

Early career moves to take you to the top, www.efinancialcareers.de

Frankfurt, Germany – Many young people dream of a great career, but they must make the right moves during their studies and early professional life if they are to fulfil their ambitions. Florian Hammann of www.efinancialcareers.de spoke with headhunters in high management positions, and has the following tips to share:



Upper-class advantage

“It is still the case that children from wealthy homes start out with an advantage,” says Client Partner [Andreas Weik](#) from Executive Search firm [Pedersen & Partners](#). A young person who attends an elite boarding school (such as Salem on Lake Constance) and then later on a top private university (such as the WHU in Vallendar or the EBS in Oestrich-Winkel) is likely to make decisive contacts early on, Weik continues. “We can help each other out later.”

Complete internships while you study

In addition to excellent marks, a good record of internships will be of great importance. “You should be able to complete an internship abroad even during your studies,” Weik emphasizes. Globalisation is making it increasingly important for ambitious young people to gather experience in dealing with foreign cultures. “It’s harder if you’re older,” adds Weik.

In addition, Weik suggests collecting internships in various sectors, which will facilitate transitions between sectors later on. “If, for example, you want to go into investment banking, it makes sense to have an internship in Corporate Development or Corporate Finance from another company,” Weik says. After all, many investment bankers will later broaden their horizons, and an internship outside financial services makes this much easier.

The central importance of networks

“In general, networking plays a central role in a career development,” emphasizes Weik. “For this reason, I recommend setting up a network as early as possible. You never know where you will end up, and who you will need to recommend you. For example, students from private universities are clearly favoured over students from public universities.”

“It is a major advantage if you can spend time at a company that attaches great importance to its alumni network. McKinsey is the best example,” says Weik. With the rise in online social networks, it is easier than ever to maintain long-term contacts across the world.

Early contact with top management

Young high-flyers should take early responsibility, and actively seek out projects and initiatives that make them stand out to the top management.

The question of career change

In Germany, frequent job changes are not always seen favourably. If you start with a large company and regularly assume more and new responsibilities, there is no reason for you to change, but be careful not to fall into a dead end!

Do not wait for opportunities to find you

Headhunters often note that if you wait for the right opportunities to fall into your lap, you may be waiting for a very long time. Instead, take a proactive approach, seek out your own opportunities and make your own luck.

An MBA or a Master's?

Most top managers today have a master's degree or a diploma, but this could have something to do with the era in which they studied. Nevertheless, Weik suggests obtaining a master's degree after the bachelor's has been awarded. Fresh graduates who enter the profession immediately and then return to university a few years later are at risk of being passed over.

A wealth of possibilities

Connections, good grades, internships, foreign studies – a lot is demanded from young people today. Nevertheless, Weik believes that the demographics are in their favour as the baby boomers age out of the workforce: "Talented, diligent young people do not need to worry today. They will get their chances because an aging society will need their skills."

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[Andreas Weik](#) is a Client Partner at [Pedersen & Partners](#), based in Frankfurt, Germany. With more than 26 years of extensive experience in Executive Search and Management Consulting, Mr. Weik has executed C-level and senior executive assignments in the Financial Services and Real Estate industries for leading investment & commercial banks and Private Equity firms including many of the Fortune 500. He has serviced clients on a variety of projects across functions, including board selection, general management, professional services, sales, and finance. Mr. Weik began his search career in 1990 with a recruitment boutique and subsequently advanced to holding significant leadership positions at some of the world's largest Executive Search firms, as Junior Partner, Partner, Senior Client Partner, and Managing Partner. Prior to joining Pedersen & Partners, Mr. Weik was the Managing Director of a leading German Executive Search and Management Consulting company where he was responsible for growing the firm's global Financial Services Practice, as well as driving business development and cross-border search execution.

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