

CCB-Carson Coffee & Conversation: Career Management And Developing Your Elevator Pitch

>> Great. I'd like to welcome everyone to our Carson Coffee and Conversation.

Today, we'll be exploring our Career Management and Developing Your Elevator Pitch.

I'm Keri Knight. I'm the Student Engagement Specialist for Carson College of Business in Vancouver.

I'll be helping to facilitate today's event with our presenters and guests from Perkins.

This event is part of Carson professional network.

The Carson professional network creates community for Cougs and Coug friends, to open opportunities, to build relationships, and lead to the vast range of business and community opportunities in our region.

Network membership is open to all Coug students, recent alumni, industry executives.

Join today using the link that will be dropped into the chatbox.

I'm really excited today for this event about career management and developing your elevator pitch.

As our attendees log in,

we'd like to remind you to participate in some of our ground rules.

Please keep your mics muted.

Please consider turning your video on, so that our attendees can see your faces, the expression, and laughter.

If you have questions, please put it into the chatbox or raise your hand.

At the end of today's event,

we'll have a question and answer.

Also, if attendees at the end of the event will just stay logged on and take our survey.

I'd like to thank all of our participants for being here today,

and I'd like to extend a very warm welcome to our guest speakers.

Please welcome, Jake Johnson and Gretchen Kokko.

I'll be letting each of our speakers introduce

themselves before briefly jumping into our presentation.

We're going to start with Jake,

he's an auditor at Perkins.

He graduated in 2018 from Washington State University, Vancouver.

Jake, please just take a minute and give us

your elevator pitch and let everyone get to know you.

>> Like what Keri said, so my name is Jake Johnson,

I'm an audit staff at Perkins and Company.

I'm also a volunteer treasure on the board of directors of AMA PDX,

which is a local marketing non-profit,

and I graduated from WSUV in May 2018 with a double-major in Accounting and Finance.

While I was at WSUV,

I was the vice president of events for IMA, Beta Alpha Psi,

and I currently live in Ecuador,

my fiancé and two dogs [inaudible] pretty much everything about me.

>> Perfect. Gretchen, would you like to give us your elevator pitch.

Gretchen works at Perkins also as an auditor and

she graduated 2016 from Washington State University Vancouver.

>> Yeah. Hi. I'm Gretchen,

as Keri said, I graduated in 2016 from WSU Vancouver.

I've taken a few different jobs since college.

I started on corporate accounting and it wasn't necessarily my thing,

so I ended up down at a small boutique firm in Lake Oswego called TKW. I did

mostly governmental work there for auditing and then I decided that

government work wasn't the niche that I wanted to be in,

so I switched over to be an auditor at Perkins,

well over a year ago now.

I think I just celebrated one year.

When I was at WSUV,

I also was on the officer team at the same time as Jake,

if I recall correctly.

Then I also really like to spend some time outside when possible,

not currently possible with all the smoke in our area,

but we have hope that it will go away soon, latest this week.

>> Thank you so much to both Jake and Gretchen.

We're going to get started with the presentation.

Like I mentioned, if there's any questions,

please drop those questions into the chatbox and we'll get to them at the end,

or I'll be able to ask those questions personally.

Our first question, I'm going to start

with Jake and then Gretchen if you'll answer after.

What are the key steps you took to be successful in your career?

>> All right. By the way you can cut me off if I'm going too long,

but I'm very conscious of the time,

and I'm going to really try to stand or correct.

The most important thing is networking, that's been the most important thing in my career.

I knew nothing about networking.

My parents are nurses,

they're not really in business for all.

I just started at WSUV and then the next week I was to meet the firm.

I really had to figure it all out.

But basically events, in my case,

it was a bit off of savings.

I get the business cards,

the guest speakers follow-up,

say thank you, and try to build a relationship on, Athuman LinkedIn.

LinkedIn's very important, everyone should have LinkedIn.

If I meet somebody or if we have a guest speaker,

I'll add them in LinkedIn,

or if somebody meet the firms or different event.

I'll send a message and something about the conversation that we had,

and something that I do that I didn't start networking once I graduated, I still do it.

I go to anything I can find,

ribbon-cutting ceremonies from the Chary commerce.

I go to those and I meet people,

and then you start seeing the same people and continue meeting people.

I'll let Gretchen, so I don't go too long.

>> I agree.

I would say the same thing.

Networking, no matter the industry that you're in business,

whether it's accounting or HR or anything.

Networking is probably your most important tool as

a student for jobs after graduation and career management.

As I mentioned, I've changed jobs couple times since I left school,

and both of the jobs that I got after

my very first job were opportunities that I got because of people that I knew.

