Navigating the Job Search
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“There’s nothing online!” “Where are all the jobs?” Finding a job can be a daunting and frustrating task. It will not happen overnight or by wishful thinking. Getting a good job takes preparation, effort, and a dose of reality.

You need to make sure you are tapping into ALL available resources instead of literally putting all your eggs in one basket. It would be wonderful if you could do all your job-hunting in one sitting - while eating breakfast, enjoying the comics, or surfing the Internet. However, if you want a golden opportunity, you must put a lot of effort into finding it.

This booklet is designed to give you information, tools, and strategies to utilize during your search. Find the techniques that work best for you and get that job!!

Good Luck!
Understanding The Hidden Job Market

Only 10 - 15% of all jobs are advertised.

Where are all the rest?

The remainder of available jobs are found either through employment agencies or in the hidden job market.

This is how it works:

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<td>No job openings, but employers are always looking for a good worker.</td>
<td>The need is clear - the insiders know but no action is taken to notify the public. Referrals and timing are critical.</td>
<td>Job is now open in-house and is posted. Referrals are desired. Employers call schools, employment agencies, etc.</td>
<td>Ad is in the newspaper. Crowds appear.</td>
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20% 50% 90% 100%

90% of all jobs are filled before a job is even advertised.

Therefore, you must be creative in your search and tap into ALL resources!
Getting started is the hardest – **How Do I Begin?**

The newspaper is a great first step. You can see what companies have openings, and also get an idea of what kinds of jobs are available. **HINT:** Read all classified ads, not just the ones under a specific heading or job title. Think in terms of the **DUTIES** you’d like to perform in your job and search for those. Your dream career may be under a heading you never would have considered.

Don’t park yourself in the classifieds, though. Look through the entire newspaper. Did a company just open a new location? Did another company just have a massive layoff? Get to know what is going on in your local business community, and you will know where the real opportunities are.

Once you have finished scanning the newspaper, pursue other avenues for uncovering opportunities. The newspaper only has 10 – 15% of available jobs, so you must tap into the **hidden job market**. The following are some suggestions, but this is by no means a comprehensive list. Use your imagination and creativity to broaden your horizons, and take some time to investigate those that interest you.

- **Yellow Pages** – Let your fingers do the walking to find what businesses are available in your geographic area. You’ll get a breakdown of businesses by specialty or service provided, as well as contact information.

- **Job Fairs** – Where else can you network with a multitude of employers in a span of a few hours? First and foremost, make sure you do your homework beforehand. Know what employers will be there, what they do, and what opportunities might be available for you. Bring plenty of resumes, a pleasant demeanor, and comfortable shoes for the ride home.

- **College Career Offices, Workforce Development Offices, Community Agencies, and Libraries** – Employers post openings with many organizations. Make sure that you **frequently** investigate job postings, either on the web or in paper form.

- **Chamber of Commerce** – New companies register with the Chamber to begin their own networking. Settled companies also utilize Chamber of Commerce membership to retain community ties and continue networking. Get on the Chamber of Commerce website for each city you are interested in to find out more.

- **Online** – Use the Internet to research companies, cultures, and environments. Many companies now post opportunities directly on their website, so you can check out opportunities while deciding if it would be a good fit for you.

- **College Central Network** – Search jobs through the Career Development Center - [http://www.collegecentral.com/bloomsburg/index.cfm](http://www.collegecentral.com/bloomsburg/index.cfm)

- **Network** – Never underestimate the power of networking. **“It’s not what you know, it’s not who you know, it’s who knows you.”**
According to Experience.com, 88% of entry-level positions in the U.S. are now listed ONLY online.

So it is time to become savvy and put your best online face forward.

**FIND:** There are many sites to find open positions. Big job boards list a wide variety of jobs, job search engines research jobs and companies, and company websites provide specific openings. Niche job boards list positions for applicants with special qualifications such as technology professional or bilingual job seekers.


**LEARN:** Career blogs and information sites abound. Human resource professionals, recruiters and career counselors post fresh tips and tricks on getting ahead in your job search.


**RESEARCH:** Unsure what would be a fair salary for a job to which you are applying? Want to know what the top companies are in Chicago? You can do research on employers, salaries, occupations, and locations online to better prepare you for your job search.


**CONNECT:** Job searching is more than just locating open positions. It is also important to network with people to provide your information or referrals.


**CONTROL:** When hiring managers perform background checks, many will “Google” a candidate’s name and search social websites such as Facebook and MySpace. Employers are paying attention to how appropriate your email address, instant message screen names and blog or forum postings are. Be proactive; search yourself and use appropriate security settings.

