

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

1. Identify the position (or positions) you are seeking

- Knowing what type of position you want will help you identify employers
- Research your values, interests and skills and how they relate to the work world
- Clarify your interests by talking to Career Services, faculty, staff and contacts in the field

2. Research potential employers

- Determine the type of environment where you want to apply your skills. Your major does not determine your work environment. Business skills can be used in industry, hospitals, government, financial institutions, schools, and non-profit organizations.
- Ask yourself the following:
 - i. Where do I want to be geographically? Am I seeking a more formal or casual work place? Do I want a constantly changing or fast-paced environment? Is my goal to work in an environment that is involved in helping others or working for the good of the community? What kind of customers or clients do I wish to work with? Do I like a small company where I know all of my coworkers or do I like being part of a larger organization? How does the company mission statement fit with my values?
- Identify companies/organizations that meet your interests through High Library, Career Services, online information and faculty/staff input. Some online research tools include Vault (on Career Services home page) www.hoovers.com, and www.wetfeet.com.

3. Create a targeted resume and cover letter

- Prior to writing your resume, research the career field and identify the skills needed to be successful in that type of position.
- Demonstrate in your resume how you have acquired or used the skills needed for the position.
- If possible, describe your accomplishments with tangible numbers; don't just list your job duties.
- Use your cover letter to further explain why you are good fit for the company or the position.
- Always check your resume and cover letter for grammar and spelling mistakes.

4. Develop a list of contacts for networking

Employers are far more likely to bring a candidate in for an interview if he/she is referred by someone they respect. Let your contacts know about your interests so they can assist you with your job search.

- Divide your contacts in categories like: close family/friends, school contacts, previous employers or coworkers, and community contacts. Write down any names that come to your mind. Remember to talk with Career Services about business or alumni contacts.
- Develop a brief pitch (30 – 60 seconds) that describes your interests, background, skills, and why you are contacting them. Identify how you think your contacts might be able to help you. Could they provide company information? Information about career options? Job search advice? Additional contact names?
- Write down your questions so that you will be prepared. Call to arrange either a phone appointment or a brief meeting. Make sure to follow up meetings with a thank you note or a resume if appropriate. The goal of your networking is to develop contacts that will ultimately lead you to a person who has the authority to hire you.

5. Responding to advertised postings

Including Sunday newspapers, internet posting sites, Career Services, job fairs, trade journals, professional association web pages or on company websites.

- When responding, always include in the cover letter how you heard about the position.

- Carefully read the advertisement and follow directions for applying. Tailor your cover letter to address the requested skills by the company and site examples that prove you can do the job.
- Close the letter by requesting an interview and thanking the employer for their consideration. Unless the advertisement states, “no phone calls please”, follow up with a call within a week of sending your resume. Let the employer know that you are very interested in the position and would like to meet to discuss how your skills could be used within the company.

6. Applying directly to companies (sending your resume or calling when you do not know if there are any available positions)

- Start by researching to whom in the company you should send your resume. Find out the name of the manager of the department where you would like to work and send your letter directly to him/her. Send a targeted cover letter and resume directly to this contact.
- You may also choose to send a cover letter to Human Resources letting them know you have sent a letter to the department manager. If you are calling, use your sales pitch (30 – 60 second highlight of your interests and qualifications) and request a meeting to discuss how you may benefit the company.
- If you are seeking an internship, let the employer know this. Some companies have different policies for recruiting interns and full-time employees.

7. Working with Agencies

When working with an agency find out the type of companies they serve and if their primary focus is temporary employment, full-time placement or temp-to-perm contracts. Do they specialize in manufacturing? Healthcare? Information technology? **Exercise caution when working with agencies.**

- Do not work with an agency that asks you to pay a fee for their services. Fees are paid by the employer to the agency. As a result, the agency’s primary customer will be the employer, not you.
- Thoroughly read any agreements you are asked to sign. Some companies will try to collect fees from employers (or you) even when you have found the position on your own.

Tips for your job search

- Be organized. Make copies of advertisements, applications you sent, and company contact information.
- Present yourself in a professional manner. Make sure your answering machine (or cell phone message) and email address is appropriate. A voice mail should state your name, number, and let the caller know you will be returning their call as soon as possible.
- Your email address should include your last name. Do not use email addresses that include nicknames or hobbies. When contacting a company, be polite to every staff member you encounter (even if they do not extend the same courtesy to you).
- Maintain contact with people on your networking list. Keep them updated on your progress. If a contact made a suggestion or referred you to another person, let them know what you did and what the outcome was.
- Start early and be persistent. It takes time and energy to conduct a job search. Start looking about 6 months prior to the date you wish to be employed. Government clearances and hiring processes may take even longer. The deadlines for some competitive summer internships often close in January or February.