

# **Unit 12 – SEM Careers**

## **Student Handout**

### **Career Development**

The process of gaining the skills and knowledge necessary for, in the short term, beginning a career in a desired field and, in the long term, creating opportunities for career advancement

Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You. You're every bit as much a brand as Nike, Coke, Pepsi, or the Body Shop.

## Sports Career Consulting Blog

### “Five Keys to the Game”

In all my interaction over the years with students, whether it was during my time with the Portland Trail Blazers or events hosted by Sports Career Consulting, the question I get asked most frequently is focused on what steps are necessary for pursuing a career in sports. It is a great question to be sure, and obviously one that many students would like to see answered. It is not, however, one that is answered easily, nor is it one with any “correct” answer or a magical solution. The good news is that there are several key pieces of advice anyone interested in a career in sports should be aware of and we’ll share them in today’s blog post. Rest assured that this is not any complex formula by any stretch, but one that I can assure you is paramount to breaking into the industry. Here are our five keys to the game...

#### *Five Keys to the Game*

##### **Key #1: Be Passionate**

Regardless of which career path you choose (sports, entertainment or otherwise), find something you can be passionate about. Passion is one of the primary, underlying characteristics shared by the majority of people who find success in their chosen field. Take Kobe Bryant for example...one could argue that very few have played the game of basketball with more passion. It is that passion that drives Kobe to be one of the best (if not the best) basketball player in the world today.

Do not think for a second, however, that you need to be a professional athlete to be passionate about something. Consider Phil Knight, founder of Nike, who used his passion for running to fuel a passion for developing (and later selling) the perfect running shoe. His passion turned into a multi-billion dollar global brand. Knight’s passion was one of the key ingredients in the recipe for Nike’s success. In fact, it was recently announced that Phil Knight will be inducted into the basketball Hall of Fame!

SCC has managed a number of events focused on careers in sports and entertainment which afforded me the luxury of hearing from many prominent industry professionals. One pearl of wisdom that was repeated over and over again is this: ***Find a job doing something you love and you’ll never work a day in your life!*** In other words, find a way to channel your passions and funnel them into an energy that will translate to success in whatever career path you choose.

## **Key #2: Gain Experience**

One of the first criteria sports organizations look at in the employment process is related experience. Getting your foot in the door is such a crucial step toward breaking into *any* profession, but particularly in the sports industry. There is no secret formula to tell you exactly when you should begin looking for opportunities to gain experience, but this idiom sums it up best: there is no time like today. The earlier you have shown a commitment to a career in sports, the more marketable you become to a prospective employer.

Involving yourself in any type of job shadow or internship experience is a great way to get a head start on the competition. Talk to any local teams, health clubs, colleges, or even your local schools about assisting them with anything they need with their athletic programs. You may also want to consider volunteering to assist with any local events in your area. Showing that you have some experience with successful event management would be another feather in your cap. You would be surprised at how willing organizations are to accept volunteer work. Remember, *your future begins today!*

## **Key #3: Network, Network, Network**

Networking is a great way to increase your personal marketability by connecting with others. In sports, like any other industry, relationships matter. Getting to know people who work in the field will provide you with a great opportunity to gain a fundamental understanding of future job responsibilities, learn about industry trends and find out what job opportunities are available.

Networking is one of the reasons why getting a foot in the door with a sports organization sooner rather than later could be instrumental in advancing your career. You will have an opportunity to meet interns and students who are involved in the same effort as well as managers and executives through these organizations. Spending some time getting to know those individuals, and learning from them, will be your biggest asset in the end.

You must be cognizant of the fact that networking doesn't necessarily mean you should spend every waking hour on social media. In fact, as you've probably been told 1,000 times already, being careful of what you post on social media can be the difference between gaining employment and becoming a professional job seeker. However, if utilized in the proper way, however, social networking platforms *can* also be very useful tools. Additionally, professional networking websites like LinkedIn are used by a large contingency of sports industry professionals and provide a great forum for meeting people who could help advance your career.

#### **Key #4: Show a DESIRE to learn**

A big part of making yourself more marketable is demonstrating a *desire* to learn. Note that I did not say you need to show a “willingness” to learn. There is a BIG difference between a willingness to learn and a desire to learn. Those who have a thirst for knowledge are usually the people standing at the top of the hill. If you truly want to learn, you will greatly improve your odds of being the one at the top.

If you truly have a desire to learn, you will do everything you can to absorb as much information relating to your potential career path as possible. Read. Talk to people involved in the industry. Spend time with the people you admire, respect and for whom you have an appreciation for their accomplishments. Try to gain some insight on what has allowed them to enjoy successes throughout their careers. Pay attention to things that could be related to your career path in your every day life. Pay attention to what you see in the news, on the radio and on the Internet to learn and follow industry trends.

Doing all of these things on your own will show a potential employer that you are a self-starter and that you have the grit and determination necessary to excel in the industry. You will also gain pertinent knowledge, observe and absorb interesting and relevant ideas (which will potentially inspire great ideas from you), and you may even hear about potential job openings. Consider all the ways to improve yourself and make yourself an expert in your field.

#### **Key #5: Make Yourself Marketable**

*If* you successfully take advantage of the steps presented in the first four keys to the game, you will be on the fast track to making yourself a marketable asset in the eyes of a prospective employer.

You might not be lucky enough to have a local team or organization in your community. Do not let that get in the way or be a deterrent. You have many resources at your disposal. Find a way to align yourself with experiences that will provide relevant job experience that could translate to other aspects of a career in sports. Does your community have an annual festival? Are there any local events that attract an audience? Can you help market or promote sporting events at your school? Can you put on an event of your own? There are many ways you can find opportunities to gain experience. Sometimes you just need to get a little creative. Remember, determination and perseverance breeds opportunity.

Marketing is not an exact science; it is all about getting people to remember. Making yourself marketable is about positioning yourself in such a way that others (employers in particular) will not forget!

**\*\*\* Careers in Sports: A Self Assessment \*\*\***

- 1) How can I apply the five keys to the game to my own personal set of circumstances?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) What will make me marketable? Identify a specific plan.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) What characteristics do I possess to make me stand out among other prospective employees in such a competitive field? How can I distinguish myself from my peers?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) Where can I get related experience?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 5) Am I willing to make the sacrifices necessary to break into this field?