My first job at CKW.

I knew a couple of ladies who works there that I had gone to school with,

and they knew that they were looking for auditors.

We met for coffee and they connected me up with one of the partners there.

Then I knew Arena from recruiting at

WSUV even though I didn't think I wanted to go into public accounting,

I kept up that connection with her.

When I was ready to go on more commercial auditing routes,

I was able to e-mail her and ask her for coffee and that's how I got the interview there.

Even if you don't think it's an industry that you want to be in,

it never hurts to have those connections.

They've been very important for me.

>> There are two quick things I want to add to that,

I was going to say.

I really start to be successful at WSU Vancouver.

Your success in college is really important and

it can translate to your success afterwards.

In the case of accounting,

I really started to have a good reputation with the students and the professors.

You work hard at everything you do because those people who are in your groups,

they can have some say in your employment at a future company.

If somebody can ask me like this person is applying to Perkins,

but you can say well,

they were superstar in this project,

and they are so amazing or they're really slacked off,

they [inaudible] was sloppy.

Your performance in college really is important and the people that you work with.

Accounting is a very small world.

I see so many people everywhere, so they're there.

Definitely good relationship with your professors is really important.

>> I have to say as an instructor for BA 102 and HB 101,

you guys just hit on all the points.

I don't even have to teach my class anymore,

that's exactly what we teach students.

That networking is so important, LinkedIn.

Thank you for hitting on those points.

Gretchen, we're going to start the next question with you.

What is the biggest challenge in accounting or the business world at the moment?

>> I would say other than the obvious with COVID,

[LAUGHTER] that technology has been a big issue for companies,

even before all of this happened.

Corona has very much forced companies to go more

remote and to learn how to use the technology that they have available,

but I know a lot of companies were struggling

with transitioning into using technology more.

I wouldn't necessarily say that that's

because of people just stuck in a rut with how they want to do things,

this is the way we've always done them,

so that's the way we're going to continue to do them.

That's been a little bit my experience in some companies,

but some companies just don't know how to move forward with technology.

As a student, it's really important to learn how to be effective in a remote environment;

learning how to collaborate with people who aren't in the same room with you.

Well, as a student,

I would have felt very cheated by not being able to

wander through the cafeteria and see students from my classes and just pop in and say,

"Oh hey, I'm really not understanding this concept.

If you guys are studying it right now,

can I sit down?"

I would have felt very cheated by that.

But in the business world,

especially as an auditor,

you may not be in the same city as people that you're working with.

My first job, I worked for an investment firm

and they had offices all over the country and all over the world,

so I worked with people everywhere.

It's really important to learn how to do that because I think that going forward,

that's going to be an even bigger concern for companies.

>> Okay, Jake.

>> I think the way I answer, if I were to answer this,

I think the biggest challenge that we're facing as a firm and

probably every accounting firm is due to COVID.

It's basically how much uncertainty there is

because the biggest impact was scheduling because when we have a busy season,

everybody is scheduled on audits very specifically in its perfect schedule.

If everything happens like it should, then everything's good.

Then all in the end our clients were

struggling and that was a major challenge with scheduling.

I'm curious what it'd be like this busy season,

but also, I think our firms are facing.

We still don't know the impact because the companies are there,

they're still burning through their PPE loan money,

their reserves, and utilizing any that they can gather,

however they get financing.

So I think we are about to see and are currently seeing that impact,

but it's definitely uncertain, all because of that.

>> Thank you. Our next question,

Jake, if you will start,

"Who is making the greatest advancements in the industry and what are they doing?"

>> I'd say the companies that are making

the greatest advancements are the ones that adapt to technology.

For example, advancements in automation of auditing procedures.

I could relate to a metaphor be people going paperless.

Even to a few years ago,

there are so many companies that were very resistant to

change, filing things electronically.

When things like that happen,

we become so much more efficient,

but so many people are resistant because they get very comfortable doing what they do

and it's easy and they know how to do it and basically being able to adapt.

I think currently blockchain is something that's very interesting.

I've read three books and I still don't understand what it is.

[LAUGHTER] I think you're going to have a profound impact on accounting because

a lot of people are focused on the value of it and the speculation of the currency,

but it really has a potential for an accounting application,

but it's basically an audit trail.

So I haven't seen it integrated yet in auditing ,

but I think it's going to be the next thing,

but basically being able to adapt to those kind of things.

>> Gretchen.

>> I would say the adaptation.

I don't really have anything specific additionally to add,
but I do have clients who very attached to their paper
and they had a very difficult time this year getting
their audit done because literally everything that they had was on paper.

