

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

Your main goal in seeking satisfying employment is to get as many job interviews related to your career objective as possible. The strategy you use to reach this goal requires a great deal of planning, persistence, hard work, and a good attitude. The following information is offered for your use in developing a thorough job search plan.

Your search begins with some general self-assessment and preparation. If you can respond positively to the following questions, your search will take on a clear focus.

- Do you know what type of position you are seeking?
- Have you identified your assets in terms of skills and interests?
- Do you know how these skills and interests might be applied to work?
- Have you identified geographic preferences?
- Have you considered work and life style values?
- Have you developed a resume?
- Do you know how to prepare for a job interview?

THE JOB MARKET

The job market consists of available job openings that may or may not be advertised. While advertised job leads are the most evident, about 85% of the jobs available at any given time are not advertised. Tapping into these potential opportunities requires direct contact with as many employers as possible. The following are some tips to help you achieve this objective.

NETWORKING & INFORMATION INTERVIEWING

NETWORKING

Your actual search for a job can begin in an obvious, yet not so obvious place...with the people you know. The concept of networking simply ties into a human trait – the desire to help others. Never underestimate the knowledge and influence of people you know.

- A network is a series of interlocking connections with people who may be helpful to you in your job search.
- Begin building a network by first contacting members of your family, other relatives, neighbors, personal friends, general acquaintances, professors, work associates and service activity colleagues. Do not set limits on who should or should not be part of your network.
- Let everyone know that you're looking for a job and what type of job you're looking for.
- Determine if they can provide you with information about a certain type of job, provide you with information about a particular organization, or refer you to others who know about a career field or specific organization.

- ❑ Maintain these contacts by checking back with them periodically.
- ❑ Follow through on any suggestions offered.

INFORMATION INTERVIEWING

While the goal of interviewing is to obtain a job offer, the goal of information interviewing is to gather information. Like networking, information interviewing is based on the premise that people are a tremendous source of information. Its purpose is to gain information about a career field upon which to base some career decisions and to put you in touch with possible job leads.

- ❑ Begin with people you know (your network contacts). Choose from this group those who are in career fields to which you aspire or people in related career areas.
- ❑ What about people you don't already know? Identify them through newspapers, telephone books, professional association directories and professional counselors.
- ❑ If you have located an office name, but don't have the name of an individual, call and speak with the secretary or receptionist. Explain politely and succinctly why you are calling (for information, not employment) and ask if you can be directed to an appropriate person.
- ❑ Schedule an appointment for a specific amount of time (30 minutes maximum).
- ❑ An alternative is to send a letter ahead of time stating what you want, indicating you will be telephoning and asking that the secretary or receptionist be alerted to your call.
- ❑ Be prepared! Take an active role to get the most out of your information interview.
- ❑ Review in your mind what you want to learn from an individual.
- ❑ Have questions prepared ahead of time.
- ❑ Following are some sample questions you might wish to choose from.
 - What credentials (education degrees, licenses, etc.) are required for effectiveness in this occupation?
 - How much variety would you say there is in the type of work you do?
 - Is there much opportunity for travel?
 - What types of employers hire people in your line of work?
 - What kinds of work values attract people to your occupation? (security, income, prestige, etc.)
 - What do you find most rewarding/least rewarding about this career field?
 - What is the typical entry level salary range for positions in this field? What is the potential?
 - What is a typical career path?
 - What is the future job outlook in this field (increased or decreased opportunity, etc.)

FOLLOW-UP

- ❑ Always ask for a referral to someone else. Ask the person with whom you are speaking to refer you to others who would be good sources of information.
- ❑ Evaluate what you have been told critically. Are there trends developing from one person to another? (In the end – you'll have to make your own judgments about the validity of the information.)

- Make sure you have the correct name and title of the person with whom you've spoken.
Write a thank you note!

Identifying Sources of Employment

To review, we learned that the job market consists of available job openings that may or may not be advertised. Following are some sources to utilize to discover job opportunities in both the advertised and "hidden" job market.

ADVERTISED JOB LEADS

- "Help Wanted Ads" can appear in a variety of publications:
- CAMPUS INTERVIEW PROGRAM, eRecruiting.com
 - Lists companies holding interviews on campus for full-time jobs upon graduation.
 - Contains profiles and contacts for over 1900 organizations
 - Workshops and programs sponsored by Career Services

JOB VACANCY NOTICES

All job leads received by the Career Services Center are filed in binders in the Career Resource Center.

