Understanding What On-Campus Recruiters Want

Hire and Retain the Best People
Companies tend to take the long-term perspective in their hiring. They look for people who will make an impact on and difference in their organization. Therefore, companies look for people who are committed to their industry and company. In the recruiting process, company “fit” is important; possibly even more important than previous experience or qualifications. If they can’t find a perfect qualifications fit, they may take people that appear to have excellent ability, but do not have as much knowledge or experience in their particular industry or function. They are confident that, after training, these people can make a major impact on the organization and be future leaders.

This is similar to professional sports teams doing drafts for talent. These drafts usually have multiple rounds. The most talented are drafted in the first round. It is important for you to understand where your background, achievements, talents, and skills allow you to compete. You need to find the opportunities that will let you excel and become that organization’s MVP.

The Hiring Process
What is the hiring and recruiting process? “It depends,” is the answer that you will hear often at the Hotel School. The different segments that recruit have different recruiting rituals that they follow.

There are, however, some common elements for all industry segments. For the companies that recruit on-campus, there is a general schedule they follow. Companies that recruit during the fall semester typically come to campus from early October through November. Most interviewing takes place the third week of October, the week of the annual Hotel School Career Day. A small number of companies attend career day just to market to students and then return in the spring for interviews. Interviews during the spring semester generally take place from February through March. Many companies hold presentations the evening before interviews, or atrium company showcase the day before, or day of, interviews. Recruiters expect students to attend these events to introduce themselves and learn more about the company before the interview.

Companies continue to solicit resumes, through “resume drops” throughout the fall and spring semesters, outside of the typical recruiting cycle. If the needs and number of suitable candidates match-up, companies will sometimes come to campus to interview, but generally it is done by phone or by students visiting the company. Smaller companies, and some industries, do not have staff devoted to college recruiting, and may practice “just-in-time” hiring by posting positions through our online permanent job listings.
Attributes Recruiters Look For
Attributes recruiters are seeking vary depending on where you are in the recruiting process. There are three different parts of the selection process; resume, networking, and interviewing. The word selection is used because, with very few exceptions, the companies are not here recruiting you into their companies, but rather, they are selecting you from a group of highly qualified candidates.

Resume
Since this is a selection process, where you have been in the past is important; this includes your education and experience. Name recognition and respect for the selection process in these institutions is important.

Next, they look for past and present leadership positions. Quality is more important than quantity. Do not necessarily list everything. If you do, it becomes a meaningless list.

In the experience section, the companies look for candidates who have made a difference in their work life. They expect to see achievements and accomplishments, not a listing of duties and responsibilities. Since many Hotel School students are changing careers, to one extent or another, the actual duties or responsibilities may be of marginal value to a company in another industry or another function in the same industry.

Companies are very interested in the behaviors and talents that contributed to your accomplishments:

- What qualities do you have that make you an above-average performer?
- Did you take initiative to get things done?
- Do you work well with people?
- Can you influence people to get them to accomplish tasks?
- Can you analyze data?
- Can you analyze problems?
- Can you come up with creative solutions, and implement them?
- Are you a confident, sharp person who presents himself or herself professionally?

In the latter sections of the resume (activities, skills, interests, etc.), you complete the picture of you, the person. Some recruiters will go straight to these sections to find out what makes you unique. This is where you can mention your accomplishments and achievements in your personal life.

Networking on Campus
Employers will begin coming to Ithaca in October to talk about their companies and meet you. During career day, company presentations, and atrium company showcases, you will have the opportunity to meet company representatives and make an impression. In some cases you meet and start creating relationships with companies before they see your resume. This is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your communication skills, confidence, presence, and passion for their industry.
Excellent communication skills are probably the most important factor. While you may start performing analytical work in many post MMH jobs, you may have significant interaction with others at high levels in organizations. It is critical that you have confident presence and good communication skills to make successful presentations and convince people of your ideas and/or products.

The other key quality companies look for is passion for their industry, their company, and function. Some students who go into revenue management do not have any prior experience. But, they are able to develop genuine passion for the revenue management function and for the companies who recruit at the Hotel School. Students interested in gaming will demonstrate their passion by making trips to Atlantic City and Las Vegas to network and do informational interviews. Genuine passion can often compensate for other weaknesses.

Your enthusiasm can often be demonstrated by asking questions based on thorough research and investigation of issues and trends affecting the company or industry. Speaking with alumni who work for the company is probably the most effective way to prepare for interviews with the company. If you make a favorable impression, during these on-campus interactions, alumni will help you navigate the process.

**Interviewing**

Most on-campus interviews are the basic behavioral interviews. This style of interviewing is based on the concept that past behaviors predict future behaviors. Companies have determined that there are four or five behaviors that they think are the keys to success in their companies. Their interview questions are designed to determine the extent to which you have demonstrated these behaviors in the past.

In the interview you have to differentiate yourself from the rest of the candidates. The first step in this process is to understand what it is that you have to sell that differentiates you from the rest. Therefore, start thinking about your accomplishments and achievements and the behaviors that allowed you to be successful.