



# CAREER

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# Where the Jobs Are

## Working Aggies Share Their Wisdom

By Megan Orton  
CAREER SEARCH

Where are the jobs? How do I find them? How can Texas A&M and the Aggie Network help me?

Many Aggies find themselves reaching a endless series of dead ends in the weakening job market, only to ponder a series of questions similar to these.

"Ninety-nine percent of Aggies find employment through networking or job search Web sites," said Paul Pausky, assistant director of placement at the Texas A&M Career Center.

But what happens when you've exhausted all of those possibilities?

Three students were willing to share their stories: how they got the career of their dreams, how they utilized their A&M backgrounds, and what you can do to follow in their footsteps.

### The Industrial Distributor

Natalie Despaux, an industrial distribution graduate of the Class of 2004, used the Career Center to land her job as a procurement service adviser for Exxon-Mobil.

"The best advice I can give anyone is register through the Career Center your freshman year," she said.

The Career Center can then make available a list of jobs that apply to the student and he or she can sign up for interview times for the jobs that interest them, she said. Based on your resume, career center advisers decide whether you qualify for a particular interview, and the process begins there.

"The key thing is that even if you are not selected for an interview, you can still go to the company's presentation the night before the interviews begin," she explained. "There is a chance that if they have an extra opening, they will let you interview if you express interest in the company and the position."

Despaux set up her interview through the Career Center, landed a three-month internship with Exxon-Mobil, and a job offer followed. She stressed the importance her internship had in getting the job of her dreams.

"The internship and interviewing process allowed me to learn a lot about myself, and what I like and I don't like," she said.

Understanding this helped Despaux find the job that best suited her needs and the needs of the company. As a procurement service adviser, she handles different agreements between contractors and other divisions of Exxon-Mobil, mainly services and materials.

"I have the personality and the technical skills needed for the job, but I also have the determination to take on its challenges," she said. "Our work is different every day."

Despaux said the job has offered her the opportunity to interface with many different clients, including international companies. "As a global corporation, we have different laws and regulations we have to abide by to succeed," she said.

Despaux was hired by an Aggie, and said that although everyone in the workplace has been helpful, anyone with an Aggie ring is always more than willing to share experiences with her. Working with another Aggie gives you that "connection," she said.

### The Entrepreneur

Steven Prince, a marketing graduate in the Class of 2003, met up with high school buddy Justin Rana six months ago and decided to start a business.

"I spent four-and-a-half months looking for jobs, was unsuccessful, and then decided to start my own business," Prince said. "My friend had some talent and was going in the right direction, so I applied my time and interest to his efforts."

And here they are.

The company, Miriam Media, is a small ad agency located in Denton, Texas, and currently employs only Prince and Rana themselves. They have been successful in working with Web sites, graphics, and ads for businesses in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

"We pretty much pitch to the businesses,"

Prince said. He said Miriam does business with some companies that have six metroplex locations, but also with some like the mom-and-pop store around the corner. "It's a pretty wide spectrum."

Prince said he has been able to apply a lot that he learned in college, but he has since been shown a lot toward setting up his own business. He also did a lot of individual research and learning to successfully help launch Miriam Media.

Prince hopes to encourage other Aggies to strive for success in the advertising field.

"I think advertising is a weak area at A&M, and I hope one day I can buy my own building and make the ideas of advertising truly clear to Aggies," Prince said.

### The Engineer

"Intern, intern, intern," said Sam Rodgers, Class of 2002. Rodgers was

hired by Halliburton Energy Services almost seven months before graduation. A petroleum engineering graduate from Katy, Rodgers had two internships with Halliburton while in school.

"My department was really good about bringing the interviews to us," Rodgers explained. "We didn't have to go through the Career Center, and that afforded us a little better opportunity." Rodgers said engineering students are simply told when and where the information sessions are, either by professors during classes or by company members during "lunch deals" in the petroleum engineering building. Then a list was made available to sign up for interviews.

"I tried to be outgoing, attentive and personable when I was put in a business/interview environment," Rodgers said. "I also never stopped asking questions. I felt like the better I knew my job, then the better I could present myself later." Rodgers said he felt that he showed dedication to his work and tried to emphasize those qualities when he interviewed. Once he accepted the internship, Rodgers said he attributed his success to hard work.

"I can't stress enough how important experience is," Rodgers said. He said that in the petroleum engineering department at A&M, internships weren't just encouraged, but required. "I think that is a big edge we have over other schools."



Rodgers also said that the Aggie connection is alive and well in the petroleum engineering field. "In the oil field Aggies are well thought of and all around you," Rodgers said. "When I meet other Aggies in the industry, it is almost as if there is an immediate connection — an understanding. I look out for him or her and vice versa."

Halliburton has offered Rodgers exactly what he was seeking. He said once he got his offer, he knew a career at Halliburton was what he wanted to pursue, and he didn't feel the need to look elsewhere. The career path flexibility, the daily challenges and the people he works with are all advantages of working with Halliburton. "And of course, the pay!" he joked. Opportunities included, for him, "hopefully seeing the world" and "feeling a part of something."

