



How Jenna Palek Got Her Dream Job

When searching for a job in her final semester this past spring, **Jenna Palek, BA '20**, realized that few companies would be hiring during a global pandemic. Undaunted, she kept applying, reminding herself that "I was capable of finding not only a job, but a great one."

Looking on LinkedIn, she found a listing for a position with TikTok that seemed ideal for her qualifications. Figuring there were thousands of applicants, she stayed up until 5 a.m. designing a custom TikTok-themed résumé. But by the time she went to submit it online, the posting had been taken down.

She was upset at first, but then had an epiphany. "TikTok is all about highlighting your creativity, and I needed to do something else to be noticed," Palek says. "What better way to show my commitment than to create a video that explained who I am, my job experience and why I'm perfect for the position?"

A day and a half after she posted her video on TikTok, it had received more than 220,000 views, with many viewers liking it and tagging TikTok. The next day she received a call from TikTok's lead talent acquisition manager. TikTok's employees had forwarded Palek's video to the human resources department. They reviewed her application and were impressed with her credibility, experience and creativity. A week of interviews followed, and she was offered a job—six days after the first phone call.

"They loved that I was able to utilize the platform in such a unique way, and innovation is what TikTok is all about," Palek says. So far, her application video post on TikTok has been viewed more than 1.6 million times.

In July, Palek moved from Cleveland to TikTok's new office in Austin, Texas, and started her first full-time job as a brand development manager (BDM), representing the US growth market. "Simply put, that means I sell advertisements," Palek says.

To see how she's doing on her new job we watched a TikTok video where Palek shares her typical workday, highlighting the following seven steps:

A Day in the Life of Jenna Palek

STEP 1: COFFEE. "Every productive day starts with caffeine. Then I put my thinking cap on and get to work."

STEP 2: FIND A PRODUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT WITH GOOD INTERNET CONNECTION AND LIGHTING. "Since we've been working from home, I think it's important to get out of my apartment—and I like to work on my building's rooftop patio."

STEP 3: CHECK IN WITH TEAM. "Every morning starts with a daily standup with our team, so we can talk about objectives and trouble shoot problems. It's also a great time to bond with teammates we can't see in person."

STEP 4: PRIORITIZE DAILY RESPONSIBILITIES. "I check my calendar for the day and reply to all my emails."

STEP 5: FIND NEW ADVERTISERS! "I research companies and then I send out prospecting emails and connections on LinkedIn."

STEP 6: CONNECT WITH PROSPECTS. "I present a sales pitch about why TikTok is amazing! Then I conduct sales calls with different clients."

STEP 7: HELP MANAGE ACCOUNTS AND OPTIMIZE CAMPAIGNS. "Once onboarded, I help advertisers run their campaigns."

Adds Palek, who currently has more than 90K followers, "I'm also creator of @lifeattiktok, so be sure to follow me!"

by challenges, serve as volunteers in their communities and are role models for their peers.

Sminchak was also selected as the 2019 CashCourse Financial Educator of the Year. The award honors an educator going above and beyond to promote financial literacy on their campus, as well as demonstrating creativity and passion in the field of collegiate financial education. She developed and implemented the "Balancing on a Budget" program at The University of Akron, which has seen great success helping college students with their finances. Sminchak has been recognized for her efforts by The University of Akron and external partners, including an invitation to a private White House briefing during fall 2019.

She and her husband, Patrick, welcomed Karsyn Kate Sminchak, (9 lbs., 8 oz., 20 in. long) on Jan. 20, 2020.

Chris Baum, AA '99, BA '16, Atwater, Ohio, published his third and fourth books in May. *Magnificent* (Book 1 of a series) and *Out of Darkness: Twists & Turns* (also Book 1 of a series) are available exclusively through Amazon. *Magnificent* received Amazon Best Seller in three categories upon its release. If you like engaging fiction with page-turning action, you can find out more at www.chrisbaum.net, where you may also subscribe to his newsletter and receive one of his books for free. He wishes you good health and prosperity.

Greg Donnellan, MM '16, Bay Village, Ohio, director of the Middle School (grades 7-8) at Lawrence School in Sagamore Hills, Ohio, is one of five teachers from across the country named as winners of the 2020 Leavey Awards for Excellence in Private Enterprise Education. Lawrence School is one of only

three schools in Ohio that exclusively serve K-12 students with learning differences. In addition to his administrative duties, Donnellan is the founding program director of the Young Entrepreneurship Experience, an annual hands-on and experiential program for all middle school students, and also serves as advisor to the Entrepreneurship Club (grades 7-12). With his background in music education and the performing arts, he appreciates the opportunity to create a platform to facilitate students' creativity, divergent thinking and tenacity.

Scott Little, BM '19, McDonald, Ohio, accepted a full-time position with Brunswick City Schools teaching band and orchestra. He'll teach sixth through twelfth graders, as well as act as assistant director of the marching band. ▶