Careers in Mass Communication

Television
* TV News:
    Reporter/anchor
    Writer
    Assignments editor
    Newscast producer
    Newscast director
    Production:
        video editor/wire editor
        camera operation
        field camera
        satellite engineer
        sound operation
        character generation
        floor manager/director
        teleprompter operation
    Public affairs programming
    Promotions/community relations
    Researcher/fact checker
* Sports
    Anchor/writer/reporter
    Videography/editing
    Producer
* Advertising (see also separate Advertising section)
    Creative director
    Writer/editor/commercials
    Sales
    Account manager
* Programming
    Script writing/editing
    Production (same jobs as above, plus film editing and developing)
    Promotion
* Marketing/promotion (see also Public Relations)
* Digital/web/social media (see also separate Digital Media section)

Recording
* Recording engineer/producer
* Marketing/promotion
* Digital/web/social media (see also Digital Media section)

Radio
* Disk jockey
* News reporter/anchor

* News director
* Production
        Audio editor
* Program design/music director
* Advertising (see also Advertising section)
* Promotions
* Sports
* Digital/web/social media (see also Digital Media section)

Digital Media
* Web site design
* Web site operation/management
* Writing/reporting
* Editing
* Photography
* Computer graphics/illustrations
* Video/audio editing/streaming
* Social media manager/coordinator/monitor
        Content
        Analytics/strategy
* Aggregator
* Game designer
* Online community manager
* Digital strategist/SEO
* App/software development
* Advertising (see also separate Advertising section)
* Marketing/promotion (see also separate Public Relations section)

Newspapers (daily, weekly, monthly, specialty)
* Writing/reporting
        News, features, arts/entertainment/leisure, business, sports, education,
        columns/reviews, government, health/science
* Investigative reporter
* Editing
* Photography
* Computer graphics/illustrations
* Advertising (see also separate Advertising section)
* Copy editor
* Wire editor
* Layout/page design
* Researcher/fact checker
* Editorial cartoonist
* Marketing/promotion (see also separate Public Relations section)
* Digital/web/social media (see also separate Digital Media section)

Magazines (keep in mind that there is a magazine for every subject)
    * Writing/reporting
    * Editing
    * Photography
    * Computer graphics/illustrations
    * Advertising (see also separate Advertising section)
    * Marketing/promotion (see also separate Public Relations section)
    * Researcher/fact checker
    * Digital/web/social media (see also separate Digital Media section)

Book Publishing
    * Writing
    * Editing
    * Photography
    * Computer graphics/illustrations/art director
    * Marketing/promotion/publicity (see also separate Public Relations section)
    * Researcher/fact checker
    * Digital/web/social media (see also separate Digital Media section)

Film
    * Script writing/editing
    * Production (same types of jobs as listed under Television)
    * Marketing/promotion (see also separate Public Relations section)
    * Digital/web/social media (see also separate Digital Media section)

Advertising (newspapers, magazines, Internet, television, radio, advertising agencies)
    * Medium:
            Sales representative
            Designer
            Copy writer
            Producer
    * Agency:
            Account executive/supervisor
            Designer
            Copy writer
            Media planner
            Media buyer
    * Creative director
    * Client services
    * Marketing/brand development
    * Digital/web/social media (see also separate Digital Media section)

Public Relations
* Account executive
* Crisis management
* Political campaigns
* Lobbyist
* Recruiting
* Corporate relations: employee relations, investor relations
* External relations/outreach: media, government, volunteers, clients
* Internal relations: employees, managers, newsletter
* Community relations
* Communications coordinator
* Public information officer
* Sports information director
* Sports marketing/promotion
* Entertainment marketing/promotion
* Press agent/publicist
* Events management/conference planning
* Marketing/brand development/publicity/promotion
* Digital/web/social media (see also separate Digital Media section)
* Non-profit agencies:
    campaigns/media relations/promotion
    fund-raising/donor relations/development director
    events management
    administration/program manager

Potential Combinations
* Graphic design
* Music videos
* Strategic planning
* Web sites for media organizations
* Speech writer
* Entertainment (movies, music) critic or reporter for TV, print or Web
* Teaching
* Freelance work in writing/reporting, editing, consulting, design

