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Banking jobs are an excellent fit for anybody interested in personal finance, business, and math. Banks typically provide excellent benefits, opportunities for advancement, and a variety of positions that include customer-facing roles and analytical duties. If you like the idea of working in an office environment and working with numbers, you may want to try a career in banking.

Start by identifying the type of banking career that appeals to you most, and develop your skills to advance your career.

Pick your path: You can work in retail banks and credit unions nationwide, commercial divisions with a focus on business needs, investment banks that help firms raise capital, and other types of institutions.

Develop your skills: Before you get a job as a banker, it's critical to be good with numbers. Study math, statistics, or business to build a strong foundation—but don't ignore "soft" skills. If you can score an internship with a bank or another financial-related business, you'll gain valuable experience and meet people who can help you move forward.

The household name banks you're most familiar with are probably retail banks. Retail banks, located in almost every city, help individuals and businesses with essential financial needs like checking accounts, savings accounts, loans, and more.

Personal bankers and loan officers: With some work experience and a college degree, you can help customers with more complex needs. Direct them toward bank products and services that help them manage their finances, and assist them with the process of obtaining home and auto loans. You can also help local businesses with basic banking needs and financing

Sales skills: Becoming a banker is about more than just helping customers make deposits and withdrawals. You also need basic sales skills and the willingness to promote your bank's services. You shouldn't need to mislead or take advantage of anybody—learn to arrive at mutually beneficial solutions that truly help customers while bringing in profitable business.

Commercial banks focus on business needs. For example, you can help businesses accept credit card and other types of payments from customers. Companies also need guidance on managing their assets while limiting risk. You might even help organizations do business overseas or borrow money to expand operations.

Useful skills: To become a commercial banker, it's essential to understand how businesses work. A business degree is helpful, and an MBA might be even better. You need the ability to evaluate a business' finances and determine what products and services might be a good fit. Sales skills are increasingly important for business bankers. Banks and credit unions need revenue from active businesses, and it may be your job to grow and retain business clients.

Investment Banks

Investment banks help businesses raise money in financial markets, and they may help coordinate mergers and acquisitions. Becoming an investment banker is a demanding (and sometimes competitive) endeavor that requires serious commitment. Banks typically hire high achievers who thrive in high-pressure environments.

Life of an investment banker: Investment banks are most common in major metropolitan areas (New York City, for example) where potential clients are nearby. To work for the largest investment banks, plan to devote much of your waking life to your career. You need to arrange financing deals and complicated transactions with sophisticated counterparts.

Analytical skills: You need to have strong spreadsheet and analytical skills, and to advance at most firms, you may need graduate degrees and designations. For example, a master's degree in finance or a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation is common with investment bankers.

The career of an investment banker is extremely demanding, but successful bankers have the potential to earn high salaries and bonuses.