NEWSPAPERS

Can be obtained or subscribed to for the cities in which you are interested (particularly Sunday editions.)

www.bonafideclassified.com currently contains the classified sections of over 1,700 newspapers in the U. S. and Canada.

ON-LINE JOB LISTING SERVICES

World Wide Web resources

SOME POPULAR INTERNET SITES:

- www.experience.com
- www.MonsterTRAK.com
- www.JobWeb.com
- College Grad Job Hunter
- NationJob Network
- Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition

PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS/PUBLICATIONS

Morris Library likely has the journal(s) relating to your field.

APPLYING TO ADVERTISED JOB LEADS

- ❑ Read the entire “Help-Wanted” section of the classifieds (A to Z) because ads are sometimes misclassified. For example, an entry-level banking position may be under “Assistant to” rather than under “B” for banking trainee.
- ❑ Read every ad that seems at all relevant to your qualifications very carefully.
- ❑ Distinguish between absolute requirements and wishful thinking (words like “should have”, “preferred”, “helpful but not required” indicate wishful thinking, for example). If you almost fit the requirements, such as having three years of part-time experience rather than one year of full-time experience, apply for the position.
- ❑ Send out a cover letter and resume the same day you see the advertisement. The longer you wait, the more reasons you will find not to apply.
- ❑ Send a cover letter and resume. Mention where you saw the ad in your cover letter.
- ❑ If it’s a blind ad (where the employer’s name is not listed) apply anyway. There are a variety of reasons why an employer might choose not to list their name, but at this stage of your job search, you have nothing to lose by applying to blind ads.
- ❑ In the case of an ad placed by an employment agency, call first and try to schedule an appointment to meet with the person screening for that type of ad.

POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

Identify potential employers through the following resources:

PEOPLE

Including family, other relatives, neighbors personal friends, general acquaintances, professors, work associates and service activity colleagues.

SPECIALIZED DIRECTORIES

Available in the Career Resource Center at the Career Services Center and Morris Library Reference Room.

TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES

Yellow pages, white pages, and blue pages

Yellow pages of telephone directories from across the nation are available on microfiche in the Morris Library Reference Room.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES & EMPLOYERS (NACE) ANNUAL, Volume 1

Copies available at Career Services Center

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Contact the Chamber of Commerce for the cities/geographic areas you are interested in for their listings.

FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

INTERNET

WORLD WIDE WEB

Begin with Career Services Center's "Internet Resources" website – www.udel.edu/CSC/netresources.html

USING THE INTERNET IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

RESOURCES AT UD

Career Services Center home page: www.udel.edu/CSC/ provides information about:

- Workshop/Program calendar (www.udel.edu/CSC/happening.html)
- Summer, part-time and on-campus job listings
- Internships, Campus Interview Program and over 1900 organization profiles and contacts are available at <http://bluehens.erecruiting.com>
- Graduate school information
- Internet resources and links

E-MAIL

Subscriptions to electronic discussion lists.

Electronic journals and newsletters, sent directly to your e-mail account.

Communication with individuals. Use it to contact people who perform work that interests you and to gain more information about a position before you apply for it.

Sending your resume to potential employers.

WORLD WIDE WEB

Job listings at other universities, both jobs with the institutions and their postings of external jobs.

Complete listings of U.S government jobs.

The *Riley Guide to Employment Resources on the Internet*, a continuously updated guide.

Job listings in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Home pages of UD and many other career centers and many employers of potential interest.

www.Careerbuilder.com - search 75+ sites for jobs from across the country

Occupational Outlook Handbook, the U.S. Department of Labor summary of all the types of occupations in the American economy and projected demands for each.

Search Engines: Yahoo, AltaVista, etc.

RESEARCHING ORGANIZATIONS

Before applying for a job with a particular organization, you should conduct some research to learn more about that organization. There are two main reasons why research is essential. First, given the keen competition for most positions, it is the well qualified candidate with the most knowledge of the organization's needs, and what he/she can offer them, who gets the job. Secondly, you need to know about the job and organizational environment to decide if the job will allow you to feel productive, enjoy our work and satisfy other high priority work values.

What Should I Know?

- Size of organization, relative to others in same industry/field
- Potential growth for the industry
- Product line or services rendered
- Potential new markets, products or services
- Organizational structure
- Location of the home office and other sites
- Number of plants, stores or sales outlets
- Formal or on-the-job training
- Typical career paths in your field
- Who the competition is
- Recent items in the news
- Short term profit
- Structure of assets

How Can I Find Out?

