

UNCOLLEGE

A Guide to Getting Your Foot in the Door

Tips from industry experts for getting your first job.



Find out if a job is right for you and how to get your foot in the door from professionals in 6 different industries!



Ben Max Rubinstein

Ben is an engineering manager at Facebook. He has a few teams of talented mobile engineers currently working on Facebook Groups. He is a lifelong guitar player and music enthusiast. He believes that constantly nurturing hobbies that you're passionate about is really important to your success and happiness everywhere.

Q: What should an entry-level mobile software engineer candidate know?

A: • Understand what views and data objects are and how they can be connected to the lifecycle of their controllers.

• Know what object and view recycling is and why it's important.

• Know basic threading / task prioritization methodologies on your platform. Understand what should run with "UI priority" and what can run in the background.

Q: What skills should they have on their way in?

A: Have a good understanding of your development environment; Know how to test apps on actual devices and on simulators.

Be able to wrap some basic features up in a product and try going through a shipping process. This shows many abilities that I look for; Initiative, learning on the fly, basic understanding of tradeoffs of a release process and being able to make something useful (especially if going through iOS' review system, vs the looser Android one).

Q: What are some good projects for them to have in their portfolio?

A: You should be able to ship a V1 of a simple app using some of your platform's basic views. Understanding Table views and collections (grids) is pretty useful.

You should be able to have an idea for an app that requires a remote data source or sensor input (for example, you could decide to make a crystal ball app that has a sun shining if it's cold outside and snow if it's cold + you shake the device) as a learning project. It's even better if you have an idea of something you actually need and think you can create. Dream big.

Q: What will someone learn on the job with you?

A: How to write and design robust code that passes the test of time.

How to ship apps continuously.

How to iterate, measure, and pivot.

How to optimize for small screens.

How to focus on impactful features.

How to improve your app's retention.

How to best support your app's use cases.

How to improve conversion rates and user feedback.

How to increase the time spent in your app.



Nathan Maton

Nathan is a Program Manager at Google. Describing himself as a, “Transmitter of ideas, galvanizer of people, builder of tools,” Nathan strongly believes in seismic change through courage, trust and collaboration. He has built communities from scratch in multiple industries and scaled them in both depth and breadth. Nathan advises startups and NGOs and enjoys working most with small teams where the creativity is high. Nathan’s specialties include: Community Management, Product Management, Educational technology, and Programming.

Q: What should an entry-level Community Manager candidate know?

A: *Social Science and Psychology. You should know some social science around how people build relationships with each other. Any psychology knowledge will be helpful - from marketing psychology, to understanding how brains work*

Q: What skills should they have on their way in?

A: *You need to be cross functional. As a community manager, it’s your job to listen closely to what your users are saying, find meaning through the noise, and apply that information to many different areas of your company. You are not a megaphone, it’s more of a two way, peer-to- peer communication. You get users to talk to each other, and help users talk to your company. To do that well you need to be adept at product design, product innovation, customer support, and marketing.*

You need to be a skilled communicator. Can you write? Can you inspire? Can you persuade? Can you console? There’ll be grumpy members in any community and times when you’ll need to send an email to millions of people. Communities are about touchy feely stuff. Sometimes a fun video for your members can do more than a well structured plan to market to them. You’ll need to know when to try some of each tactic.

In addition to being skilled at communicating with your users, you also need to be skilled at articulating your work. Community management is a nascent role, so people think different things about it - some think that it’s just social, some think that it’s just support. You have to be able to define it for yourself and define it for others to set realistic expectations at work.

You need to be empathetic and great at customer service. The person who is hiring a community manager is looking for someone who’s going to meet customers’ needs, and make customers happy. You need to be able to listen to customers with empathy, understand their problems, and help them find solutions. Sometimes you have to listen to cranky customers, that’s part of the job.

The biggest skill is problem solving. You’ll have millions of problems thrown at you. You’ll need to be able to break them into smaller parts and offer strategic reasons for each solution.

Q: What are some good projects for them to have in their portfolio?

