

Begin Your Career In
Public Accounting
What You Should Know To Be Successful
During the Recruiting Process

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**INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP
CD EDITION**

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Why I Wrote This Book

Public accounting is a wonderful industry in which to begin a career. After a few years, an entire world of business opportunities will open up. Many students aspire to begin their careers in this field but do not have the necessary information to help them get their foot in the door. Even with the proverbial foot in the door, they often do not have the information to subsequently land the job.

I managed to negotiate my way into the world of public accounting by getting good advice from knowledgeable and well-informed people. That advice led me to a very successful career. My career consisted of two summer internships, and five fascinating years with one of the world's largest firms.

While working in public accounting, I participated in recruiting other sharp men and women for the company. What I noticed was that many potential recruits, and the recruits themselves, would make costly errors that could have been avoided. These errors sometimes meant the difference between being extended a job offer, or being disregarded so entirely that the firm would not even send them a rejection letter.

I would always do my best to coach students on approaches to handling different types of recruiting situations. However, I could only talk to students one at a time, and there were so many that needed assistance. I was fortunate to have helpful individuals reach out to me. This book will assist you in your career goal of getting a job in public accounting, supplying those pieces of information to put you ahead of your competition.

Why I Wrote This Book

This book is meant to better position you for a career in public accounting. It is a quick read of my observations and personal insights into the recruiting environment over a seven-year period. It is aimed at college students both graduating from a four-year college or university seeking full-time employment and college juniors wanting to get an internship in public accounting.

A successful recruiting process is what you should achieve as a result of reading this book. Success is, in fact, more than getting a job in public accounting. It's making an informed decision on the firm with which to begin your career. You should not only know which firms you *want* to work for, but also the firms you *don't want to* work for.

Consider this a “popcorn book.” You don't necessarily need to read it chronologically. You may want to skim through the table of contents and jump to a particular topic of interest. I believe each topic contains golden nuggets of information that will be helpful to you.

Big Four Vs. Second Tier

You have probably heard of the Big Four and the second-tier firms. There are differences between them, but the similarities far outweigh the differences. Keep this in mind when it comes time to submit resumes.

I've often heard students make statements, such as, "I only want to work for one of the Big Four." Statements like that have always struck me as interesting because most students don't know what distinguishes a Big Four firm from a second-tier firm. The only difference I have seen is that Big Four firms have more snob appeal – excuse me, I mean curb appeal – than the second-tier firms when it comes time to talk to your friends and classmates. Students often think bigger is better, but this is not necessarily so.

When my classmates and I were being recruited, there was one young woman who had received an offer from a second-tier firm (Kenneth Levanthal) but was so Big Six-minded (can you believe we're now down to four?) and snooty that she declined the offer. One week after turning down Kenneth Levanthal, the firm announced it was merging with Ernst & Young. She had no other offer from a major firm. Guess what she missed out on.

You don't want to make this mistake. Here's why. The second-tier firms are large themselves. At a certain point of comparison between the two, the numbers get astronomical. What's the difference between \$5 billion in revenues and \$1 billion? I'll tell you what the difference is: It's the difference between being labeled Big Four vs. second tier. In other

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words, does it make sense to claim friendship with Bill Gates and turn your nose up at those who have befriended Warren Buffet? Of course not! Both men are rich beyond what most people can imagine. My point is this: both the Big Four and the second-tier are large firms that generate tremendous amounts of revenue and are respected by their clients, potential clients, and competitors in the industry. Both types have a global presence in the public accounting marketplace.

There are, of course, differences between the Big Four and the second-tier firms. The Big Four are much larger in terms of the number of employees. Also, you may find Big Four offices in more countries than a second-tier firm. However, most countries are a plane ride away, and the second-tier firms have the ability to mobilize their staff when needed.

You will find that all firms are pushing their employees to specialize, because their clients want specialists. If you work for a Big Four firm, you may find that there is pressure to specialize much sooner in your career than at a second-tier firm. In the second-tier firm, you may have a better opportunity to build a foundation as a generalist and specialize later.