They didn't want to provide anything at all
electronically and it made it very difficult to get their audit done.

Fortunately, I am very grateful for Perkins.

I guess responding to them in a way that, "No,
we're not going to send our auditors on-site just because you refused to scan things."

That made me feel very supported,

so I appreciated that,

but I think that adapting to paperless is
a really good analogy [LAUGHTER] for companies that are going to be
able to adapt and change and move forward.

And come [inaudible] out of this even stronger.

It'll be interesting to see how companies continue to do that.

>>Yeah. Something too about that is the company to adapt,

let's say auditing procedures.

If there's automation out there to make us more efficient,
then if we as a firm aren't adopting these new technology and procedures,
our competitors are going to become more efficient and they can register other fees,
and it just becomes very competitive.

>> Awesome. Thank you for those examples.

Our next question, Gretchen, we'll start with you,

"What are common misconceptions people have with the industry and how can we combat these misconceptions and communicate more effectively?"

>> I'll specifically talk about public accounting because that's my wheelhouse for this.

I would say the most common misconception is a bit of

a two-sided coin because there seems to be

two common misconceptions about public accounting.

The first one is, busy season isn't that bad and the second one is busy season is

horrible or ruin your life and you're going to work

100-hour weeks for the next three years.

It's really somewhere in the middle.

Sometimes students get information about how many hours are going to be working?

What busy seasons are going to be like? All of that.

They get really terrified because they think,

"I can't do that," and they steer away from it.

That's what happened to me.

I steered away from public accounting because I thought there is

no way I'm going to be [LAUGHTER] able to work

80-hour [LAUGHTER] weeks for longer than

about a week or two without completely burning out.

It turns out that most companies don't do that anymore.

I would say some of the big four,

you will still have that.

But especially in Portland,

most of the firms have a really strong sense of work-life balance,

where they don't really want you to burn out and leave after a year.

So they're really trying to combat that misconception.

I think the most important thing that a student can do if they're thinking, "Oh,

this isn't for me because this is too many hours or this is going to be too much," is

talk to people who either work at that firm or who have connections with that firm.

I know it feels really uncomfortable to ask the recruiter,

"How many hours am I going to be working?"

Because you automatically think you're putting

yourself out there as someone who doesn't want to work hard,

but that's not how it's viewed.

Just be kind of careful how you were with this.

[LAUGHTER] But I know at Perkins,

we work 50-55-hour weeks during busy season.

Sometimes more if it calls for it,

sometimes less if there's not enough work.

It really just depends on the firm and I don't

think it's standard to be 80 or 100-hour weeks anymore?

[LAUGHTER]

>> I would say a common misconception is that accounting is easy.

That was a joke, [LAUGHTER] because accounting is really hard.

But I would say,

when I was learning from my textbooks,

I mean, I read every page of every textbook I had,
and I was expecting things to be like that in accounting,
and it's so different because my first year of public accounting,
I was really just trying to go from the textbook to what I was doing.
But in practice, it's so much different.

You use the fundamentals of what you learn,
but things do not work in the real world like they do in the textbook.

Thank goodness for materiality,
because if I can pass on variances,
I would still be on my first audit.

A lot of people think you only network until you have a job,
and you really should continue networking always.

I know a lot of people, they network,
and they get a job and you just take your feet up and do it.

That's fine, there's nothing wrong with that.

But if you get laid off or if you decide this isn't for me, then what?

Then you have to start all over.

If I decided tomorrow, like well,
maybe I want to leave Perkins,

I have this huge network I can reach out to.

Don't be surprised, I'll give credit,

I got this few advice or my fiance because I had to get help on this one.

But don't be surprised,

if you start your career in one direction and become passionate about something else.

I know she started at a company called Netrush in digital marketing,
and now she's a research analyst.

Very different, just working on data.

In my case, I mean,

even in accounting, I know a lot of people,

there was somebody at Perkins who was a manager or a senior manager,

and he quit and started doing software development.

That's a crazy example.

But let's say you're crazy about,

"I'm going to work at Apple or something," and then you

are really interested in government accounting, that's not a good example.

But just don't be surprised if you become passionate about something different.

>> Perfect. Thank you, Jake. I am a living example of that.

I started my career in sports medicine.

Then I got a degree in Deaf Education to work with sign language.

Now, I'm working at the College of Business.

[LAUGHTER] I'm all over the place,

but it's okay to be passionate about a million different things and try them all out.

Thank you for sharing.

Jake, we're going to go back to you.

In regards to your career,

do you remember a specific experience

where you wish that you would have done something differently?

If you were to do it over again,

what would you change?

