

# Real World Advice: Transitioning from College to the Workforce

Are you preparing to complete your degree and start working full time? Would you appreciate a few words of wisdom from people who have been in your shoes?

The United States Patent and Trademark Office helps inventors and entrepreneurs introduce their innovations and products to the world. We employ over 12,000 professionals with degrees ranging from electrical and mechanical engineering to finance, IT and law. Our people work as patent examiners, accountants, help desk technicians, HR professionals, trademark examining attorneys and a variety of other roles to help bring innovation to life.

We tapped some of these professionals and asked them what advice they would give their college selves if they could travel back in time. We hope their words of wisdom help as you prepare to navigate the future.



**“Your basic STEM knowledge** — problem solving and understanding how things work — is so valuable in all aspects of life. It can help you in your career and beyond. Be willing to use it to make a difference.”

**Joyce Ward**  
*Director, Office of  
Education and Outreach*



**“Self-discipline and a willingness to learn** are two vital skills you must have when you enter the workforce. You will most likely have a role that will provide you some autonomy, so you need to have the discipline to get things done. And though you have a degree, you’ll still have a lot to learn, so be open to it. Don’t go in thinking you know everything.”

**Rebecca Volentine**  
*Patent Examiner*



**“Be ready to adapt, work hard, sacrifice, and have an open mind** to seek support and help. There will be a lot for you to soak up and learn, so you’ll need to be agile and willing to give of yourself.”

**Arleen Vazquez**  
*Supervisory Patent Examiner*

UNITED STATES  
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE





**“Consider what your short and long-term goals are.** Ask questions. Be confident in yourself and your abilities. Use experiences inside and outside of your professional education to build your career. Know how to budget your time and multitask. Be organized.”

**Kendra Carter**  
*Patent Examiner*



**“Remember to G.I.V.E.** — Gratitude: Don’t take things for granted, and always give appreciation for any help you receive. Initiative: Find ways to obtain the experience that you need to get you where you want to go. Volunteer: Not only does it provide a great pathway to happiness, but will also likely help your career by broadening your people network and enhancing your experience. Execute: When you take initiative to do something, make sure that you have the time to do it well.”

**Sarah Harris**  
*General Counsel*



**“Do yourself and the world a favor —** learn as much as you can so you can make informed decisions. You may discover you have strengths and passions you did not know existed.”

**Ivana Miranda**  
*Financial Analyst*



**“Consistently do a great job.** Cultivate a reputation as someone who has a high quality work product and a strong work ethic.”

**Montia Pressey**  
*Trademark Attorney Advisor*