

Social Entrepreneurship Clinic

Social Sector Employment Tips

Finding a Change-the-World Job

- Start *today*. Your role model is Keely Stevenson, former CEO, Bamboo Finance USA: "I woke up every morning and for eight hours straight the only thing I did was surf the Internet, prepare my resume and write my cover letters. I treated the job search as a job."¹
- Always be job-searching, *not* strategizing about job-searching. Avoid over-planning. Don't wait for the perfect job announcement for the perfect job because it doesn't exist. Inversely, don't wait until you achieve perfection. The only employment guarantee is that you will not get a job if you don't apply for jobs.
- Apply for every job, yes, *every* job. Even if seemingly disqualified on paper, make your cover letter explain what you do have to offer. Why? One, it's free advertising. Two, getting a job is a competition. Even if you lack a particular qualification, your resume may still have *more* needed skills than the other applicants or you may have a useful skill that the job announcement did not call for, but which may give you a competitive edge over others. Don't negotiate against yourself. Don't pre-judge. Apply for every job!
- Always write a cover letter, even if one is not asked for. Smart employers know that resumes are simply history papers. They say where you've been, but not where you're going. Stand out with a cover letter that succinctly explains what skills and knowledge you have to contribute to the organization and demonstrates what you have learned about the organization's work and mission.

Social Sector Job Market Basics!

Starting salary range for an entry-level job in the social sector is \$30-40,000 range with some health benefits.

Average Nonprofit Salaries, PayScale, 2010:

<http://www.payscale.com/compensation-today/2010/01/average-salary-of-jobs-in-nonprofit>

For-profits typically pay low starting salaries, but offer stock in the social venture. How soon, if ever, the stock becomes valuable is an open question.

¹ *How-To Snag A Social Justice Job Interview* video. <http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-snag-a-social-justice-job-interview/>

- “What turns me off is reading resumes,”² says one savvy social sector CEO. All resume readers are forced to skim. Three over-worked resume mistakes to avoid:
 - Don’t send a resume and cover letter filled with mushy generalities about your commitment to a better world, cleaning up the polluted planet and fighting for social and economic justice. That’s predictable and boring. What’s interesting about you is what you specifically and uniquely have to contribute to the work of the organization.
 - Don’t include extraneous information. No one cares if your hobby is deep-sea diving or knitting, unless you are president of your dive club or knitting circle in which case it is worth mentioning because it demonstrates your organizational and leadership talents.
 - Don’t trivialize your volunteer work which is an important part of your employment history and, hopefully, demonstrates both skills acquisition and long-term commitment to social change. List social sector volunteer fellowships, internships, etc under Employment (not in a separate category called Volunteer Activities) with pro bono in parentheses next to your title. For example, “Research Associate (pro bono), Happy Organic Farms.”
- “Be foolishly courageous. Be proactive in your risk-taking. Anticipate the needs of future employers.”³ Every social entrepreneur worth a damn takes two kinds of risks: social venture risk and social career risk. If you’re not willing to take a risk on yourself, you’re not a social entrepreneur. 20th Century poet extraordinaire T.S. Eliot got it right: “Only those who risk going too far can possibly find out how far they can go.”
- See Selected Internet Resources at the end of this resource document.

“The one thing I have learned is that you can’t think your way through life. The only way to figure out what to do is to do something.” - Meg Jay in The Defining Decade

Interviewing for a Mission-Oriented Job

- Keep it simple. People are not good listeners. Your interview task job is not to educate the interviewer about every aspect of your life. Your job is to explain how your skills will contribute to the success of the organization’s social justice mission.
- Don’t go to an interview without thoroughly studying the social enterprise. Read the annual report, the IRS filings (if any), the website, books and blogs by the founder, etc. Be the informed co-worker that you intend to be!

² John Anner, CEO, East Meets West Foundation, in *How-To Snag A Social Justice Job Interview*.

³ Jacob Harold, CEO, Guidestar, in *How-To Snag A Social Justice Job Interview*.

- Ask questions about the work. “I look for curiosity – asking me good, thoughtful questions.”⁴ - Regina Starr-Ridley, Publishing Director, Stanford Social Innovation Review. “Do your homework. Be prepared with good questions.”⁵ - Anne-Marie Burgoyne, Managing Director, Social Innovation Initiative, Emerson Collective.
- Assume values alignment. No need to harp on it. If the organization did not "get" that you are a motivated person of conscience, then you wouldn't even be interviewed. Focus on how you think you can help the organization realize its values and goals. “I definitely look for people who are excited. Also, ambitiousness – the feeling we can really do something together,” says Raquel Donoso, CEO, California Latino Community Foundation.⁵
- Know thyself. Understand and openly acknowledge your core competencies. What are your signature strengths? Which of the following management roles *best* describes you?
 - The *evangelist* “secures a \$35,000 donation from a philanthropist who happens to be sitting next to him on a flight.... She sends one-line emails at obscure times of the day and night, many of them ending with ‘this is why what we are doing is so important!’
 - The *scaling partner* “keeps a color-coded to do list.... And asks, after an inspiring proclamation of a new strategy to scale up proposed by the founder, ‘have you thought through how this will affect our resources and strategic plan?’”
 - The *connector* “sees weddings, reunions and neighborhood block parties as ideal opportunities to expand her professional network.... She speaks on a first-name basis with the barista at her local Starbucks and once sent flowers to her hairstylist after she had a baby.”
 - The *program strategist* weaves words like rubric, metrics and outcomes into regular conversation...and programs his office voicemail to ask people to call his cell phone because he is in the field observing the organization’s programs.”
 - The *realist* uses Excel to help organize his thoughts, even when he is not using any numbers...and brings a copy of the budget to every executive meeting.”⁶

“Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken.”- Oscar Wilde, writer, poet and social critic. Raquel Donoso, CEO, California Latino Community Foundation, chimes in, "I would not want to work for someone who does not take me as I am.”