>> I have an example. In my first year of public accounting,

I really wanted to understand the big picture,

I really wanted to understand everything going on in the audit

because I just wanted to understand how everything is connected,

and why we are testing everything not related to the audit plan,

and eventually the financial statements.

I was put on this huge prior second biggest audit,

and it was this fun,

and it is probably the most complex thing I ever seen in my life.

I would cause myself undue stress from trying to understand everything

and how it all connected and why I was doing what I was doing. It's always good.

I still have that mindset, I'm still really going to have.

But in the case of accounting and making some auditing,

in a lot of cases, you really have to take it piece by

piece and then eventually you learn the big picture.

So if I went back in time,

I would have just focused on the test I was doing and think,

"What am I doing, how does it relate to this audit plan?"

As far as the different assertions, and then,

let's say I do cash one month and then investments the next or the next year.

Sometimes it could take a year to get the full picture,

sometimes it can take five years or 10 years,

but I was really trying to rush that and I would

have felt a lot less stress if I'd just taken one piece at a time,
because you just master those skills along the way.

>> I agree, Jake,

and I think I know which audit you're talking about.

Yes, it is very,

very challenging to try to get that in your first year.

There's no way. [LAUGHTER] I would say my experience stems from a supervisory role.

At my former firm,

I was in charge odd job,

and I was talking to one of my staff about how long this set of
three or four tasks should take her because I was going to have to
be off-site for a couple days and she was going to be working by herself.

One of the things that I apparently did not make clear to her was

that if things start to go way outside this time frame,

there might be something wrong,

so please contact me, and instead,

she spent three 12-hour days and half of her weekends getting it done because I said,

"You should be able to get it done by the end Friday so that I can look at it on Monday."

It really caused for me that thought

of I just ruined this person's weekend because I did not make that clear enough.

One of my personal philosophy is any response to your communication,

[LAUGHTER] the meaning of any communication is the response that you receive,

and I did not get it clear to her

whether she was supposed to just work 50 extra hours and get this done,

or there might be something wrong if it's taking more than this time frame,
and maybe then come talk to me.

It turns out there was nothing wrong,
there was just a really big piece of it that I had
missed when I was doing my time estimating.

She thought it was her. I'm now much clearer
about having people come to me when things are
taking longer than they think that they
should and rather than spinning their wheels on it.

>> Perfect. Now I'd like to flip that and make it a little bit more positive.

So a follow-up to the previous question.

By the way, a comparison,
do you remember something that you've done or something that you wish
everyone was doing and why? Jake, you'll start.

>> Jake, do you have a good run for this?

[LAUGHTER] [OVERLAPPING]

>> I can start, I can start.

It's different than what I mentioned previously.

But I think if there's something that I wish everybody was doing is networking
constantly and maintaining relationships.

That's a hard thing to do. I even struggled with it.

I tried to put everybody in on an Excel spreadsheet,
but I need a better system.

But what my goal would be for myself and for anybody else's,

maintaining those relationships and just keep in contact every few months to say,

"Hey, how's it going?"

Something I learned, I don't remember the exact percentage,

but I heard from illegitimate source somewhere

that a large percentage of jobs are never posted online,

and they're just created through networking

or just fulfilling needs and just somebody knows somebody.

So that's another reason why it's important.

>> I guess something that I wish students knew more when they came out of school,

if I can twist your question a little bit,

is that communication is really,

really critical, especially as everyone goes more remote.

I'm sure that every person that presents

virtually is going to mention the remote environment and how much more challenging it is.

But it really is [LAUGHTER] a lot more challenging in the business world.

When I'm sitting at home in my office

and I have three different people working on stuff for

me and I don't know where they are with anything because no one has sent me an update,

they get in the zone, they're working on it,

they think, "Everything is great.

I'm right where I should be on this project.

I'm exactly where my in-charge wants me to be."

That scrapes the problem when you start to get up into the upper levels.

As I'm trying to keep my supervisors informed of where we are with the project,

even if that someone is on time and doing exactly where they should be.

If I don't know that,

I then have to come and ask.

So just learning how to communicate preemptively.

Descended daily, end of day update.

Here's where I got today.

Here's where I am.

We're still on track or not on track.

It doesn't have to be a big long email.

Just communicating more about where you are with your tasks really

helps everything go more smoothly because as you get further up the food chain,

those people want to know,

and if the person in front of you doesn't know,

then they have to ask and then it gets passed on and it takes a lot

of extra time to find that rather than just sending out a quick two minute,

here's where we are and everything is fine.

Over communicate is better than under communicate.

>> I definitely agree with that. I definitely

over communicate and I'd recommend that to anybody.

