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Bryce Welker • Feb. 18, 2017



The Big Four—Deloitte, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Ernst & Young, and KPMG—are among the largest employers of recent graduates on a global scale. Like many other companies, the Big Four will be changing their hiring practices with more advancements in technology.

Technology Advancement: Does it Impact Hiring Practices?

Technology has been opening doors in business for many years now, making certain

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Financial Times. “Given the rate at which technology is speeding up audit, that number could drop by 50 percent in 2020.”

However, others that work within the Big Four don't think there will be a decrease in hiring of graduates. The counterargument is that the increased inclusion of artificial intelligence and technology won't take jobs away. Instead, it will create opportunities around solving problems in a new and different way, fueling the growth of business for all accounting firms, big and small.

While this may mean a drop in hiring of finance and accounting graduates, there will have to be an increase in the hiring of other graduates who have skills in areas such as computer science and data analytics.

“Firms will no longer need armies of junior staff,” says Jim Peterson, accounting specialist and author, “instead, they will need the best algorithm design geeks in the world.”

The Big Four firms are not quite at the stage of having computers replace people. The challenge they have now is hiring a balance of people who can do the interpreting and people who will make sure the computers are set up to interrogate properly. So you can expect recruiters to be looking for auditors that have analytical abilities.

Tips on Getting Hired by the Big 4

For many aspiring accounting or finance graduates, landing a job at one of the Big 4 firms is the dream. Whether or not hiring practices are expected to change, you can follow these tips to increase the chances of turning your dream into a reality.

1. Pass the CPA Exam ASAP

Most college graduates don't have their CPA and decide to put it off. I strongly

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goal is to fill internships and fulltime positions for the following year, so don't miss out during these months!

3. Prepare Your Resume and Cover Letter

Your resume should be flawless and a smooth read. The format of your resume is potentially more important than your content. If you can't quickly scan your resume, it is not formatted clearly enough. You must be formal while including enough personal elements that will make your resume stand out from the massive pile of hopefuls.

Your cover letter is another great tool you will need to use to land your dream job. You can use your cover letter to detail the points you made on your resume. One little mistake in your cover letter will cost you, so make sure you have gone through it with a fine tooth comb to ensure that it's the best it can be in terms of content and grammar. I had a recruiter tell me that less than 20% of all their applicants bother to make a customized cover letter. This is a potentially HUGE differentiator. So I suggest making personalized cover letters and having a mentor or career counselor look over it to give you some points on where to improve.

4. Network

"It's not what you know, but who you know." Might sound like a cliché, but it's undoubtedly true. It is actually the most effective way to get your foot in the door at the Big 4 firms. Employers are more likely to hire individuals that are referred by someone they know. I bet you know at least one accountant, even if you don't know it yet. So get on LinkedIn or alumni groups and start networking, you never know what opportunities you might run into.

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