

Office for Financial Success – Financial Tip of the Week
A service of the Personal Financial Planning Department
College of Human Environmental Sciences
University of Missouri-Columbia
(08/21/2009)

School Year Resolutions

To paraphrase a Jimmy Buffet song, “We’ve all got ‘em and some stick better than others”. Here are some I’d recommend for the students in the readership that are serious about their long-run plan for *financial success*.

- Write your personal values statement. - I know this sounds a little too 1960ish but take some time and make a list of the values you embrace. Think of them as those one-word statements of what you’d like your life to represent. For example, the University of Missouri’s values are Respect, Responsibility, Discovery, and Excellence. I’m not sure of yours but, if someone were to write your eulogy, what would they say about you? What would you like them to say about you? (Your values will probably come from the latter list and, if you’re lucky, the lists are identical.)
- Set goals – What are your goals for the school year? Greater grade point average? Improved performance in sports? One-hundred percent attendance? Involvement in a student group? Better track record in doing your homework, readings, and other assignments – on time? Visualize reaching your goals – all of them. Write your goals down. Tell your roommate or parents about them. Make decisions that support them. Stick to them, even when the occasional wave washes away your progress.
- Get connected to the industry you want to work in. – Do you have an idea about where you’d like to spend your time in gainful employment? If so, find someone in that line of work and ask them if you can interview them about their life’s work. See if you can job-shadow them for a day. If the career feels right, look for a mentor to help you with the inevitable choices you are going to make over the next few months and years. Consider doing an internship to “test drive” an occupation. Often, I have found, students that do “unpaid” internships have fantastic experiences. You can learn a lot about yourself and a company, from four to eight weeks of life experience in their world.
- Go to a professional conference. – This one may be a tad expensive but if there is a meeting with many professionals present that are engaged in the line of work you’re pursuing, go to the meeting. Look for local, less expensive opportunities. When you are at the meeting, talk to people. Ask them questions. Don’t be afraid to ask someone to dance. (This is *code* for “not being afraid to talk to people and ask them to help you.” It is for certain that, if you don’t ask them, they won’t dance with you! You’ll be surprised how “old-folks” like to help “young people”.)
- Visit the local Chamber of Commerce. – While you’re there, ask for a list of members. Check out the members you think might provide you with opportunities to advance your goals. Firms that are very active within their communities tend to be very interested in others.

- Identify a weakness. – Everybody has one (or two) that they'd like to work on. Perhaps yours is public speaking. If so, practice until you gain confidence. Writing? Then, write letters to your friends, improve your emails or seek help from one of your teachers. Dress? Go to a workshop on professional etiquette and dress. Ask for some pointers from a quality clothing store. Weight? Lose it. Exercise? Do it.
- I'm sure there are many more we could list but I think you get my point. The start of a school year is a new start – every year. At the start of a year, we are in a new environment with different classmates, roommates, and friends. This allows us to be the person we want to be, rather than the one that others expect us to be, since we've been that person for years! So, if you're ready to be the person you want to be, you're where you belong...in the beginning. And, as the Moody Blues sang in the song of the same name [In the Beginning](#): "keep on thinking free".

- Robert O. Weagley, Ph.D., CFP(r)
Chair, Personal Financial Planning
University of Missouri
Columbia, MO 65211

©2009 Office for Financial Success – University of Missouri-Columbia

Tip's Blog Site

<http://mufinancialtip.blogspot.com>

Tip Archive

Free access to weekly financial tips (pdf format)

<http://financialsuccess.missouri.edu/archive.htm>

A primary objective of the MU Office for Financial Success is to provide sound, nonbiased information related to your financial life. Financial products are neither sold nor promoted. Our service is free to MU students and an inexpensive educational option for non-students. Visit us (<http://financialsuccess.missouri.edu>) to learn more and/or to schedule an appointment.

SUBSCRIBE/UNSUBSCRIBE:

- Have friends that would like to receive the weekly financial tips?

Email: LISTSERVE@LISTS.MISSOURI.EDU

No Subject

Body: subscribe financialtip your first_name your last_name

- Want to unsubscribe?

E-mail LISTSERVE@LISTS.MISSOURI.EDU

No Subject

Body: unsubscribe financialtip your first_name your last_name

CONTACT INFO:

- WEBSITE: <http://financialsuccess.missouri.edu>

- E-MAIL: financialsuccess@missouri.edu