I always status updates constantly because then there are no questions.

But one piece of advice,

one small thing, 1a and 1b.

Start networking and make connections in school than wait to graduate.

I'm sure you've all heard that by now.

But for me I think one piece of advice is when I first started I wish I knew that my seniors and managers knew that I didn't know anything because I thought they were expecting me to know everything coming out of college. I learned as much as I can in my auditing and accounting classes, and they say audit accounts receivable, and I think, okay, this textbook knowledge, and then I open it up and there are 10 documents and one Excel has 10 tabs and think, how is accounts receivable so complicated and apparently and stuff. I didn't get the perspective really until people told me, but it is hard to believe because you just want to do a really good job and you won't be able to do without asking many questions. But I would always feel bad when I ask questions, but now that I've done two years, I'm starting my third year and I'm starting to help people in delegate work is that I know that if I ask them to do accounts receivable, I expect them to look at last year and then have a 100 questions about what to do, and I would hope that they asked me questions. But I know that they don't know how to do it. I mean, they have the fundamentals they're capable, but it's just so much to learn, and that's a perspective that I have and that I've heard people talking about. >> I made it a rule for myself that if I didn't hear any questions within a two hour window,

I would say, okay,

what questions do you have?

Because there's no way you're going to go two hours

without having any questions when you're brand new as an auditor in this field.

Even in taxes, well I know we don't have any tax public accounting representation here,

but it's the same thing for taxes.

They are expecting you to have a million questions.

You can book learn all you want,

and then when you get there, it looks entirely different.

Or you get something from a client that's not very well organized or is missing pieces,

and sometimes it's hard to know what you're missing when you're first starting.

Yeah, ask the questions rather than assuming that you are the problem.

>> Sometimes you have the wrong report.

I mean, I've done already this,

like [? Granals?] Report, and they say,

well, they just give us the wrong thing.

Because you have to understand that things look different every year.

If I had accounts receivable last year,

they could program me something totally different

this year that accomplishes the same objective,

and so just being able to understand and just know what you're looking for.

>> I think that goes just in overall business sense as well.

My my first job at an investment firm,

one of my tasks was streamlining accounting processes and making better reports.

Reports that you're looking at one month,
they're going to look different next month.

So walking executives through how the new report works was also something that I did.

It does apply across all business practices.

>> That was some great advice.

I just wanted to see if you all had any resources that students that are
just starting out could use to do their career management?

>> You want me to start answering or do you answer it?

>> Actually, I have a couple suggestions.

Keep coming to these presentations because when I was in school,
this is one of the things that I learned the most from,

and I hope that doesn't sound really [LAUGHTER] overly confident.

But you get the perspective from a lot of different people and you learn,
little bits and pieces.

You might only take away one or two things to each presentation and learn things,
but you're still making connections,

you're still finding different perspectives from different industries,

you might attend a presentation about something and think,

this is something I could be really passionate about.

With the first presentation I attended about auditing I thought, that looks terrifying.

Let's do that, [LAUGHTER] and here we are.

Just going to presentations like this and the Carson College of Business and the WSUV.

I don't remember what it's called.

It's like the career development Center.

They do like resume reviews,
mock interviews, things like that.

That was extremely helpful for me.

I'm really good at editing someone else's resume but not my own [LAUGHTER].

So [LAUGHTER] taking your resume and having someone else read it,
stuff like that, and reaching out to people in the industry.

If you're sitting there going,

what do I want to do?

I don't really know where I want to go.

If you think you have some ideas,

reach out to some people in the industry that you have

hopefully built connections with through networking,

and ask them to have a cup of coffee

and talk to you like informational interviews is what we used to call them.

I'm sure that's still the same [LAUGHTER].

Even now, virtually, I don't know what I'll speak for everybody,

but most of the people that I know are perfectly happy to take 20 or 30 minutes out
of their day and have a virtual coffee with

you and talk with you about the industry and answer questions you have.

Don't forget that that is still available,

and it might actually be better because no one has to travel.

Might actually be easier to get people on the phone to talk to them about it. Jake.

>> Mine probably sounds pretty similar.

I would say that the best researches are people and books.

As an example, I first started auditing I really wanted to learn about what blockchains do look like and how it's going to impact the accounting industry, and there's no information out there, at least there wasn't at the time, and I really couldn't answer my questions based on anything on the Internet.

I bought three different books and I found people on LinkedIn, I thought, there's almost nobody in the Portland area from two people in the Portland area who worked in blockchain, and so I sent them messages.

I went out to coffee with one person and just try to learn as much as I could, and I still have no idea how blockchain works, but I will probably continue to keep trying to learn and that's my strategy.