Important Note: Mass Comm. alumni have gone on to careers in other fields as well
* Law
* Legal assistant
* Technical writer
* Seminary/missionary/clergy
* College admissions/student services/student development/recruiting/
    alumni services
* Arts administration
* Administration/management (several different fields)

* Fund-Raising/development (several different fields)
* Sales (several different fields)
* Consultant
* Lobbyist/political aide/legislative aide
* Campaign director
* Child Protective Services
* Domestic abuse counselor
* Player marketing/player services, NFL Players Association
* NCAA compliance
* Teacher/Professor
* Military
* Program manager/project manager
* General management – restaurants, shops, hotels, etc.
* Insurance: sales, claims adjuster
* Banking/finance
* Market research/market development
* Research analyst
* Grant writer
* Health communication
* Human resources
* Police
* Library sciences

Some things to think about

- "Although I dropped out of college and got lucky pursuing a career in software, getting a degree is a much surer path to success. College graduates are more likely to find a rewarding job, earn higher income, and even, evidence shows, live healthier lives than if they didn't have degrees."
  - Bill Gates, "Help Wanted: 11 Million College Grads," Gatesnotes, June 3, 2015
- Related: Bill Gates, Steve Jobs and Michael Dell all left college before completing their degrees, but their phenomenal successes are exceptions. "It's the exceptionally innovative person who can do this," according to a study of CEOs (Carol Hymowitz, "Nation's Top Chief Executives Find Path to the Corner Office Usually Starts at State University," Wall Street Journal, Sept. 18, 2006, pp. B1, B4).
- The average employee with a college degree will take home about $900,000 more over a 40-year career than someone with only a high-school diploma. Even if average student debt and four years of lost wages during the college years are factored in, the difference is expected to average $900,000.
- One study estimated that a bachelor's degree "costs" approximately $122,000 when we factor in tuition and other costs as well what the person might have earned working for four years. This study also estimated that the $122,000 will be recouped in 8-10 years. In 1984, that estimate was approximately 16 years.

- Another study estimated that return on investment for a bachelor's degree averaged about 15 percent during the previous 50 years. Return on investment for the stock market during that time was 6.8 percent, on treasury bonds 2.2 percent.
    - Gary Burtless, The Brookings Institution
- The average college graduate's yearly salary will be approximately 68 percent more than someone with only a high-school diploma at age 25. This figure rises to approximately 84 percent by age 40. Those who are between ages 25 and 32 and have college degrees earn on average $28,000 more annually than those in the same age group who do not have college degrees.
    - These figures do not include differences in benefits such as health and life insurance, paid vacation time and retirement plans, nor do they account for the fact that those with college degrees are more likely to be promoted and thus increase the salary gap further.
        - Source: www.60x30TX.com
- Among those in the upper one-quarter of income distribution, half have at least a bachelor's degree. Among those in the lower one-quarter of income distribution, 90 percent do not have at least a bachelor's degree.

- Those with a college degree are 11.8 percent less likely to be unemployed and are 32.4 percent less likely to receive public assistance. Regardless of the economic cycle, the trend has been that unemployment rates among college graduates are likely to be approximately 33 percent lower than unemployment rates for those without a college degree.
- College graduates account for approximately 34 percent of the American workforce but account for approximately 53 percent of the wages.
    - As an aside, the latest census data (2015) show the following:
        - 89 percent of Americans over 18 have at least a high-school diploma
        - 59 percent of Americans over 18 have at least some college credits
        - 43 percent of Americans over 18 have at least an associate's degree
        - 34 percent of Americans over 18 have at least a bachelor's degree
        - 12 percent of Americans over 18 have a master's degree
        - 1.5 percent of Americans over 18 have a doctorate
        - 1.5 percent of Americans over 18 have a professional degree (e.g., law, veterinary, pharmacy).
- Those with a college degree reach what economists call financial independence (a complex formula involving salaries, debt-to-asset ratios and other variables) typically between ages 26 and 32. Those without a college degree reach financial independence on average at age 52, but a large percentage of those without a degree do not reach financial independence at all.
- More than 70 percent of Americans enroll at a four-year college; of those, only 53 percent graduate. About one-third of new college students in any given year do not return for their second year.