Find out information related to the preceding points through two major sources – written information and people (both inside and outside the organization).

WRITTEN INFORMATION

EMPLOYER PUBLICATIONS

- World Wide Web Sites
- Career Services Employer Literature Library contains literature on several hundred organizations. Also check CSC homepage – <http://www.udel.edu/CSC/> for links to employer's homepages.
- Personnel Departments have materials such as the posted job description, organization newsletter, and organization annual report.
- The actual department in which the job is located might have an annual department report, job description, department/division newsletter and special reports.
- Public Information/Relations Offices can provide general promotional literature about the organization and annual reports.

VARIOUS LIBRARY RESOURCES

- Publications such as Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Business Periodical Index and Business Index (microfiche).

RELATED PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS AND BUSINESS ORIENTED NEWSPAPERS/MAGAZINES

- Professional publications covering trends in your career area like Wall Street Journal, Fortune, Forbes, Business Week, etc.

BUSINESS DIRECTORIES

- Reference books such as Dun & Bradstreet Directory, Standard and Poor's Register, and Moody's Manuals.

REPORTS FILLED WITH APPROPRIATE REGULATORY, FINANCIAL, LICENSING AGENCIES

- Securities and Exchange Commission – Using EDGAR online at www.sec.gov/

PEOPLE

PEOPLE INSIDE THE ORGANIZATION

- In the department in which the job is located speak with the job incumbent (if possible); others with similar jobs; people who provide support services to the job; people who supervise the job, other than the person doing the hiring; and other technical/professional staff.
- The Personnel Office can serve as a referral source to those in the organization who have more of a direct relationship to the particular job and as information sources for general hiring processes, personnel policies, etc.
- Other departments may have people who know the supervisor who will be doing the hiring, people who have liaison activities with the job and other technical/professional support with useful knowledge.

PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE ORGANIZATION

- Sister organizations which share the same management structure and/or collaborate in the provision of a service or product can provide information.
- Competitive organizations will usually know a great deal about what's going on in the organization, especially if they are profit-making organizations
- Contributors to the organization can be helpful, i.e., free-lance professionals who serve as consultants, writers, etc.; people who sell or distribute to the organization; and people who serve on the Board of Directors.
- Related professional or trade associations, unions, etc. can be good sources of information.
- Auditors/Accreditors/Licensors, etc. who have responsibilities for monitoring this organization or for ensuring that the organization or department meets established standards can be of assistance.
- Consumers of the service or product can help you identify problem areas, new service or product ideas, etc. that you might want to talk about in your job interview.

Contacting Potential Employers

Your next step is to try to convert job leads into job interviews. The action that you take with potential employers boils down to three methods of contact – writing, telephoning, and visiting.

LETTERS

- Writing letters to potential employers is the #1 method used by job seekers.
- The main criticism to this approach is the low rate of return.
- You can insure the best response by writing your letter in a way that will capture the attention of people serving a variety of functions in your career field.
- Compose and word process your letters individually.
- Address correspondence to names of individuals with job titles that are appropriate.
- If applying to an organization from a distance, focus on geographic interest and a specific career goal.
- Regarding the content of your cover letters, there are several options:
 - State that you will call at a future date about the possibility of an interview (you take the initiative).
 - State that you plan to be in the area at a particular time. You will call about the possibility of arranging an interview during that time period (you take the initiative).

TELEPHONE

- Reread the information you have on an employer as a result of your research.
- Make some notes about key points you wish to make.
- Know the name and title of the person you wish to reach.
- When the secretary answers, ask directly for the person you want.
- If the secretary asks, “May I help you?” take him/her up on it. State you wish to speak to Mr./Mrs. ____ Ask when he/she will be free.
- Insist politely if there is another block to your reason for calling.
- Try to pinpoint when the person you wish to speak to will return. Then YOU return the call.
- Once you have gotten through to the right person, identify yourself and indicate that you are following up on a letter (if that is the case).
- Have some questions prepared that relate to the organization—something you found out in your search (i.e., new products, expansion of facilities, etc.)
- Try not to drag out the conversation. Once you have established interest, get to the point.
- State that you are calling to find out if there are any immediate openings in your field or if openings are anticipated in the near future.
- Try to arrange a meeting and suggest a time to discuss possible job opportunities.
- If there are no openings, inquire if they have any suggestions of other organizations you might contact.

