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# JOB SEARCHING GUIDE





## The Job Search Process

Finding the right job requires many steps and many decisions. You don't just apply and wait for an offer from those who have a place for you. Nor do you hope that you stumble onto an appealing opportunity. It is important to realize that getting a job will depend on the level of effort that you put forth. Most people do want more than "just a job." To ensure a successful career campaign, there are four essential steps to follow:

Step I: Self-Assessment

Step II: Knowledge of Employment Options

Step III: Contacting Employers

Step IV: Preparing Job Search Tools

## Career Campaigns Four Essential Steps

### Step I: Self-Assessment

- Skills
- Interests
- Values
- Family situations
- Employment preferences
- Job target

### Step II: Knowledge of Employment Options

- What do I want to do
- Job families
- Work settings
- Long-term career goals
- Occupational titles
- Where can I work
- Who employs workers in my field

### Step III: Contacting Employers

- Hiring methods
- Online resources
- Print resources
- Networking
- Agencies
- Associations

### Step IV: Preparing Job Search Tools

- Resume
- Cover Letter
- Interviewing skills
- Record-keeping system
- Professional image



## Step I: Self-Assessment

To prepare for an effective job search, you must understand your skills, interests, values, family situation, employment preferences, and job target. Although this sounds basic, it is an important but often forgotten step.

Knowledge of your skills, interests, values, family situation, and employment preferences can help you clarify what type of organization, industry or position offers you the most of what you want in a job. Although no job will be an exact match, the job offer you accept should provide the best opportunity available to match the factors that are most important to you.

**SKILLS** indicate work tasks (behaviors) that you can usually successfully perform. Identifying your skills can help you focus on specific positions that draw on your strengths.

**INTERESTS** indicate what work activities we enjoy or prefer doing. Know whether you want to work with people, data or things and whether you prefer to work alone or with others. Clarifying your interests can help you identify specific positions that will allow you to engage in activities you enjoy.

**VALUES** motivate us to work. Know what kind of reward is most important to you in a job – money, security, creativity, leadership, influence, etc. Clarifying your values helps you to identify potential employers and work settings and confirm your decision to seek employment with a particular organization.

**FAMILY SITUATIONS** include the desire to live close to family members, the employment opportunities for a spouse, fiancée, or partner, the preferences (or bias) of family members, family employment contacts, or the existence of a family business.

**EMPLOYMENT PREFERENCES** include the hours of work, travel limitations and the physical demands of the job. Choose your ideal location – urban, suburban or rural and your ideal work environment – large corporation, small business, government agency or non-profit organization.

**SPECIFYING A JOB TARGET(S)** helps you to answer the question, “What do I want to do?”

Pay special attention to this first step. It is the foundation of your job search; without it you will not be able to effectively write cover letters, prepare a resume, or interview. The job search is an exercise in communication; you will be evaluated on your ability to communicate both orally and in writing. And you must have something to communicate!



## Step II: Knowledge of Employment Options

Now that you've completed an assessment of yourself, your next step is to determine what you want to do, where you can do it and who employs people who do what you want to do?

### WHAT DO I WANT TO DO?

"I want to work with people" or "I'm interested in making a lot of money" or "I want to work for the federal government" are all inadequate answers. For example, if you want to work with people, what age group, race or gender do you want to work with; do you want to gather information from people by talking to them as a newspaper reporter does, investigate people through contact with other people as a law enforcement officer does, or influence the attitudes and ideas of others as a salesperson does? Secondly, the federal government has all types of positions from janitors to program directors – what are your interests?

To adequately answer this question, you should consider four factors: job families, work settings, occupational titles, and long-term goals.

*Examples of Job Families* include advertising, banking, education, health care, law, human services, telecommunications, and sales.

*Work Settings* can be grouped into six categories:

1. **Business/Industry**  
(e.g., banks, insurance companies, manufacturers, and transportation firms)
2. **Government**  
(e.g., federal, state, or local)
3. **Education**  
(e.g., public, private, trade schools, elementary, secondary, or college)
4. **Non-Profit**  
(e.g., social services, health services, or cultural)
5. **Professions**  
(e.g., law, medicine, clergy, or dentistry)
6. **Private**  
(all forms of individual and private ownership; may overlap with previously mentioned categories)

In addition to your immediate job target you should also be thinking about long-term career goals.

### *Long-Term Career Goals*

You do not necessarily have to know exactly where you want to be five years from now, but you should have a general picture of an occupational interest for the next few years.

