the money of the book. It is a lengthy and valuable tool because it provides additional resources for students, such as template letters, common interview questions, and lists of useful websites related to job hunting.

Faculty running internship or career prep courses will find this book especially useful, as will students majoring in humanities or social sciences, in which a specific career path is not always defined. One of the strengths of this book is that it offers tips and advice for students, regardless of their major. Although much of the advice is cross-disciplinary, it does seem that the book will be of most use to Liberal Arts, Humanities, and Social Science majors more so than students in STEM fields. Nevertheless, much of the advice in “Step 5” is related to communication in general and often echoes advice commonly heard in writing classrooms of being aware of your audience, making *Start Your Career* a text that could, in part, be more broadly incorporated into composition and technical communication courses as well as internship programs or career counseling/preparation classes. Yet the benefit of the e-book format makes it easier to pick out exactly which

information may be most useful to the reader, whether that reader is a student, a faculty member preparing career-based lesson plans, or a program administrator hoping to provide some increased support when it comes to helping students find not just a job, but a job they will enjoy.

Author information

Jessica Lauer is a PhD candidate in the Rhetoric and Technical Communication program at Michigan Technological University. She was a recipient of the 2011 Dean's Fellowship and is currently a graduate instructor of technical and professional communication courses at MTU. She is also a reviewer for *Queen City Writers*, an undergraduate journal focused on writing and composition. Her research interests include food studies, the history of technical communication, and the history and philosophy of technology. She is currently working on her dissertation about food and community among prison inmates. Her academic and creative writing—as well as some artwork—can be found at www.jessicaroselauer.com.