- Salaries and unemployment rates do not change much between those with no college credits and those with some college credits but no degree.
  The improvements tend to come only with a four-year or two-year degree.
- Median salaries for those without college degrees have decreased by $3,000, in real dollars, not adjusted for inflation, since 1965.
- More than half of all employers require a college degree for all or most positions. A recent study showed that about a third of employers report requiring college degrees for positions that did not require a college degree 20 years ago. Another study found that within 10 years, about two-thirds of all jobs will require education beyond a high-school diploma.
- Contrary to popular belief and some politicians' misguided statements, liberal arts graduates do just fine in the job market. According to one study, 94.1 percent of graduates with degrees in the liberal arts are employed full-time or in a graduate program, as compared to 92.5 percent of all college graduates.
  - And they're not generally asking if you'd like fries with that: 64.3 percent of graduates in the liberal arts are employed in positions that require a bachelor's degree, compared to 52 percent of all college graduates.
  - A little more than 9 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs attended Ivy League universities. While many of the rest attended Carnegie-1 universities such as the University of Wisconsin, UC-Berkeley or Texas A&M, others attended smaller universities similar to Midwestern.
    - Macy Bayern, "These Colleges Produce More Fortune 500 CEOs Than Any Others," TechRepublic.com, Oct. 31, 2018, accessed on Nov. 25, 2019.
  - Howard Schultz, communication, Northern Michigan University, 1975, is CEO of Starbucks; Michael Eisner, English literature and theatre, Denison University, 1964, was CEO of Walt Disney Co.; Robert Iger, radio and television, Ithaca University, 1973, is CEO of Walt Disney Co.; Carly Fiorina, medieval history and philosophy, Stanford University, 1976, was CEO of Hewlett-Packard; John Mackey, philosophy and religion, University of Texas-Austin, 1977, is CEO of Whole Foods; Susan Wojcicki, history and literature, Harvard, 1990, is CEO of YouTube; and Steve Ells, art history, University of Colorado-Boulder, 1988, is Co-CEO of Chipotle; A.G. Lafley, history and French, Hamilton University, 1969, was CEO of Proctor & Gamble (was also sophomore class president and a member of a fraternity).
    - "My own experience suggests that it is possible to start from nothing and achieve even beyond your dreams." – Howard Schultz.
  - Related: A recent study of CEOs suggests that graduates of high-profile universities and/or elite private colleges do NOT fare any better in the career world than those from less well-known, smaller and/or public universities. Warren Buffet, one of the wealthiest people in the world and a graduate of the University of Nebraska, said, "I don't care where someone went to school." The CEOs tended to agree with what is noted above: the best employees tend to be those who held leadership positions, had

strong relationships with their professors, and worked well with a diverse group of people.

- Carol Hymowitz, "Nation's Top Chief Executives Find Path to the Corner Office Usually Starts at State University," Wall Street Journal, Sept. 18, 2006, pp. B1, B4.
  - o "College is college. Some schools have more to offer than others, but in your life, you're going to meet plenty of useless dingbats who went to the most distinguished colleges in the country." – Jason Gay, commenting in The Wall Street Journal on the recent admissions scandals involving celebrities and the wealthy, March 14, 2019, p. A16.
  - o Study after study tells us that rankings such as those found annually in U.S. News and World Report are not helpful to most students. Those rankings are based on many criteria, some of which will and some of which will not matter to you (e.g., selectivity in admissions; graduation rates, which are often a result of selectivity in admissions; "reputation" scores as given by other university presidents and deans; endowment totals; etc.). The most important criterion should be where you believe you will do the best, in terms of academics, social life, fitting in, etc. It may be Harvard, but it may not be. What opportunities will you have, and what chances will you have of making the most of those opportunities?
  - o See also info. re. Google below.
- Related: Another recent study found that while those with degrees in the humanities and liberal arts tend to make less money than those with business or STEM degrees, they report higher levels of job satisfaction (87 percent). Among those with degrees in communication-related fields, 70.5 percent are satisfied with their jobs/careers.
  - o Scott Jaschik, "Study Finds Humanities Majors Land Jobs and Are Happy in Them," insidehighered.com, Feb. 7, 2018, accessed on Nov. 25, 2019.
  - o R. Glenn Cummins, Melissa R. Gotlieb and Bryan McLaughlin, "2017 Survey of Journalism and Mass Communication Graduates," ASJMC Insights, Autumn 2018.
- In mass communication fields, most employers will hire those without college degrees only for part-time work. About 7 percent of all full-time employees in mass communication fields do not have college degrees. Among those, few are in management positions. It is very difficult to be promoted without a college degree because employers fear the demoralizing effects of someone without a degree supervising employees who do have a degree.
  - o Related: A recent study found that 78 percent of those employed in mass communication fields feel "very secure" or "fairly secure" in their jobs.
- Employers report valuing a college degree not only because of skills developed, but also because it shows that an individual has learned to navigate multiple obstacles and stick with something until completion.
- A recent survey of editors and newsroom managers found the following complaints about new employees:
  - o poor writing skills
  - o poor interpersonal communication skills