### *Occupational Titles*

In order to know how your abilities and interests can be put to best use in the job market, you need to become familiar with occupational titles – what employers call certain jobs (e.g., Tax Accountant, Job Developer, Environmental Engineer, Home Health Aide, Cashier, etc.). There are many resources you can use to locate specific information about occupations like the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* and the *Career Choices Encyclopedia*.



### 4 FACTORS FOR TO CONSIDER

Job Families

Long-Term Goals

Work Settings

Occupational Titles



## Step II: Knowledge of Employment Options

### WHERE CAN I DO IT?

To conduct an effective job search campaign, you need to consider and specify the geographic location where you want to do the work. While jobs exist almost anywhere, it is clear that economic activity is sometimes concentrated in particular regions of the nation, which means more employment opportunities than ordinary are available there. Decide if your job search will include international, national, regional, or local employers.

### WHO EMPLOYS PEOPLE WHO DO WHAT I WANT TO DO?

To increase your awareness of companies who employ people who do what you want to do consider using the following resources:

1. Employer directories (e.g., Corporate Jobs Outlook, Moody's Manual, Standard & Poor's Industry Surveys)
2. Periodical articles (e.g., Business Periodicals Index)
3. Company web site and literature
4. Chamber of Commerce directories
5. Trade and professional association web sites and magazines
6. Telephone directories
7. Information interviews
8. Networking

## Step III: Job Hunting Methods

The first thing you should realize before launching your job search campaign is that each type of employment has its own unique style of hiring. The hiring methods of advertising agencies differ from those of newspapers. Similarly, the hiring methods of newspapers differ from those of public accounting firms, which differ from those of educational institutions. In addition, large, complex organizations often use different hiring procedures to fill different types of positions. Therefore, savvy job seekers use a variety of methods to contact prospective employers, rather than limiting themselves to one method. Below is

a list effective approaches which can be used in your job search.

Regardless of your career interest, it is important for you to let as many potential employers as possible know who you are, what you can do, and why you are interested in their organizations. The more specific you can be in discussing why you are interested in them and what you can contribute to their organizations, the more effective your contact will be.

Newspaper/Classified Ads	Career Expos/Job Fairs	Employment Agencies
Public Library	Job Hunting Clubs	Previous Employers
Chamber of Commerce	Cold Calling	Networking
Mail Campaign	Volunteering	Internships/Co-Ops
Internet Job Databases	Telephone Books	College Career Center
Professional Association Journals	Web Sites	State Employment Office/ One-Stop Career Centers



## Step IV: Preparing Job Search Tools

After you have completed the self-assessment, researched your employment options, and identified potential employers, your last step is to refine or develop your job search tools, including the resume, cover letter and interviewing skills. It is also very important to set up a record-keeping system to help you keep track of your job search.

### A WORD ABOUT VOICEMAILS

As your job search advances, an employer may need to reach you by phone. Voicemail can be very helpful; however, employers won't appreciate silly messages that entertain your friends. If you're engaged in a job search, use a simple, businesslike message. Here's an example:

"You've reached 236-789-6547. Please leave a detailed message to include your name, the time of your call, and phone number after the tone. I will get back to you as soon as possible."

### ELECTRONIC JOB SEARCH

One source of jobs may be as close a personal computer. Various online resume services let you

input your resume into a database, which then can be accessed by companies searching for applicants who meet their criteria. Companies also post job listings on web sites to which you can directly respond by sending your resume and cover letters. Some of these services will also send you job alerts via an e-mail account.

Persistence is the key to cracking the hidden job market. Attend meetings of professional associations and become an active member. After you begin the above processes, and your network base expands, your search will be made easier. Employers will appreciate your resourcefulness – and view you as a viable candidate.

### THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

Your job search should neither begin nor end with the help wanted ads. Studies have shown that fewer than 5% of openings are filled by employment agencies, only 15% of available jobs are filled by applications or responses to "help wanted" ads, and 80% are filled through recommendations of friends already employed by the organization, by "tips" or other contacts – what we refer to as the Hidden Job Market.

It takes much more than merely perusing the classifieds. By employing a number of methods, you increase your chances of landing a job.



## Voicemail

⇒ Professionalism is Key

If you're engaged in a job search, use a simple, businesslike message.



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Some hidden job market techniques you might use are:

**NETWORKING.** The most effective way to meet potential employers and learn about possible jobs is to tap into your personal network of contacts. Think about everyone you know – family members and their friends, co-workers, professors, past employers, neighbors, and even your doctors. Don't be afraid to inform them of your career interests and let them know that you are looking for work. They

could possibly be able to refer you to any professionals they think can be of assistance.

## **INFORMATION**

**INTERVIEWS.** This approach allows you to meet professionals, gather career information, investigate career options, get advice on job search techniques, and familiarize yourself with employers who just might remember you when a vacancy occurs.