A: *Show empathy, and communication skills. You should be thinking about how you can communicate that you are empathetic, and an outstanding communicator through your portfolio. You could have articulate blog posts that show people what you do and what you've done. You could create presentations of things that you're passionate about. You could make a video, showcasing your fun and vibrant personality.*

Be part of some online communities. If there's a product you like, be part of that product's community. Become a power user. Lead an online community.

Become a power user on social media. Pick a topic, market, or trend you're interested in and try tweeting about it 3 times a day for a month to see how people start to perceive you as an expert. Use that to get a job, customers or something else you want.

Q: What will someone learn on the job with you?

A: Product knowledge - you will learn more about how products are built.

How to translate between different parts of a company.

How to listen.

How to be organized - you will have a lot of different responsibilities, being able to juggle and stay on top of them all will take learning new levels of organization.

How to say no - you will learn how know your limits, and not take on more responsibility than you can manage.



Charles Kelly

Charles runs Tenant Representation for CBRE in Japan. Tenant Representation, called by many different names throughout the industry, is essentially commercial (primarily office space) real estate brokerage where the sole interest of the “broker” or “Tenant Rep” is aligned with the tenant/occupier. He has ten years of experience working in commercial real estate in China, Hong Kong, and now Tokyo.

Q: What should an entry-level Real Estate Sales candidate know?

- A:**
- *Understand (just Google. . .) the standard market leasing practices for the market in which you would like to work.*
 - *How to be presentable to the CEO of a Fortune 500 company. Yes, a suit is required for this job. . . .*
 - *Know how to illustrate that you are a team player and someone that would be capable of going out and winning her/his own business in a year or two.*
 - *If looking to work in Asia, an additional language (for the country you would like to work in) is a plus, but not typically a requirement.*
 - *If you are looking to work in Asia, being well traveled and able to show that you understand local cultural differences is a plus.*

Q: What skills should they have on their way in?

- A:** *Know Excel. This is good for two primary reasons: 1) in the beginning you will need to partner with senior brokerage personnel and they often do not have the time to work on spreadsheets - if you make their lives easier and show that you are good and detail-oriented, there is a high chance that they will bring you into more deals which will benefit your career and your bank account. 2) Clients nowadays are looking for an analytical and data-based approach and recommendations. This is a basic item that people in the industry now fail to understand, but those that do, succeed.*

Be able to speak in front of people. You will be pitching clients and competing for those clients on a weekly basis. If you are confident, clients will be confident in you. Be able to tell a story, and articulate what you are thinking.

Good writing: grammar, spelling. Emails are the primary mode of communication in this industry, and as you are effectively an expert in your field. Everything you communicate in writing needs to be clear and concise. Bullet points are good.

Be able to see things from the other side of the fence/live in another person's shoes. These types of “salesy” roles are about connecting with people – the bulk of experience will be gained on the job but if you hone your ability to listen and react to a clients needs, that'll go a long way.

Q: What are some good projects for an entry level candidate to have in their portfolio?

A: *In a perfect world, have an internship at one of the international real estate consultancy firms: CBRE, JLL, Cushman & Wakefield, Colliers, DTZ, etc.*

Acquaint yourself with the product in the market. Basically just walk around town, have a look in the different office lobbies. What types of companies occupy space there? How do the buildings differ? Where do they differ? How accessible are they?

Read the latest research reports from the international firms – all readily available on the website – and try and understand the current dynamics running the marketplace.

Q: What will someone learn on the job with you?

A: *A focused business development approach based on the characteristics of the market place.*

Global, regional, and local client and internal stakeholder engagement.

How to pitch to multinational clients.

How to partner with a teammate in a local country who does not speak English well/native level.

How to write a business plan and revenue forecasting.

How to set realistic goals based on your experience and the market.

How best to track what you accomplish.



Margot Malarkey

Margot Malarkey is an Associate supporting the Regulatory and Compliance Strategy Practice at CEA. She serves clients in the transportation and renewable energy sectors through regulatory strategy and policy analysis, as well as stakeholder outreach and engagement.

