

4-28-2014

# How to get a job at Google?!

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## Recommended Citation

Hemesath M. 2014 Apr 28. How to get a job at Google?! [blog]. Quad 136. [Accessed 2017 June 1]. <http://blogs.csbsju.edu/mhemesath/2014/04/28/how-to-get-a-job-at-google/>.

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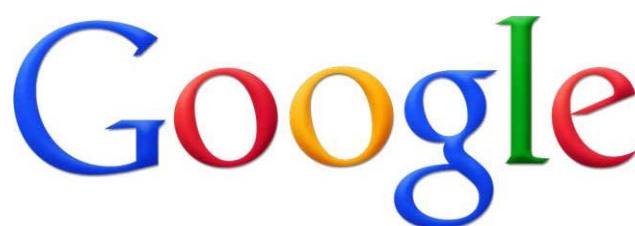
## Quad 136

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## How to Get a Job at Google?!

Thomas Friedman writes in *The New York Times* \* about an interview with Laszlo Bock Google VP of People Operations (HR in the rest of the world). In the interview, Bock says that “G.P.A.’s are worthless as a criteria for hiring, and test scores are worthless. ... We found that they don’t predict anything.” Google looks for five things:



1. Cognitive ability
2. Emergent leadership (Do you know when to lead and when to step back?)
3. Intellectual Humility
4. Ownership (Willingness to take responsibility.)
5. Expertise

These seem like five good things to have in any job, but what is much less clear, is how Google actually assesses these characteristics. Certainly GPA and test scores give an incomplete picture of any job candidate, but it seems that GPA and test scores might matter in assessing cognitive ability.

As for the other traits, those are a lot harder to discern via a resume or even an in-depth interview. I suspect that most of those come out on the job and what Bock is really describing is “how to be successful at Google once you do get a job.”

So there is less here than meets the eye. What Bock says in his interview would likely be replicated by any HR professional you talk to. It is not clear why Friedman thinks these observations are so insightful. He does offer a useful reminder of the importance of skills beyond academic or intellectual ability:

*In an age when innovation is increasingly a group endeavor, it*

*[Google] also cares about a lot of soft skills — leadership, humility, collaboration, adaptability and loving to learn and re-learn. This will be true no matter where you go to work.*

So, how to get a job at Google (or anywhere else): be smart, be adaptable, be intellectually curious and have good character.

I might be a little biased, but a shorter answer might be get a great Benedictine, liberal arts education.

(\*Thanks to a reader for the link.)

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Michael Hemesath is the 13th president of Saint John's University. A 1981 SJU graduate, Hemesath is the first layperson appointed to a full presidential term at SJU. You can find him on Twitter [at] [PrezHemesath](#).