>> I just want to check before we open it up to students for their questions, if there's any last minute advice that you have or anything that we didn't touch on that you think is really important for students to know as they're doing their career management.

>> Jake you want to get this one first?

>> Sure. The most important thing is never burn bridges anywhere, ever, at college or at work, and just think of it as trying to be a good person.

You go coffee hour does always treat everybody nicely, and school, like I said, the accounting community, it's very small.

Everybody knows everybody.

I think it was last year that made the firms.

The day before me at the firms,

I was eating pizza and playing

super smash brothers with probably a quarter of the employers there the next day.

You never know who is connected,

and it can come back and bite you in ways that you'd never expect.

Just never do that.

>> Mine is very similar.

As Jake mentioned, I think very first thing in his question.

The people that you're going to school with

are people that might be your interviewer in five years.

There are people that I worked with on group projects that

I know that if their resume came across the desk and someone said,

they were the same school as you were at the same time,

do you know this person, I would say yeah,

throw that resume in the trash.

There's always going to be a couple of those people. You'll remember them.

I'm sure you can think of some right off the top of your head because everyone does.

But protect your reputation at school and beyond.

Don't burn the bridges.

Even if you dislike someone,

you might end up in the same office as

them or they might have the ear of someone that you're talking with,

and if someone finds that small connection,

they're going to ask about you,

they're going to ask as much as they possibly can.

Protecting your reputation and not allowing necessarily

your anger or frustration to

get out with someone so that it doesn't come back to bite you later.

Jake, anything else?

>> I'm trying really hard to think.

If anything comes to my head soon, I will say it.

>> Well, those are all the questions that we have for you.

As we have discussed,

networking and marketing yourself is really important.

I've given the opportunity,

nobody is muted now.

If you have a question and you'd like to network a

little bit unmute yourself, ask a question.

You can practice your elevator speech.

Find out if you're on the right track,

and then we just have a little bit more at the very end of the presentation for everyone.

If you'll just stay tuned and I'm going to turn it over to any questions.

If you don't feel comfortable unmuting and asking the question,

please drop it into the chat and we'll ask it for you or you can

private message myself for Amy and we'll get those questions out.

>> Any questions?

>> I'll ask a question that's just off the cuff just to get people started.

When you have somebody come in and they give you an elevator pitch or you're out networking and people are pitching themselves to you, what is something that you want to hear and what don't you want to hear from someone as they are marketing themselves?

>> That's a good question.

I would say what I want to hear are positive things.

I know that everyone's had poor job experiences at some point in their lives.

I worked in retail management for a few years before I went to college.

There's always going to be negative employer experiences that you have, but that's not what someone wants to hear during your elevator pitch.

You don't really want to hear someone say,

"I left this job because my boss is terrible."

Because automatically you're thinking, okay,

if this person ends up working for me or with me at some point,

in another three years, are they going to be telling someone else,

"I left Perkins because my coworker was terrible?"

That's something that I don't particularly like to hear is negative,

especially in an elevator speech there's not enough time for that.

What I do like to hear is a little bit more color than I went to school here,

I graduated this time,

I want to hear

more than what's on the resume because if

I read the resume, I'm going to know all of that.

Give the footnotes and then I want to know about you as a person.

What do you like to do outside of work, things like that.

Maybe that's 25 percent of the elevator speech.

Give some idea of what you like to do outside of your cubicle.

>> I think I like you to run perspectives.

What I expect to hear from students in a way,

what I experienced after college and just some other networking events.

But from students, I think it's specific.

If I were to meet at the firms,

if I get the information,

what your name is, when you're CPA eligible, if that's applicable.

You'd say, "My name is Jake, I'm graduating in May 2019 or '18.

I am looking for an auditing internship and I'll be CPA eligible the following year."

I'm saying it pretty sloppy but basically alluding to the fact

that I'm looking for an internship and I'll be

graduating one year after the internship and I'll be CPA

eligible and I'm interested in public accounting.

Because if somebody comes up to me

and I know that they're interested in government accounting,

for instance, then perfect [NOISE] ,

I know exactly who to connect you with.

If you can communicate what you're looking for and milestone dates,

I think it really gives me a lot of information that I need.

Those that are outside of college,

when I go to different random networking events around town,

I think if I know their name and what they do,

I always like to say where I went to college because almost everybody went to WSUV and that's a good thing to talk about [LAUGHTER].

>> There's a surprising number of WSUV grads in accounting [LAUGHTER] in the Portland area.

>> Yeah. Actually to add onto that misconception question you asked earlier, Keri.

