

BSOS ALUMNI CAREER PROFILE: HUMAN RESOURCES

CAREER THE TURTLE
...because **SUCCESS** starts here.



Brandon Bowers '12
Director of Human Resources,
Macy's Inc.
Majors: Psychology

What do you enjoy most about your current position?

I enjoy the strategic thinking portions of my current position. I oversee a team of 6 HR Managers who rely on me for guidance and coaching to better support their Macy's stores and employees. It's enjoyable being able to coach and develop other executives with the company to be able to see the positive changes that they can make through their actions.

Which undergraduate experiences did you find most helpful in preparing you for a position in HR?

The course "Helping Skills" and "Intimate Relationships" were two very critical courses to develop in my current field (and I believe they would be in ANY field as well). In today's workforce we talk about the benefits of having emotional intelligence which includes empathy, listening skills and self-reflection - all skills which directly apply to the workforce and specifically HR. Within the field of HR, you have to make some incredibly tough decisions that may relate to a person's compensation, total career or what route to take from a disciplinary standpoint, and having the skills learned in these two courses will impact not only how you react or make a decision, but it also helps with your personal emotional health as well.

How are you applying or practicing psychology in your current position?

Psychology is 90% or more of my current position. I tell my direct reports almost weekly that we need to find the "root cause" to the problem so that we can grow from it and the only way to get to the root cause is by asking the right questions (Helping Skills). HR discussions are packed with emotionally charged decisions and without the ability to utilize strong listening skills (Helping Skills), you would never be able to stay in that moment and help your employee get to the solution that they need to be at. Finally, much of psychology is rooted in research and then taking the data to do something with it. Business and HR is very similar - we look at what the data is telling us, speak with our employees and come up with a positive solution.

Any job or internship advice?

Much of the HR field is now going away from the administrative tasks and evolving into a business partner. This means that you'll need to have a business mindset while also having all the critical communication skills mentioned in earlier responses. Any internship or experience that is directly related to leadership would be a great experience - it's strategic, you have to challenge yourself to come up with innovative solutions and you will be faced with having tough conversations with people when your thoughts/ideas don't align.

Any additional tips?

Yes! Networking - we talk a lot about being connected with others and sometimes we don't talk enough about how to network. So many times we think of networking as, "What can this other person do for me?" There are often times where a random person on LinkedIn will message me and instead of creating a connection, getting to know me and ease into the relationship, the person gets right into asking for a job.

Instead, think of networking as how you can add value to another person's network - this creates a stronger relationship and in the long run, you've got someone that will go to bat for you.

- Ask for an informational phone call so you can learn more about them and their career.
- Whatever advice they give you, whether it's reading a book/article or gaining a specific experience, do what they suggested and then follow up with them on your feedback!