- o inability to work well with others
- o little-to-no passion for the field
- o self-centered/lack of interest in other people
- o poor time-management skills
- o bad attitudes:
  - ▪ expecting to rise through the ranks quickly/expecting to start as a manager
  - ▪ salary demands
  - ▪ using cell. phones at inappropriate times
  - ▪ dressing inappropriately
  - ▪ poor work ethic/lack of ambition/laziness
  - ▪ lack of willingness to learn/lack of curiosity
  - ▪ frequent absences/late arrivals
  - ▪ irresponsibility
  - ▪ no emotional intelligence
  - ▪ conducting personal business while on the job.

(note that lack of technical skills was not among the chief complaints – i.e., being a computer guru will not solve all of your problems)

Making the most of your time at MSU
- • Get what you can from your courses:
  - o Don't skip class.
    - ▪ When you do need to miss class, speak to your professors. Get yourself caught up as quickly as you can.
  - o Pay attention.
  - o Put in real effort on your assignments/projects. They are designed so you learn something of value, not just to have a grade to report to the registrar.
  - o Related: Don't cheat.
    - ▪ "Not everyone cheats. Not everyone cuts corners. There isn't a diploma in the world that's more valuable than your integrity. And you can't buy your integrity back." – Jason Gay, commenting in The Wall Street Journal on the recent admissions scandals involving celebrities and the wealthy, March 14, 2019, p. A16.
  - o Participate in class discussions. Even if you aren't a "talker," make it clear in other ways that you are following the discussion and engaged in the course.
  - o Ask questions when you don't understand or you need clarification. If you are struggling, admit it and take steps to fix it. Don't just throw your hands up and say "I'm no good at _____ (math, science, etc.)." If you are unclear about the material or your professor's expectations, discuss your concerns with your professor.
    - ▪ Related: understand that every professor has a different set of expectations. Some will allow missed deadlines with points taken off for being late; others will not accept late work at all, for any

reason. Some expect students to attend every class; others allow a certain number of absences. Some are tough graders, and some are maybe even unreasonable; others are not.
- o Understand the difference between learning for the test and learning for real.
- Understand that while grades are important, they are not everything. Most employers are looking for a combination of solid academic skills along with technical skills, writing skills and what we call soft skills (e.g., the ability to meet deadlines, to stay calm under pressure, to work well with others, leadership, etc.). Good grades, alone, are not a predictor of career success or happiness (both in and outside of our careers). The better predictor is a combination of good grades, good relationships with one's peers and professors, and involvement with extra-curricular activities (see more on these topics below).
- Related: Develop a solid work ethic. One of the chief complaints from each succeeding generation about the next generation is laziness and lack of effort. Each generation perceives that it worked hard and earned what it has, yet the next generation appears entitled. At the same time, some students find that what they think is reasonable effort turns out not to be. Study after study has shown that it is not always the most talented who succeed but those who have some ability and work hard. A recent study found that 77 percent of recent graduates believe they have a solid work ethic and act professionally, while only 43 percent of their employers rated the same graduates similarly (National Association of Colleges and Employers, "Job Outlook Study," https://www.naceweb.org/store/2017/job-outlook-2018).
  - o In fact, those with talent who do not work to further develop themselves tend to go down the most dramatically in flames. Another study found that only 10 percent of the wealthiest Americans inherited their fortunes, while 86 percent of the wealthiest Americans generally worked at least 50 hours per week (Neil Wertheimer, "Lessons From The Rich," <u>AARP Magazine</u>, February/March 2017).
  - o "What do you want your life to be? I'm doing this because this is what I love and these are the rewards. Am I willing to pay the price? Everybody makes a choice."
    - Chris Jansing, NBC News