**TEMPORARY WORK.** As more companies employ the services of temporary or contract workers, this type of employment is a good opportunity to gain experience in your chosen career field. Temporary workers can explore various jobs and get an inside look at different companies without the commitment of a permanent job. Also, if a company decides to make a position permanent, these "temps" have already made a good impression and are often given first consideration.

## Dealing with Rejection in the Job Search

For some individuals, a job search may provoke more anxiety than the choice of a college major. The reason for this potential difference is that a job search, often results in the possibility of specific and immediate rejection from potential employers.

Job applicants are often aware that they are likely to receive many rejections before actually receiving a job offer. Sometimes, job seekers begin to dread the BIG NO so much that they stop pursuing additional interviews, thereby shutting down the job search and shutting off the pipeline to the future. Remember, fear of rejection doesn't have to paralyze your job search efforts. In dealing with rejections, follow these eight guidelines:

**DEPERSONALIZE THE INTERVIEW.** Employers may get as many as 500 resumes for one job opening. How can you, and the other 499 candidates be no good?

**DON'T MAKE IT ALL OR NOTHING.** Don't set yourself up for a letdown: "If I don't get this job, I'm a failure." Tell yourself, "It could be mine. It's a good possibility. It's certainly not an impossibility."

**DON'T BLAME THE INTERVIEWER.** Realize interviewers aren't in a hurry to think and behave a certain way. Blame your turndown on a stone-hearted interviewer who didn't flatter you with

beautiful compliments, and you will learn nothing.

**DON'T LIVE IN THE PAST.** When you dredge up past failures, your nervous system kicks in and you experience all the feelings that go with failure. Unwittingly, you overestimate the dangers facing you and underestimate yourself.

**DON'T GET MAD AT THE SYSTEM.** You must adjust to the world rather than make the world adjust to you. The easiest thing is to conform, to do what 400,000 other people are doing. When you sit down to play bridge or poker or drive a car, do you complain about the rules?

**TAKE THE SPOTLIGHT OFF YOURSELF.** Sell your skills, not yourself. Concentrate on what you're there for: to find out what the interviewer's problems are and to show him or her how you can work together to solve them.

**SEE YOURSELF IN THE NEW ROLE.** Form a mental picture of the positive self you'd like to become in job interviews, rather than focusing on what scares you.

**KEEP UP YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR.** Nobody yet has contracted an incurable disease from a job interview.



## Job Hunting: Temporary Staffing Services Industry

In seeking employment with a temporary staffing services agency, here are some guidelines to follow for an successful job search.

Be clear and honest about the kind of work you want, because the temp agency will use your preferences to develop a successful match with a potential client/employer. It is the agency's interest for you to succeed in the job.

It is generally advisable to apply to and be on the roster with several different temp agencies instead of just one. In this way, you have several employers pursuing your job interests. Different agencies have contracts with different clients/employers.

Be aware that you might start in low-level jobs with an employer, but keep negotiating and working collaboratively with the temp agency to get yourself into higher-level positions.

Try to get all the leadership, teamwork, computer, and training experiences that you can with a temporary employment agency.

In reporting work experience on your resume, remember that the temp agency is your employer and that your job description would describe your duties and the name and location of the client.

In researching client organizations, try to find out which temporary staffing agency has the hiring contract for that organization – for example, Motorola may have a staffing contract with Kelly Services, while General Motors may have one with Manpower.

The Yellow Pages of a phone book will have listings of temporary staffing organizations under the heading of Employment Contractors or Temporary Help. The National Association of

Temporary Staffing Services, <http://www.staffingtoday.net/natss.org>, can provide additional information about this industry.



## Temporary Agencies

### RESOURCES

#### World Wide Recruiting Network

<http://www.npaworldwide.com/>

#### American Staffing Association

<http://www.americanstaffing.net/>



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## Temp Work Checklist

This list of factors might be important for you to consider in seeking employment in the temporary staffing services industry. If many of these items apply to you, this may be a clear indicator that you would be a good candidate for this kind of employment.

- You do not need a lot of job security right now.
- You are willing to start at lower-level positions in an organization in order to develop inside information about permanent positions.
- You are willing to work for different organizations (clients) in different locations in a short period of time.
- You want to make yourself visible to employers who might be looking for someone with your skills.
- You are relocating to another city and don't want to accept "permanent" employment right away.
- You want a decent income and secure health benefits.
- You desire a more flexible lifestyle that temping can provide.
- You would benefit from having an "agent" who can help you market your skills in the community.
- You want to maintain a stable work history without getting stuck in jobs you don't like.
- You are interested in a more relaxed hiring process with an organization as a "temp."
- You would like to get training in new job skill areas, such as word processing or database creation.
- You would like to try out new occupations or industries at less risk.
- You have skills – consulting, information processing, technical, professional – that would enable you to function as an independent contractor.
- You do not want to make long-term commitments to a permanent employer.