Margot also serves as the Program Manager for the MESA Standards Alliance, a consortium of electric utilities and technology suppliers developing an open, non-proprietary set of specification and communication standards for the energy storage industry.

Q: What should an entry-level Environmental Consulting candidate know?

A: *You should know how environmental regulations impact different business sectors. Choose one area you're really excited about and get smart on it. If you want to understand what's going on with the drought in California, read the news, understand all the factors at play on a systems level - what is water distribution, how does that system work? What is ground water? How will the drought affect farmers, how will it affect consumers? The quickest way to learn is to ask questions and talk to people in the field, but before you do that it's great to have context.*

Q: What skills should they know on their way in?

A: *Research. Working as a consultant means that you are paid to give knowledge to a client, so being an effective researcher is key. You need to be able to sift through a huge amount of information and pick out the things that are going to be important to a client. The other day one of our clients wanted to look at desalination barges as an option for providing drinking water during California's drought. So I had to start at the beginning researching the basic questions - How many desal barges exist in the world? How much potable water can they produce? How much more does desalinated water cost per unit than traditional freshwater sources?*

You need to be an excellent and concise writer. People often hire consultants because their organization does not have the time or expertise to explore an opportunity or analyze a problem. What makes you good at your job is your ability to succinctly articulate complicated subjects so that a client can get a short memo or presentation and immediately understand the key issues that matter to them. In writing a memo, you are competing for the valuable time of some very influential people. Often times they don't want to know all the facts, only the two or three which are most relevant to them.

Ability to manage multiple tasks at once. Often times you will be working on multiple projects. To be eligible for your first job in an environmental consulting firm it is important to be able to demonstrate a time when you've had to manage conflicting priorities and show how it is that you keep yourself organized.

Tip for: Environmental Policy Consultant

A: *Be a good public speaker. As you advance as a consultant, you will be asked to present your findings and analysis to big groups of people. Sometimes you will also be asked to represent your client in front of other people and they want to be able to trust you.*

Excel. In consulting, you're most likely going to go a strategic, writing focused route or a deeper data analysis route. My skill-set is more in writing, but I am taking classes now to improve my quantitative skills.. If you want to be more of a data-driven person have experience with excel, and know how to do different kinds of data analysis.

Q: **What are some good projects for them to have in their portfolio?**

A: *Working on anything that shows that you take initiative, can manage deadlines, and can understand how to address a problem on a systems level will make you stand out when you're looking for your first job. Volunteer on a campaign, do some grassroots organizing. One of our recent entry-level applicants organized a campaign to make sure there were no water bottles at her college graduation. She worked through the logistics of that problem - people are going to need water, where is it sourced from, who has the decision making power, who do i have to organize - which demonstrated that she could identify a problem, understand that it's influenced by multiple things, and take initiative and problem solve to take care of the problem and achieve her intended result.*

Writing. Practice writing memos - the format is a brief introduction with a high level summary of the key points, followed by a more in-depth explanation of each item. Write about a policy issue or a case study that you're interested in. You could write about how a nonprofit is working to protecting coastal fisheries in the Pacific Northwest, pick one of the programs that they've executed and detail what their three most successful intervention have been. Be as specific as possible.

Read this memo on effective memo writing for some context. The following quote excellently summarizes just how important writing can be.

"You can influence people — and thus both policy and implementation — in three ways: by writing, by speaking, and by sending symbolic signals. Early in your career, your writing may be your most important tool of influence. If your ideas make sense on paper, others may invite you to explain them to larger audiences."

Q: **What will someone learn on the job with you?**

A: *You will get a really good introduction to the environmental regulatory system.*

Your first year you will be given a lot of basic administrative tasks. You just need to prove that you can organize a meeting, and the caterer is going to get there on time, and you can make sure the packet has the right page numbers. While you do this you should ask a lot of questions, learn how your company works, how they break problems down, and learn a lot about the issues that they work on.

You will learn how to manage expectations, and follow through on deliverables.

You will learn how to manage a client relationship.