  - o "There is no secret. Come in early, stay late, care about what you're doing."
    - Chris Jansing, NBC News
- Develop your skills, such as writing, public speaking, editing, shooting/editing video and photos, publication design, web site design, advertising design, etc. If you are weak in any area, approach your professor for help.
  - o Related: Understand that the communication fields are constantly changing. Some jobs that existed 20 or 50 years ago no longer exist, while some current positions with many openings didn't exist as recently as 10 years ago.
  - o Related: Understand that today's college graduate, in any field, is predicted to have up to 11 jobs, and 3 career fields, before retiring. This is

in stark contrast to previous generations, some of whom held the same job with the same organization from high-school graduation until retirement.

- o Related: The two points above mean college graduates must be flexible, adaptable and "occupationally footloose" (Dr. Henry E. Siu, professor at the Vancouver School of Economics, University of British Columbia).
- Develop your brain. Skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, dealing with change, persuading, motivating, organization, effective planning and operating smoothly on one's feet are less common than we often think and highly valued by colleagues and employers.
- Develop what are often called "soft" or "invisible" skills such as working well with a team, leadership, time management, adaptability, conflict resolution, conflict prevention, self-awareness, self-confidence, empathy, taking/giving criticism diplomatically, persistence, ability to deal with and overcome obstacles/adversity, and stress management.
  - o A study by Google of its hiring patterns from 1998 to 2013 found that the top seven characteristics of its top employees were not technical/computer or other scientific knowledge. Instead, communicating and listening well, trying to understand others well, working with others who may have differing viewpoints from one's own, problem-solving, making sense of complex ideas that may seem to have to no connections to each other, and critical thinking are the top qualities.
    - "Project Oxygen," as reported by Cathy N. Davidson, "The Surprising Things Google Learned about its Employees," Washington Post, Dec. 20, 2017, accessed on May 17, 2018.
- Develop relationships with your colleagues. Some say the best friends you will have for the rest of your life are those from your college years. This may or may not be true for everyone, but the fact remains that these are the people who will see you at your best and at your worst, and the connections you make now may help you later in a variety of ways.
- Develop relationships with your professors and understand that we are here to help you. Study after study shows that the students who rate their college experience the highest had mentors and believed their professors cared about them. We cannot care about you if you don't care.
  - o Related: alumni who rate their college experience the highest state that they had at least one mentor among the faculty who pushed them academically and/or at least one faculty member who encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams.
  - o Related: among alumni who said they had a faculty mentor, 71 percent report keeping in touch with their mentor.
  - o Related: students who have a mentor are twice as likely to graduate and 3.6 times more likely to report that they felt prepared for their careers upon graduation.
    - Brandon Busteed, "Faculty Mentors Provide Students Exceptional Educational Benefits," insidehighered.com, Feb. 25, 2019, accessed on Feb. 21, 2020.

- Get involved outside of the classroom. Join extracurricular organizations, both within the department and outside of it. Again, alumni who rate their college experience the highest cite academic, service and social organizations as major parts of their time in school.
    - Related: Seek out "high-impact" activities such as internships, community service projects, experiential-based learning and study abroad. Employers report seeking candidates who have a variety of experiences outside of the classroom, and alumni who are happiest and most successful report considerable experience with high-impact studies while in college.
- Get outside of your comfort zone. A recent study showed that those who rate their college experience the most positive experimented with technology, writing styles and areas of study they were not previously familiar with. The same study reinforced the importance of colleagues and faculty mentors mentioned above.

Feel free to contact me with questions, comments, etc.

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