

The world of work awaits you, graduates. Keep these things in mind in your job search

- By Heather Boulger
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Berkshire Community College graduates participate in the commencement ceremony at Tanglewood in 2022. The outlook looks good for recent graduates entering the workforce, notes columnist Heather Boulger.

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“Your talent determines what you can do. Your motivation determines how much you are willing to do. Your attitude determines how well you do it.”

That's a quote from storied football coach Lou Holtz, which sets the stage for this next chapter in your life.

It's that time of year again where hundreds of recent graduates will be heading into the labor force. Job markets in every industry have faced drastic challenges over the last few years, and 2024 graduates are heading into a changing workforce.

Graduation is a sacred rite of passage. It's the act of crossing a threshold after years of hard work and studious dedication into a new beginning of a new stage of life. Starting your post-grad life can be the most exciting but also scary time, and the outlook looks good for recent grads. Berkshire County's employment rate dropped to 3.9 percent in March 2024 and the region is showing thousands of opportunities in every industry and occupation.

The class of 2024 is resilient, and should be prepared for the job search process to ensure they find a job that sets them on their desired career path. Here are some tips to help people entering the workforce for the first time or considering a new opportunity.

Be open to new things. Although you just graduated, your education is far from over. Be open to new ideas and adventures. Get involved, volunteer, and continue to grow yourself as a person.

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The workplace is a rapidly changing, dynamic environment, and whatever you find yourself doing today, most likely will not be what you find yourself doing a few years down the road. Embrace growth and a learning mindset and you will become a valuable resource for your employer.

Highlight your skills and how they translate. The job market in the United States is exploding. Because of the talent shortage, businesses are more willing to entertain hiring nontraditional applicants. People are shifting

between business sectors, so it is key to highlight your skills and how they translate. A “can-do” attitude is important. Change is the new normal.

Ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Everyone started somewhere. Speak up and be honest. Employers appreciate those willing to learn and who are honest.

Be true to yourself, stay humble and know your value. Employers are looking at your skill set and experience, but they also want someone who will work well within their culture. Being yourself is essential in making sure you end up in the right place for both you and the company. Be confident but remember to be humble and remain grounded.

Network and interview with confidence. Learn from everyone and tell them you are seeking employment. Remember every moment is an opportunity to learn. Focus on opportunities you are passionate about that will help keep you sharp, help you grow, and maintain your relevance in the market.

Interview often. Experience is everything and putting yourself out there by interviewing will make you more comfortable and confident in the process to help land that right job.

Job opportunities will continue to be in ample supply almost everywhere for candidates who are flexible, proactive and ambitious. Companies are looking for critical thinkers, problem solvers, team players, willingness to learn, and strong communicators.

As tables have turned and the power has shifted to employees, companies are strategizing how to recruit, retain and engage talent. Keep an open mind, network and evaluate your next steps. What does work mean to

you? How does it connect to your purpose and integrate with your life? Revisit your values, skills and gaps. Take this time to reinvent yourself and your definition of success.

Finally practice the three fundamentals of success: Be consistent. Take the time to show up and invest in yourself as you would for your employer. Stay curious, don't be afraid to ask questions, and remain open to change. Stay confident which will gleam a positive attitude and attract positive outcomes.

The opportunities for new employment are bountiful in 2024. Identify your goals and motivational factors and select a profession that aligns with your core values. Perform due diligence and identify jobs and industries of true interest. Don't be afraid to network. On the practical side, always be prepared with an updated résumé, social media profiles and ready for video interviewing.

Congratulations to all recent college graduates out there! There's plenty of opportunity out there, all you have to do it go for it. And if you need additional support, MassHire Berkshire is here to help!

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