

Reading Lesson

B2 Business: Sport Careers

Reading

How many sports-related jobs can you think of? Read the text to find out.

Sports Careers

So you want to work in sports? When young people are asked what jobs there are in sports, they usually list jobs like professional athlete, team manager, coach, physical therapist, or sports psychologist. They may mention things like sports announcer or sports journalist. The fact is there are many different types of jobs within the sports industry. Some jobs that may not immediately come to mind are director of city sports programs or sports facilities, director of stadium management, cruise recreation director, sporting goods sales manager or representative, and sports marketing specialist. If you think you might want to work in the sports industry, first do research on the types of jobs that exist in the industry, and find out what types of sports-related jobs there are in your country and the area where you live or want to live.



Once you have an idea of the types of sports careers that are available, identify several that you think may fit into your interest and skill areas. If you are interested in communications, you might consider a career as a sports writer, a TV sports commentator, a sportscaster, a sports event promoter, or a public relations director for a team or a sports program. If you are interested in business and finance, an obvious job choice is business manager of a professional sports team. The number of those jobs may be limited, but there are other jobs related to the business of sports, from stadium manager to financial director of a city sports program to financial director of a chain of fitness centers.

You've done some research and found out about a range of different jobs in the sports industry that fit in with your interests and skills. The good news is that the sports industry is growing very quickly, and there are many more jobs in the industry than most people realize. The bad news is that there is also an enormous amount of competition for those jobs, and only the most motivated and qualified people will get the best jobs. How do you make yourself stand out? First, choose an area and focus on it. If you are interested in sales and marketing, focus on an area within that category, such as ticket sales, event promotion, or product sponsorship. Then do something to get experience and attract attention in that area. Start a podcast or a blog, or do a major research project on a topic related to your area of interest. Join professional organizations related to your area and attend conferences. Submit proposals to speak at conferences if possible.

Another key factor to breaking into the sports industry is networking. One way of doing this is by attending conferences and speaking at them if possible. By attending, you would also learn about the latest trends in your industry, as well as meet people who may be able to help you professionally. It may not feel right to expect to get a job simply because you know someone in the industry, but it is perfectly fine to try to meet people and impress them with your skills and qualifications so that they remember you and recommend you on the strength of your abilities. People in any industry know each other and talk about young people entering the industry that they've been impressed with and think can make valuable professional contributions.

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Finally, once you have chosen an area to focus on and have learned as much as you can from reading, going to conferences, and talking to people in related jobs, apply for an internship or an entry-level job. The best way to learn and to become known in your field is to start working in it. Most internships do not pay or pay very little. However, an internship often provides an opportunity to work with top organizations and people in an industry. Sometimes a successful internship can even lead to a permanent job once the internship is over. You should be aware that many high-level jobs in the sports industry now require a master's degree in sports management or a similar field. Students who are already doing graduate studies in a sports-related field probably have the best chance of getting a good internship.

If getting an internship is not an option for you, there are other ways to “get in the door” of the sports industry. There may not be many, or any, jobs in exactly the area you are interested in, but one job can lead to another. Take any job related to sports that you can get, do the best job you can, and try to meet as many people in the industry as possible. Show interest in doing extra work to learn about areas outside your immediate job responsibilities. If there are no jobs available, volunteer with sports organizations in your area. Offer to help coach children's soccer or softball teams. Volunteer to help your city promote and organize local sports events. Remember that anything you can do to show hard work, skills, and initiative can give you an advantage in the highly competitive sports industry and may help you reach your goal of getting your dream job in the sports world.

internship (n): work experience in a company or organization for students or trainees for a limited amount of time, usually without pay

sponsorship (n): the act of supporting an event or activity by giving money, products, or services

sportscaster (n): an announcer on TV or radio who describes what is happening during a game or sports event

Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with phrases from the box.

get in the door on the strength of rely on show initiative stand out

1. Bill got the job _____ his excellent work during his internship.
2. You can't _____ just getting good grades in college. You need to show that you have a range of skills that employers look for.
3. It's important to _____ during an internship by trying to solve problems on your own and offering new ideas for doing things.
4. When there are a lot of qualified candidates, you have to do something to get noticed and make yourself _____ from the others.
5. It can be difficult to _____ of any industry, so you have to start by attending conferences, taking low-level jobs, or even volunteering for things related to your field.

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Comprehension

Number the steps the writer suggests for starting a career in the sports industry in the correct order.

- _____ a Get to know as many people in the industry, especially in your interest area, as possible.
- _____ b Identify jobs that fit with your interests and skills.
- _____ c Try to get an internship or a job, even if it's a very low-level job.
- _____ d Do research to find out what types of sports-related jobs there are.
- _____ e Choose a specific interest area and focus on it.

Thinking

Go back and look at examples of jobs in the sports industry mentioned in the blog. What types of skills do you think are necessary for each job? Which job would best fit with your skills?