EMAIL

- While email is an option for initially contacting employers, it may be difficult to find out the email address of the person you wish to reach. Many Human Resources departments use email aliases, for example, humanresources@xyzcompany.com
- Email is not necessarily secure, therefore, think carefully about what you say in your message.
- Email is not as personal as a letter, phone call or personal visit, so try not to use it exclusively.
- For more technical jobs, the employer may appreciate your initiative in using email, just keep the above points in mind.

INTERNET JOB HUNTING TIPS (“NETIQUETTE”)

While e-mail has opened new lines of communication between job seeker and employers, it is imperative that job seekers follow suggested rules of “netiquette” when using this option. In the real world of work, manners are expected. If an applicant is too casual or familiar in their approach, electronically or otherwise, an employer is turned-off immediately. Communicate professionally at all times.

General rules of etiquette for electronic job seeking:

- Never address the employer by their first name. Use the proper salutation.
- Always use your full name when signing correspondence. Using only your first name presumes intimacy.
- Watch return addresses (e-mail name). Cute and clever e-mail names are considered unprofessional by most employers. Play it safe and use your own name.
- Avoid slang expressions
- Do not use "smileys" or "emoticons" (facial expressions made by using punctuation marks). They are inappropriately casual.
- Write in complete sentences. Friends and acquaintances communicating electronically tend to use a type of verbal shorthand; do not do this when contacting employers.
- Never presume on the employer's time. Always ask if what you propose (e.g. an interview or brief meeting) is convenient. Don't make demands. Make polite requests, if anything.
- Don't inundate the employer with a string of messages. Once you have sent the original correspondence (and perhaps resume electronically), follow up at well-placed intervals (about once a week). Employers are receiving hundreds of electronic contacts. Give them time.
- Don't assume the employer will remember you. In subsequent messages, refer to your prior correspondence and always use both your first and last names.
- Check your e-mail several times a day, every day. You may risk losing an opportunity or alienating a potential employer if messages sit for several days.
- Never keep employers waiting. Answer e-mail messages promptly.
- Be polite and observe proper manners.
- Be friendly but not too familiar. Adopt a professional, yet cordial writing style.
- As with normal cover letters, you need to strike the right balance. Be assertive but not aggressive. Enthusiastic but not pushy. Professional but not stiff. Knowledgeable but not a know-it-all. Persistent but not annoying. Above all, be respectful.

Source: Using the Internet in Your Job Search

SPECIAL HINTS

- Be firm, clear, and assertive. These are the qualities that are needed and sought after by employers.
- Be prepared to communicate the value and benefits you can bring to the employer. You have a clear reason for setting up the appointment because you have something to offer. You are not one of the many job seekers who are unprepared for an interview.
- If you are referred by someone else to the employer, be sure to give the referral's name.
- Role play the call with a friend. Keep your presentation short (about 1 minute.)

PERSONAL VISIT

- While the potential for "being in the right place at the right time" can be great, cold calling can be a tough, discouraging proposition. Being told "no" to your face is a major confidence destroying experience.
- To be successful, you need to be prepared for anything, i.e. filling out an application, getting screened initially, setting up a return appointment, etc.
- When conducting a personal visit, ask to see someone in a particular department. Try to have the name ahead of time.
- If you can't see the person right away, offer to wait.
- If waiting is not possible, try to make an appointment.
- Another option is to leave your resume and callback for an appointment.
- In the case of an ad placed by an employment agency, call first and try to schedule an appointment to meet with the person screening for that type of ad.

FOLLOW-UP

- No matter what method of contact you use, maintain careful records. Develop a system to keep track of contacts with employers - including such information as date, person, result, current status, and next action.
- It is important to follow-up by a letter or phone call on any contacts you have made, especially those in which you are most interested.
- If you have been asked to supply any information or check back at a particular time, be sure to follow through.

CONCLUSION

The bottom line of a job search strategy is job interviews. These grow out of solid job leads - obtained from reading job advertisements as well as your contact network and information interviewing which generate referrals into a hidden job market. The action you take boils down to three activities - writing, telephoning, and visiting - to convert these leads into job interviews.

SUGGESTED READING

Career X Roads by Gerry Crispin and Mark Mehler

Hook Up, Get Hired! by Joyce L. Kennedy

America's Top Internet Job Sites by Ron and Caryl Krannich

Internet Job Search Almanac by Adams Media Corp.

Job Searching Online For Dummies by Pam Dixon