

## **Hear it from your Seniors: International Alumni + Job Search Success**

Notes from presentations and remote input for this event held April 28, 2009

### **Alumni Presenters**

#### **Nitish Gupta**

M.S. Computer Systems Engineering, 2006, now at State Street Global Markets

#### **Way Poh**

M.Ed Adult and Organizational Learning, 2008 now at Demandware

#### **Neha Saple**

M.S. Telecommunication Networks, 2008, now at Akamai

#### **Shivanandan Vaidya**

M.S. Information Systems, 2008, now at EMC

### **Key themes presented:**

If co-op is an option, take advantage of it. Co-op is a huge benefit not only because of the work experience it provides, but also because it gives an introduction to how business is conducted in the US and also allows you to engage in relationships with people who will be willing and able to help you later on in your job search.

Many presenters had independently sought and found internships in addition to co-op. They went an extra mile - further than the norm - to get experience, create relationships and learn more about American workplaces, work culture and style.

Presenters made excellent use of NU resources, especially career fairs, from which 3 of 4 mentioned specifically they made contacts that would lead them ultimately to co-ops and/or jobs.

All the presenters told stories which reflected their efforts to engage people and make relationships which would help them in their searches. They talked to recruiters and asked them for feedback in career fairs, employer information sessions on campus. They stayed in touch with people regularly. One presenter described her response to a rejection in her job search: instead of doing nothing, she responded by thanking the company for giving her the chance to meet with them and asked to be kept in mind for future openings. Within a short time, she had a different job at that company, as a recruiter brought her back for another opening.

People mentioned LinkedIn as an effective networking tool for finding people to talk to, to extend a network, and to research companies. The LinkedIn group Northeastern Alumni and International Students was set up by a recent NU graduate, Priyanka Banerjee, to serve as one networking resource. NU students and alumni may also want to join other groups, including other large Northeastern groups and industry or interest groups on LinkedIn. LinkedIn actually gives much better access to recent graduates and their employment information than the NU Alumni Directory, which few recent graduates seem to use to record their information.

Presenters pointed to the value of learning how best to engage contacts and use networks in a job search, including using informational interviewing as a way to learn about companies or particular jobs and engage a person's interest in helping.

**A recent graduate sent this comment:**

"I have found a job and I would be more than willing to share my experiences and would be extremely happy if it could help somebody. I have found this job by Networking and I believe it is the best way for finding a job in any kind of economy."

**Dana Moussa, B.S. in International Affairs, 2008, now at Endeavor, sent this comment from Cairo**

"I graduated with honors from NEU in May 2008. I am an international student from Cairo, Egypt, who studied at NEU for four years. I chose Boston because I knew that the student environment that it offered could not be replicated anywhere else, and I was right. I can honestly say the best years of my life were at Northeastern, and therefore I hoped to stay in the US a little longer, maybe get a working Visa through a job and move somewhere in the United States. However the Recession has made it very difficult for anyone, let alone an international student who needs a working Visa to get a job. It was a hard decision but after looking into it I decided I needed to leave the states go back home and figure out my next plan.

The way I see it in a recession there are two routes to take for people in our situation either you go back to school and hope by the time you get out things have picked up or you find the small pockets of opportunity in this financial crisis.

I currently work at a non profit called Endeavor ( [www.endeavor.org](http://www.endeavor.org)).It's an organization based in New York that works with entrepreneurs and medium sized companies in emerging economies. I work at their affiliate office in Cairo, Egypt. I basically screen and select entrepreneurs that join our pipeline in hopes of becoming Endeavor entrepreneurs and in receiving services from our organization that allow them to grow locally and internationally. This entails meeting companies from many different industries and listening to their operations, experiences, issues, assessing them, as well as helping them write a profile that includes all their companies' information including financials.

This has allowed to me to see that, yes, many companies are facing issues because of the crisis and have cutback, however in this region of emerging economies, opportunity still exists. Companies are expanding, stores are opening up, and people are finding jobs. Many of the companies here are facing the crisis but lots of people around the world are now looking at this region. The crisis has created a shift where once the US consumer was king, now it is the emerging economies' consumer that contributes the most in terms of demand. My advice to you is look beyond your immediate borders, look for jobs outside the United States, you are only young once with no responsibilities, you do not need to be confined to one country, explore finding jobs elsewhere."

**Palaniappan Nagappan, M.S. Mechanical Engineering, 2008, now at Ansys, Inc.** sent the attached PowerPoint presentation with his recommendations, and also his story.

"I started my job search approximately 3 or 4 months before graduation. Being an international student it was never easy to find jobs even in good economic situations.

I completed my Masters from Mechanical Engineering. I did a summer intern in 2007 and the job search was mostly oriented towards my final thesis and summer internship. This gave me an opportunity to look for jobs in 2 different fields: nanotechnology (my thesis work @ NEU) and software quality assurance (Summer intern).

My initial search was mainly concentrated on the job search sites. I did at least 5-6 job applications a week for jobs that I thought I could qualify for. I did turn up some interviews but unfortunately nothing concrete followed. *Then I started applying to companies directly through their websites and followed by direct e-mails to contact persons provided.* This did work and I finally ended up with a few interviews. So initially it was about a month or two to get the basic interview call - and which was concrete and can definitely expect something if I do well in interviews.

I ended up in a job which had the same job responsibilities as my internship. Internship experience was a big plus for me to get this job.

This was as I had mentioned in the presentation as "Branching out". My internship was not connected to my Masters but some of the softwares which I learned in my undergraduate studies helped me get the internship and then finally helped me in getting a full-time position as well. So if there is any concrete reasons students can think of branching out – **This might mean having a Plan B....**

I hope this helps. And yet again I apologize for not making it in person.

**Career Services thanks all participants**, those who were able to come in person, those who sent messages or material, and those who expressed their support, for their generosity in sharing their thoughts, their time and their encouragement with students and recent alumni who are searching for jobs.