## Job Search Strategies Pros and Cons

There are many ways of looking for a job, some of which are better than others. Presented below are some of the most popular ways, as well as helpful hints, pros, and cons of each.

### STRATEGY: WANT ADS

Scan want ads. Mail your resume with cover letter tailored to specific job qualifications.

#### Tools

- \* Newspapers
- \* Journals
- \* Newsletters
- \* Trade magazines
- \* Cover letters
- \* Resumes

#### Pros

Involves minimal investment of time in identifying companies. Resume and cover letter are sent for actual job opening.

#### Cons

Resume and cover letter will compete with large number of others. Ads follow job market; least effective in times of economic downturn.

#### Helpful Hints

- \* Use as a meter on the job market in a certain geographical area.
- \* Try to get your materials in as early as possible.

### STRATEGY: EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

Respond to employment agency ads in newspapers; check phone book for names of agencies to contact.

#### Tools

- \* Resumes
- \* Business attire



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## *Pros*

Fee-paid jobs for graduates in technical fields or those with marketable experience.

## *Cons*

Usually of less help to non-technical/inexperienced graduates. Likely to charge fees.

## *Helpful Hints*

- \* Identify agencies that specialize in your field.
- \* Make frequent contact with your counselor to obtain better service.

## STRATEGY: WORLD WIDE WEB

Job vacancy databases.

## *Tools*

- \* Access to the Web
- \* Electronic resume

## *Pros*

Actual job openings. Many employers use a wide variety of job listing services. Many listings have free to low-cost access. Worldwide geographic reach.

## *Cons*

Large competition because everyone has easy access to apply to jobs. Positions available are not always kept up to date so it is always good to do follow up if you have contact information for the recruiter.

## *Helpful Hints*

- \* Use the Web frequently as information and sites change quickly.
- \* Use more than one online job database.

## STRATEGY: TARGETED MAILING

Develop good cover letter tailored to a specific type of job and the needs of the company. Send a letter with a resume to selected companies.

## *Tools*

- \* List of well researched companies
- \* Tailored cover letters
- \* Resumes

## *Pros*

Better approach than the mass mailing method. Investment of time and effort should merit stronger response from employers.

## *Cons*

Requires a significant investment of time in researching companies and writing cover letters as well as following up on contacts.

## *Helpful Hints*

Try to find out who is in charge of the area in which you want to work; send your materials to that person. Great method when used in conjunction with networking.

## STRATEGY: IN-PERSON VISIT

Visit many companies. Ask to see person in specific department. Submit resume and application, if possible.

## *Tools*

- \* Business attire
- \* Company address list
- \* Resumes

## *Pros*

Resume and application are on file with the company.

## *Cons*

Requires a great deal of time to make a relatively small number of contacts.

## *Helpful Hints*

Research the companies prior to your visit, ask for a specific person or ask about a specific type of job.

## STRATEGY: NETWORKING

Talk to everyone you know to develop a list of possible contacts; ask for information on job/companies and to circulate your resume.

## *Tools*

- \* List of contacts
- \* Resumes
- \* Business attire

## *Pros*

May learn of unadvertised openings. May result in a courtesy interview. Often results in a closer match



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of your interests to a job.

## Cons

A contact in itself is not enough to get you a job. You may exhaust all leads without landing a job. Very time-consuming.

## Helpful Hints

Follow through on all leads and keep broadening your network of contacts.

## STRATEGY: ON-CAMPUS RECRUITING

Follow specific procedures to secure on-campus interviews.

## Tools

- \* Scheduling interviews
- \* Employer literature
- \* Resumes
- \* Business attire

## Pros

One of the primary ways in which companies recruit for technical and business positions.

## Cons

Declining as a method employers use to identify candidates. May be less effective for non-technical/non-business candidates.

## Helpful Hints

Use the interview schedule as a way to identify possible employers, even if you don't get to interview on campus with those employers.

## STRATEGY: RESUME REFERRAL

Register with one of the many national referral services. As jobs are listed by employers, the data bank of registrants is searched for matches. If your materials match they are sent to the employers.

## Tools

- \* Registration form supplied by service

## Pros

Another way to monitor the job market and get your qualifications to the attention of employers.

## Cons

May involve a fee. Often more helpful to those in technical or specialized fields.

## Helpful Hints

Use only in conjunction with other job search strategies.

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