

Job Search Strategies For International Students

How to Find Job Openings

In some countries, people find jobs primarily through the government or family members. In the U.S., self-reliance is more the rule, and it is important for everyone, including international students, to use a wide variety of resources to identify jobs.

About 20% of the jobs that exist in the U.S. are advertised in newspapers, trade magazines, or on the Internet. The other 80% of job openings are in the "hidden" job market and are never advertised. These positions are filled by word of mouth.

For this reason, it is important to contact as many people as possible to find out about job openings. This technique is called networking. Contacts include friends, classmates, neighbors, family members, professors, alumni, and community members. The Career Services Center has many books on the job search and networking, as well as networking workshops and opportunities.

Working for International Companies

The best employment prospects for international students may be with international companies. International students are great assets to global organizations desiring language skills, respect for diversity, and/or knowledge of overseas economies.

Occupations in Need of International Students

According to the November 2000 edition of "Recruiting Trends," high-tech firms are desperate to hire technically skilled, non-immigrant foreign workers. According to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, from October 1999 to February 2000, H-1B petitions were approved in the following areas:

- System's Analysis and Programming (47.4%)
- Electrical/Electronics Engineering (5.4%)
- College and University Education (4.1%)
- Accountants and Related Occupations (3.7%)

These statistics suggest that International students who wish to work in the United States would be wise to study technical subjects in order to increase their chance of employment. More detailed information on the occupations of approved H-1B petitions as well as the petitioners personal characteristics can be found in the following H-1B Special Reports which are part of the INS web page.

The Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services web page lists the names of 102 companies that had more than 60 INS-approved petitions. While these companies account for only 17% of the total number of approved petitions, because they have hired a large number of H-1B employees recently, they provide a good starting point for International students.

Characteristics of Specialty Occupational Workers (H-1B): October 1999 to February 2000 (INS, June 2000)

Characteristics of Specialty Occupational Workers (H-1B): May 1998 to July 1999 (INS, February 2000)

Leading Employers of Specialty Occupational Workers (H-1B): October 1999 to February 2000 (INS, June 2000)

These documents are available online at <http://www.bcis.gov/graphics/shared/services/employerinfo/index.htm>. You must have Acrobat Reader to view or print these reports in Portable Document Format.

Once you've discovered the companies that offered H-1B visas in the past, contact those companies to request a listing of job openings or internships or set up an informational interview.

Internships

Students who lack experience in their career fields should complete one or more internships while working towards their degrees. According to "US Multinationals and the Foreign MBA," more than 53% of foreign survey respondents received a job offer from an American company where they completed an internship. Obtaining an internship is important not only in terms of resume building, but in terms of its potential to translate into a full-time job after graduation.

Approaching the Topic of H1-B Visas with Employers

Many employers are intimidated by the U.S. immigration process and are reluctant to sponsor H1-B visas, or simply have a policy against it.

Do not begin an employment interview or letter with an inquiry regarding H1-B sponsorship.

Discussions about H1-B sponsorship should come later, either when the employer brings it up or when the applicant is offered a position.

The applicant's first task in an interview is to convince the employer of his/her suitability for the job. Only later, when an employer is close to making, or has made an offer, should the applicant raise the H1-B sponsorship issue.

Learn about the sponsorship process including hiring and paying for a lawyer. By explaining the simplicity of the sponsorship process, the applicant will increase the likelihood of getting hired. **Seek out companies that have a history of H1-B sponsorship.** To identify companies that have sponsored H1-B's in the past consider the following sources:

1. The **U. S. Department of Labor** is required to provide a list of employers who have submitted Labor Condition Applications, i.e., asked for H-1B visas for employees. The list provides the names of hundreds of companies along with job titles and salary information associated with the H-1B petitions. Viewers can search for employers by location and industry -- <http://www.flcdatcenter.com/caseseach.asp>
2. **The ForeignMBA.com** is reportedly the #1 internet community for MBA students from around the world. The site includes a list of more than 70 employers that have a history of hiring foreign MBAs. The site also offers a guide, "Getting a Job in the U.S. -- a Guide for International MBA Students," which can be purchased online -- <http://www.foreignmba.com>

3. **H1VisaJobs.com** is a web site housing 10 databases listing companies that have sponsored H1-B visas within the past several years. The company obtains this information from the federal government that must disclose H1-B petitions. The Career Services Center has paid for access to this website as a service to the International students. To obtain the username and password, contact the Career Services Center. The databases available to our students, include the following areas: **Administrative Occupations; Business Management and Administration; Computer Science and Information Technology; Engineering; Mathematics & Physical Sciences** -- <http://www.h1visajobs.com>

Additional Advice for International Students

- **Market Yourself Positively** - It is very important for International students to turn employers' objections into positives.

By virtue of living and studying abroad, International students demonstrate tenacity and resourcefulness. It is important for them to tell employers about the challenges they faced in studying overseas and how they overcame them.

International students should be prepared to tell employers how hiring them offers more advantages than disadvantages.

- **Choose a Major/Specialization in Demand** - The demand for employees in technical fields, such as information technology and accounting, far outweighs the supply.

Therefore, International students who study these subjects may have more opportunities than those select majors in low-demand areas.

- **Be Flexible** - International students may need to expand their job search by considering jobs outside their desired career.

For example, an Information Technology major who would like to do web development may want to search for jobs in web development AND other areas of information technology.

- **Patience and Persistence** - Although finding employment as an International student can be challenging, it is not impossible. Each year the U.S. grants almost 200,000 H1-B visas.
- **Network** with friends, professors, other students, and staff of the university.
- Become familiar with **visa** application processes.
- Work for free like **interning** - the experience may lead to a full-time, paid position.

The Career Services Center offers job search strategy workshops throughout the year. Career resources and handouts on various career topics can be found in the Career Library or on our website. Visit our website at <http://www.udel.edu/CSC/happening> to obtain a list of events and workshops or contact the Career Services Center at udcareers@udel.edu or call (302) 831-2392.