

Marisa Deline, AB 2006

MA 2009, Applied Anthropology, University of Maryland, College Park

Senior Analyst, The Advisory Board Company

Current job description

Ms. Deline conducts healthcare research for a company that works with hospitals and health systems. She participates in research cycles with teams (1-3 people and a manager), and each project lasts approximately 6 months. She begins research by approaching clients and dialoguing with them about the challenges they face and the ways they can best address these challenges. In the end, Ms. Deline's company produces a national meeting and research book that profiles successful practices in the key challenges that hospitals face.

Career arc

Ms. Deline interned at Planned Parenthood in St. Louis while she was an undergrad and worked there following graduation. Having this job experience on her resumé has been helpful throughout her career.

While searching for her current position, Ms. Deline spent about six months doing online research and meeting with contacts from graduate school and previous jobs. Setting up this network helped her identify the different organizations she was interested in working for. She found her current company through her roommate, who was working for a sister company at the time. When she located a position opening, she applied for the job online, and they called her to come in for an interview.

Ms. Deline stresses that persistence is essential and that it is very important to be broad in your search strategies. Additionally, let many people know that you are looking for a job, in order to increase your opportunities.

Marketing anthropology

While she was in graduate school for applied anthropology, Ms. Deline worked with her advisors to develop an understanding of the most marketable ways to present herself to potential employers. She finds that focusing on the specific skills unique to anthropologists, as well as highlighting any special training you have had, is helpful while on the job market. In addition, she points out that many employers are more aware of anthropology and cultural issues than they were in the past.

Advice to undergrads, new grads

Ms. Deline remarks that college can feel like a bubble for four years, and if students enter the job market without going to graduate school, it is likely the first time that their futures have been so open-ended. This feeling can be quite disconcerting, but Ms. Deline urges students to avoid putting too much pressure on themselves and to keep an open mind. It is important to be comfortable with feeling your way through the process, and you don't always have to have an exact vision for your future. That being said, no one is going to pave the way for you. Individuals must be disciplined and self-reliant while seeking new opportunities in their chosen field. Having mentors who share their advice with you can be very valuable.

Ms. Deline found it challenging to be looking for a job on the East Coast after graduation. At times it felt isolating and without context or connections. She recommends talking to people who live in the city you are targeting and asking them questions about job opportunities. Establishing online connections can be very helpful as well.