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Entrepreneurial Job Opportunities

Factors To Consider Prior To Applying For or Accepting Such Positions

NIU's Career Services adheres to strict ethical guidelines in its dealings with students, alumni and employers – and expects the same from those companies that recruit NIU's students and alumni. On occasion, Career Services has discontinued its relationship with companies whose practices are considered deceptive, unethical or illegal. Most of the positions sought and obtained by NIU graduates are "salaried" positions. That is, upon accepting a position, an agreement is signed that explicitly states salary and benefits.

Some positions for which you may be recruited, or in which you have an interest, may provide **ambiguous salary and benefits**. This is especially common when students and alumni submit their resumes on large Internet job search sites to which thousands of recruiters have access. Further, students and alumni occasionally report that some positions for which they have applied and interviewed have **unclear job descriptions**. For this reason, we have provided the following questions for you to consider. As a general rule, if you feel confused or coerced after interviewing for a position, you probably should withdraw your application and seek employment elsewhere. We also recommend that you report any inappropriate recruiting practices to Career Services.

Are you asked to make initial monetary layouts?

Franchise fees, samples, merchandise, training, licensing, inspection fees, capital expenditures, commission fees. With the exception of starting your own franchise operation or purchasing a new wardrobe for a job, in most positions you should incur no undue expenses. If a company requires that you receive training for the purposes of gaining a certification, find out at the interview if you or the company will pay for study materials and test registration fees.

What is the method of earning?

Payment comes in many forms - straight salary, straight commission, salary + commission, hourly pay, or piece rate. Be aware that when working on commission, no salary is guaranteed and there are often "lean periods," especially during the initial stages of employment. If working on commission, you need to consider how long it will be before you earn enough to support yourself and how high your "risk tolerance" is.

Does this position involve Multi-Level Marketing?

Multilevel marketing (MLM) plans, also known as "network" or "matrix" marketing, are a way of selling goods or services through distributors. These plans typically promise that if you sign up as a distributor, you will receive commissions for both your sales of the plan's goods or services and those of other people you recruit to join the distributors. MLM plans usually promise to pay commissions through two or more levels of recruits, known as the distributor's "downline." Beware if a plan offers to pay commissions for recruiting new distributors. Most states outlaw this practice, which is known as "pyramiding." State laws against pyramiding say that a MLM plan should only pay commissions for retail sales of goods or services, not for recruiting new distributors. If your interview is occurring at a private home, hotel, or restaurant, there is a good chance you are being recruited for a MLM position by a MLM recruiter working out of his or her home.

For more information about MLM, go to www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/invest/mlm.htm

Are there any aspects of the recruiting process or interview that seem unconventional, questionable or unethical?

This is a subjective issue that each candidate must consider. Is the interview being conducted in a hotel, restaurant, or private home? Has the recruiter made grandiose claims (e.g., you can expect to earn over \$100,000 within a year)? Does the interviewer avoid answering specific questions about the company, the product, or the job description? If you still feel confused or uncomfortable after being thorough and direct in your questioning, this is often a good indication that you should avoid further contact with this employer.

Will your "good name" be placed at risk if you pursue this opportunity?

Most people work for numerous employers over the course of their career. Your previous job(s) and employer play a major role in your future job prospects. You should ask yourself how comfortable you will be discussing any previous "entrepreneurial" pursuits with prospective employers.