Patrick Scerbo

Patrick works in New Business Development & Account Strategy for iHeartMedia out of their headquarters in New York, NY. Originally from Northern NJ, Patrick went to Santa Clara University for his Bachelors Degree with work experience at the Oakland Raiders, in the Telecom & Service Industries.

Q: What should an entry-level marketing candidate know?

A: *Be ready to explain why you want to be in the world of Advertising. Too often we interview candidates that claim they want to work with us because they want a career in Marketing as if the show Mad Men inspired their decision. Similar to the Sports Industry, entry-level/early experience roles are unglamorous and require a lot of grunt work. Articulate your drive to learn the fundamentals and earn opportunities to advance.*

To the point above, don't be fooled by how awesome the job/company appears. All good marketers have a skill to convince people that they are doing the coolest, most innovative work in the market. Be prepared to ask questions that uncover the aspects of the job that aren't the most fun.

Be proactive, do not be reactive. During the interview process, it's your responsibility to follow up. Once a week is totally acceptable (without being annoying). Make mistakes, just don't make them the same way twice. You want to execute on a high level/make your boss look good but your real character is shown when you conquer adversity. Being a problem solver is much more important than a "know-it-all."

Q: What skills should they have on their way in?

A: *I repeat the point above, but with different reasoning. Be proactive, do not be reactive. For the first year of your career you should make it your goal to have no down time while at work. Ask for projects; if management needs help with anything, get involved. That's the only way to learn at a rapid pace.*

Competency in Microsoft Office is an absolute must. While being proficient in standard programs like Excel & PowerPoint can help new-hires stand out, there is no bigger "Red Flag" than an employee who can't get through the basics of the MS Office Suite. Beyond the Marketing world, I would make this recommendation to anyone under the age of 56.

Play by some of the rules, but don't play by all of them. What I mean by this: managers like young people who aren't afraid to make some mistakes and put themselves out there a bit. This applies on two fronts: 1). Questioning protocol, as long as it comes from a respectful & educated place, can often lead to better business practices. 2). Showing up earlier, staying longer, and dressing better than you have to are all positive ways of standing out. If you do the opposite, you'll still stand out but in the wrong light.

Q: What are some good projects for them to have in their portfolio?

A: • Internships are huge. Beg, borrow, steal to get one. Spoiler Alert: You're probably not going to acquire tons of relevant experience, but you will gain fundamentals of the professional life. The earlier you can get in to an internship program, the better.

****In my opinion, it doesn't have to be in the industry you want, as long as it provides strong talking points****

• Join Clubs/Play Sports/Contribute to the Community during your Undergraduate tenure. Virtually all jobs require social interaction, and having activities on your resume that go beyond "Relevant Coursework" help prove you can interact with other people

Q: What will someone learn on the job with you?

A: • Sales fundamentals applicable to all industries

- How to effectively communicate, both verbally & written in a corporate environment
- The Holistic view of the Marketing industry and the different roles therein
- Direct correlation between smart work and success
- Networking, information gathering, and prospecting tools



Molly Johnston

Molly is the Director of Teams and Event Giving at the National MS Society – Greater Northwest Chapter. She has been involved in non-profit work for over 5 years and received a Fundraising Management Certificate from the University of Washington in 2012.

Q: What should an entry-level Fundraising Candidate know?

A: *Know what Moves Management is and how to apply it in your work*

Know how to listen and how to build relationships

Q: What skills should someone know on their way in?

A: *How to fundraise themselves. It's challenging asking for money if you haven't had experience doing it yourself.*

How to cold call and feel comfortable with it. Sometimes you just need to call and introduce yourself.

Q: What are some good projects for an entry level candidate to have in their portfolio?

A: *You should know the flow of an event, from registration numbers, recruitment and fundraising strategies. Also, how to create a*

Moves Management plan with one of your top donors.

Q: What will someone learn on the job with you?

A: *How to build relationships.*

How to listen well.

How to say thank you year round.

How to incentives groups to fundraise.

How to convey their impact on the mission.