⁴ *How-To Snag A Social Justice Job Interview* video.

⁵ *How-To Interview For A Social Justice Career*. <http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-interview-for-a-social-justice-career/>

⁶ Below and Tripp, *Freeing the Social Entrepreneur*, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Fall, 2010.

- Make it memorable with your authentic personal story. “Good stories provide a simple and coherent account of people’s actions and intentions. The explanatory stories that people find compelling are simple; are concrete rather than abstract; ...focus on a few striking events...”⁷ Your story is, by definition, more compelling, more immediate and more authentic than anything else you say in an interview. It’s also easier to remember.

Embracing Your First Social Sector Job

- "There is a certain terror that goes along with saying “My life is up to me.” It is scary to realize there’s no magic, you can’t just wait around, no one can really rescue you, and you have to do something. When we make choices, we open ourselves up to hard work and failure and heartbreak, so sometimes it feels easier not to know, not to choose, and not to do.”⁸
- Take a risk on yourself. “Life is a gamble. Not to play is to foreclose any chance of winning. To play, to act, is to create at least a possibility of changing the world.”⁹ - Howard Zinn, American historian and social activist. Your first job is not your last job. If it turns out badly, quit.

Sizing Up The Job Offer!

*Not every worthwhile job working for a worthy organization
is worth YOU doing it.*

1 - The actual work – whether mission-aligned or not – has to be fun and utilize your core competencies.

- If you don’t like what you’re doing, you won’t do it well.
- If you are having fun and using your talents to the fullest, your on-the-job performance will be the better for it, resulting in faster promotions, positive job recommendations and inevitably greater social impact.

2 – Keep it real. Location and compensation package need to work for you.

- If you take a job that financially exploits you, situates you far from the person you love or disrespects your work-life balance, you will be unhappy, distracted and a lousy long-term change agent.
- Being miserable is not a social change badge of honor. Martyrdom is just stupid and self-destructive.

3 – Mission alignment with your principles and global citizenship is fundamental.

- “A wise man should have money in his head, not in his heart.” – Jonathan Swift, 18th Century Irish author of Gulliver’s Travels.
- Take Swift’s career advice and still acknowledge that if criteria #1 and #2 are unmet, being a change agent will prove unsustainable in the long term.

⁷ Daniel Kahneman, Thinking, Fast and Slow.

⁸ Meg Jay, The Defining Decade: Why Your Twenties Matter--And How to Make the Most of Them Now.

⁹ The Optimism of Uncertainty in The Impossible Will Take a Little While (Paul Loeb, editor)

- Keep your perspective. "Your first job after college need not be the beginning of an ascending curve that's going to take you through your life. It can be a zigzag. You might be doing something different in five years." That's something that young people need to hear: that the continuous story, where the whole of a person's life is prefigured very early on, is a cultural creation, not a reflection of life as it is really lived."¹⁰

Café Impact Videos (view in order)

- [How-To Start Your Social Change Career](http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-start-your-social-change-career/) (http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-start-your-social-change-career/)
- [How-To Boldly and Bravely Bet On Yourself](http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-boldly-and-bravely-bet-on-yourself/) (http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-boldly-and-bravely-bet-on-yourself/)
- [How-To Network Yourself Like A Pro](http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-network-like-a-pro/) (http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-network-like-a-pro/)
- [How-To Snag A Social Justice Job Interview](http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-snag-a-social-justice-job-interview/) (http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-snag-a-social-justice-job-interview/)
- [How-To Interview For A Social Justice Career](http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-interview-for-a-social-justice-career/) (http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-interview-for-a-social-justice-career/)
- [How-To Shut The Hell Up & Change The World](http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-shut-the-hell-up-and-change-the-world/) (http://cafeimpact.com/how-to-shut-the-hell-up-and-change-the-world/)

Selected Internet Job Sites¹¹

- [NextBillion](#)
- [Escapethecity](#)
- [Rework](#)
- [Socialedge](#)
- [ANDE Careers](#)
- [BCorp Jobs Board](#)
- [Echoing Green](#)
- [Socialgoodjobs.org](#)
- [GIIN](#)
- [GreenBiz](#)
- [Treehugger](#)

Selected Internet Fellowship Sites¹²

[ANDE Fellowship](#); [Global Health Corps](#); [IndiCorps](#); [Acumen East Africa Fellows Program](#); [Vilgro Fellowship](#); [IDEO Fellows](#); [PopTech Science Fellows](#); [Nieman Fellowship in Journalism](#); [Skadden Fellowship](#); [LeapFrog Fellowship](#); [Piramal Fellowship](#); [IDEX Fellowship](#); [Acumen Fellowship](#); [Kiva Fellowship](#); [Ford Foundation International Fellowship](#); [Teach for America](#).

¹⁰ Mary Catherine Bateson, *Composing a Life Story, Impossible Will Take a Little While* (Paul Loeb, ed.).

¹¹ Originally compiled by Samantha Smith, Forbes, September 10, 2012.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/samanthasmith/2012/09/10/34-places-to-find-that-new-job-social-innovators-edition/>

¹² Ibid.