I think when I first started, there's a misconception that people would look down on a Vancouver as being a commuter campus.

I went to Community College and that has never been a disadvantage to me and never will be.

I find it as a strength over going to Pullman because WSUV Vancouver Community is so amazing and they're all very supportive of each other.

I attribute all my success to, I think going to WSUV.

>> There's also a lot more opportunity because you're right next to Portland, you don't have to make big trips.

For me, I felt I was able to focus on my studies a lot more than if I was living on campus because I could go home and be in a comfortable environment with my family rather than in a dorm.

But that's just me personally.

>> Our Pullman students, a lot of them are at home right now.

I know that there's a bunch that are on campus as well.

But I'm sure a lot of them are understanding the convenience of being at home and also the hardship of being at home during this time.

We have a question that came into the chat that is very similar to what we were just talking about.

It says, "Do you think the current students that are participating in distance learning will be less prepared for the workplace?"

>> The way I would answer that is when I went to college, I mean, I would definitely, 100 percent of the time prefer to be in class over anything online.

But in any case,

I read every page of every textbook I ever had and I read it thoughtfully and slowly so I would learn as much as possible and class was a chance for me to ask questions and get further insight

because our professors have a lot of experience and wisdom.

I think it's unfortunate that we just can't control what's going on but I think if you still apply yourself the same way, and there are some networking opportunities because you can still do video chats.

I don't think that it will put people at a disadvantage.

I think if you apply yourself with the same amount of effort, it just looks different, but I think it'll come out the same.

>> Yeah, I agree.

I think that it really depends student to student because not everyone really does very well with distance learning and it is

unfortunate that everyone is forced to do distance learning right now.

It's how you personally are able to handle distance learning.

I know that some classes are better than others pre-COVID for distance learning.

I feel like it has really forced a lot of professors to

do things differently and do live classes.

Online classes just used to be like, okay,

it's very much easier to go at your own pace or scheduling

around things because you have a test window

that's 12 hours and you can take the test anytime in that 12 hours.

Now, there's a little bit more structure.

I think for me that would be better,

that would make online classes better having the structure,

having the live classes that you can log

in and engage with your professor and your class all at

the same time rather than responding to a forum post and

then waiting eight hours for a response or something like that.

I think that the students currently doing

distance learning are going to be more

prepared than students doing distance learning this time a year ago.

I think that distance learning has improved dramatically because of the situation.

I really don't think that you're going to be necessarily

more disadvantaged because I think

employers are a lot more aware of the situation that you went

through and you're currently going through and I

don't think that anyone will hold it against you.

I think what's going to be the most challenging is depending on the industry you're in, it may or may not be very heavily impacted.

There may not be jobs.

That's one of the things about accounting is that we do

very well in recessions for getting

students to apply because I guess it's one of

those jobs that people think is very safe and job secure.

I think that Jake and I are very similar in age and I graduated high school in

2007 right before the big crash.

For me, job security is very important and

that is something that stirred me towards accounting.

I think it really depends on what you make of it and staying on top

of your own learning will help you be the most prepared that you can for a workplace.

>> Gretchen, we have a question that's directed to you.

When you worked at the investment firm,

what were your day-to-day tasks for new entry level graduate?

Was it difficult to transition?

Is it transition from school to

work or transition from that job out into public accounting,

probably from school to the investment firm?

>> I was thinking school to work,

but maybe if you want to address both, just in case.

>> Sure. Going from school to the investment firm,

it wasn't entry-level job,

so a lot of what I did was reviewing.

I worked in AP, so accounts payable for not accounting majors, sorry.

[LAUGHTER] I did a lot of the invoice review and coding,

making sure that invoices are going to the right department because

financial data is very important and

budgets are really important to especially the large companies.

We would get, I think,

close to 2,500 invoices a month,

and making sure that all of that is going to the right places is really important,

getting the correct approvals on them and everything.

Those are a lot of the entry-level tasks that I would do at the very beginning.

Within a month or two, though,

I was working on account reconciliation for general ledger accounts,

making sure that everything was flowing through correctly.

Employee expense reports, which for

anyone currently doing auditing is one of

the number 1 places that employees try to steal from the company.

So [LAUGHTER] it was

a very important type of tasks for our department to go through those carefully.

I would say there's a lot of entry-level corporate accounting jobs out there.

They were just mostly with big companies because they

have the time and resources to train someone coming in.

Most of the small companies want someone who's already worked in the field because they

can onboard them and in a couple of weeks there up and going and no problems.

So that was my experience with that.

Transitioning to public accounting was fairly similar,

but starting over knowing nothing again,

[LAUGHTER] because they're totally different animals in terms of the fields.

