



Q&A – Take the job, or not?

“I was talking to a double-degree engineering graduate this week from my Alma Mater Monash University in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Monash is a global Top 100 university and its engineering school is ranked No. 1 for engineering and technology in Australia (Times Higher Education, 2017-18).

“That means he’s got an excellent pedigree when it comes to job search. The problem is he doesn’t have an offer from the company he’s targeting and really wants to work for. They’re still going through the motions. And from experience, as I told him, that could take a while. Instead, it’s looking increasingly likely he might just get an offer from another company that is not his first choice.”

QUESTION

The question was: should he accept the job offer from the company that wasn’t his first pick?

ANSWER

“Yes!”.

“I get asked this question a lot and my answer is always the same – yes!

“By accepting the offer in front of him, he is immediately employed. He is no longer an unemployed graduate. His career is launched. The hardest job to find is always your first and this one has just landed in his lap. Take it! He can put a company on his CV straight away and a salary will start to appear in his bank account. He will begin to accrue achievements that will eventually impress other employers. There is no downside because it’s always easier to find another job while you’re in a job so he can begin targeting future employers in a subtle manner by building relationships.”

“Most importantly, he will become part of the ‘employment ecosystem.’ He will start communicating with - and circulating in - industry, building his profile by meeting with clients, colleagues, travelling interstate or internationally and to job sites where he will practice. He can attend conferences, workshops and get paid to train and develop his professional skills. Cool, huh? None of that can happen while he’s waiting for the offer from employer No. 1 if it never arrives. If it does, he can resign from No. 2 and head over to his dream job.

“When I graduated, all I wanted was a process engineering job in an oil refinery or petrochemicals. It never came. Only the very best graduates in a very tight market won those. I wasn’t one of them. What did come was an offer out of left field to become one of the founding members of the Honeywell Software Centre in Melbourne, Australia. A 1988 version of a start up! It was a long way from where I expected to start or where I wanted to start but I took it and it got the ball rolling. I never looked back. My career and life just opened up.

The funny thing is, as a software systems engineer with Honeywell, I soon found myself in refineries, petrochemical plants and not long after the middle of the ocean on an oil rig; all the places I’d dreamed of! Our control systems were everywhere and I was writing code for them all.

“The moral of the story? Take the job on offer.”

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