That was also interesting in terms of totally new tasks, totally new software.

Learning new software is, I think,

the hardest part about the transition because everyone uses something different.

[LAUGHTER] Learn Excel, learn lots of Excel.

[LAUGHTER]

>> Perfect. This is a question that I get asked a lot by students,

especially Pullman just tagged there,

Meet the Firm career fair,

Vancouver is having theirs on Wednesday.

How do you recommend keeping a connection with

somebody alive and fresh over a long period of time?

>> I think this is like I said,

I tried putting together on Excel worksheet and I did,

but I'm going to this year look at a better software for tracking.

But what I do,

is I try to connect with my network at least every six months,

if not longer than a year.

It always looks different.

I definitely keep track in Excel because

your network will get pretty big and you'll figure out who you really want to put the effort in because you can't put the effort in with every single person, there's just not enough time.

So for me it looks different.

I have a game night and play Catan with a certain group of people every few months.

Sometimes it'll be we get together and we'll go on a hike together or we play

Nintendo and, for instance, the person that I met at an IMA event,

the monthly events that they have and at

the time he was just a few years in his career at

this reputable law firm in Portland and all of a sudden he's a partner there.

No longer than a year,

one of us will reach out to each other.

I reached out to him and we're having virtual coffee next week.

It's visit combination of methods, reminders, and Excel.

But it's important to make that effort to maintain those relationships,

it looks different for everybody.

>> Yeah, I would say I don't have a spreadsheet.

[LAUGHTER] I think that's very specific to Jake.

But I definitely agree that with those connections,

you do have to decide who's going to be the most important,

you have a few people that you

probably talk to every few months or something like that and that's good timing.

Send them an e-mail, see how they're doing,

how's the industry going.

If you know that they're in busy season,

I would add that as caveat,

that if you know they are in the middle of busy season,

e-mailing for a half an hour or

an hour-long video coffee chat may not elicit the response that you want.

So just be mindful of the industry someone is in,

and just base it off of that as well.

>> That's a very good point. Sorry. [LAUGHTER]

Because the first thing that I was talking about he is a tax attorney,

so I'm very careful because that one I tried to only

do once a year because I think they have to be so busy.

They don't have time and asking somebody out for

a coffee in accounting during busy season it can work,

but I would recommend waiting a little bit.

>> Yeah. The other thing that I would add is that I know

sometimes especially when you're early on in

your career and the people who are important seem to be,

it's like the manager is in partners are super important people.

Those are the connections you should maintain.

I would encourage you to maintain connections over everyone different levels at a firm.

Because again, those people move up,

those people move on in their careers.

Public accounting has a very linear progression of promotions.

That person that maybe you didn't think that they were that important because they're a staff or an intern or something, in five years when you're looking for a job and they're a manager, they're going to remember that you didn't necessarily treat them very well because they were unimportant at the time.

So it goes along with burning the bridges.

So maintaining connections over different levels, not just focusing on the big fish, also the little fish have more time for you sometimes [LAUGHTER] especially at the beginning.

>> Jake, if your network is playing old school Nintendo,

I expect to be invited to the next time.

I think there's a lot of people on this call that would not probably mind to be a part of that kind of networking event.

>> Oh, yeah. They're big until they have all everything.

[LAUGHTER]

>> Jake, we just have a very brief amount of

time so this is the last question but I just want to get it out to you.

Since you were also a finance major,

where can I go to apply for internships for finance?

I have a LinkedIn,

but no luck as of yet.

>> That's a very good question.

When I majored in finance,

it was the most interesting thing for me to go and major in.

I wasn't looking for a finance opportunities.

I needed a 150 credits to get my CPA.

I'm trying to think of how to answer that.

What I would do as far as finding a resource,

that's whatever the college have.

But if I was graduating finance,

I would find in some companies that I don't want to work at

and I'd find some entry-level people on LinkedIn or some recruiters,

asks them out to coffee or whatever in the COVID equivalent

is and it's just the informational interview and it's a lot better to do it as a student.

I've heard because I think a lot of times if you say, hey, I'm a student,

I'm just looking to learn more about the industry VS yeah,

I'm looking for a job, help me.

I think people are a lot more.

I'm not saying it's bad either way,

but I think I have heard people are a lot more responsive and more likely to say, oh,

I totally want to help the student out and they can connect you to somebody else,

say when to reach out to this staff-level person

and you'll have a conversation and they could tell you,

oh, you should totally let me connect you to

this person and that's how it works. That's what I would do.

>> Thank you. Thank you both of you for being here,

Jake and Gretchen, everyone for being a part of this.