*Key sites:* www.mashable.com, www.google.com/alerts

**Personal Branding**

Experience the power of social networking and how branding your professional image is an essential resource to get your recognized. The first place most people turn to when researching anything is Google. So. Google yourself and see what turns up. Be aware that businesses are doing the same to potential employees (Geisinger Googles 50% of their candidates). Assess your professional online image and determine what is missing or what should be hidden.

*Key sites:* www.studentbranding.com, www.personalbrandingblog.com
According to a survey of 100 executive recruiters conducted by ExecuNet, 77 percent of executive recruiters admitted to using search engines to further investigate job candidates. 35 percent of the executive recruiters said they eliminated candidates due to the information uncovered online. The number one reason they executive recruiters eliminated candidates was due to discovering the candidate had lied about his or her qualifications (31 percent). Other eliminations were due to the following:

- Poor communication skills (25 percent)
- Criminal behavior (24 percent)
- Badmouthing previous companies or employers (19 percent)
- Posting information about drinking or drug use (19 percent)
- Disclosing confidential information about previous employers (15 percent)
- Lying about an absence (12 percent)
- Provocative or inappropriate photographs (11 percent)
- Unprofessional screen name (8 percent)

Knowing there are more than 200 million active users of Facebook and that candidates are more honest on their accounts than on their resumes, hiring managers are going to new heights to investigate prospective job candidates. Currently, when a hiring manager performs a background check, many will “Google” a candidate’s name and search social websites such as Facebook, MySpace and YouTube. Hiring managers also pay attention to how appropriate and revealing your email address, instant message account screen names and blog or forum postings are. The more modern form of a background check is in addition to the traditional reference checks, criminal and credit background checks, drug screenings and pre-employment testing.

In preparation for today’s new style of background checks, job candidates should refrain from posting:

- Any sexually explicit information
- Racial/sexist comments
- Alcohol/drug references
- Negative comments about past employers
- Any information that indicates a poor work ethic

Rule of thumb: Avoid posting anything you would not want a valued family member or friend to see.
Networking

If you think that networking is just for job searches, think again. Networking can benefit you in many areas of your career, whether you are investigating a new career, trying to understand trends in your industry or field, looking to benchmark how another organization is handling an issue, developing business for your company, or looking for assistance with a volunteer project. Consider this a time to get information, and find out more about your career interest areas.

Do you feel unsure or nervous about networking? You are not alone. Believe it or not, the majority of business professionals hate to network. Even more surprising, few of us know how to do it well.

Is it awkward?

When business audiences are asked why they hate networking, many say they feel awkward and fear rejection, primarily because they don't know how to network effectively. Most of us learn our networking skills by observing others. The problem with learning by watching is that for many people, the observation is influenced by a belief that the purpose of networking is to obtain something from someone, which leads people to misinterpret the process.

What IS networking?

True networking is all about developing relationships. It is a step-by-step process that builds over time, not a hit-and-run transaction. Unfortunately, at some point, the business world began to view networking as the equivalent of playing the slots in Atlantic City; put a coin in the right machine and you could hit the jackpot, whether you are searching for a new job or for new business.

Blunders

This transaction mentality is the cause of the most common networking mistakes. For example, a typical mistake is to network for a job (hoping to hit the jackpot) instead of to gather information and advice. Few of us would be so brazen as to walk into an event, introduce ourselves, and ask outright, “Do you know of any jobs?” Yet every day, job seekers commit the electronic version of this blunder by sending e-mails to mere acquaintances asking for a job, when asking for advice would be much more effective. Network contacts are valuable resources for learning about a career field, trends in an industry, the culture of an organization, or even to get the inside scoop on a specific job opening.

Failure to follow-through

Another too-common mistake is the failure to follow through with contacts. Because it is viewed as a transaction, people believe if they send an e-mail or leave a voice mail message, their side of the transaction is complete. If they don’t get a response, they simply write off that contact. Skilled networkers, on the other hand, take the responsibility to make multiple attempts to connect with someone, knowing that eventually persistence pays off.

A simple shift in perspective, from thinking of networking as a transaction to viewing it as an opportunity to build a relationship, could make your next networking experience more enjoyable and much more effective.

Begin building your network

Log onto myBucknell and check out CareerNet, and the alumni directory. Join a Bucknell club and broaden your net of contacts!
Networking Tips

If you are exploring careers, here are some tips to make your networking more effective:

- Ask for information and advice about a person’s career, field, or organization, trends in the field or industry, or how to break into a particular field.
- Don’t ask if they know of any job openings. It is up to them to offer if they do.
- Don’t send your resume without being asked for it.
- Send a thank you note or email after each conversation or meeting.
- Offer to buy your networking contact coffee, a beverage, or lunch if you will be meeting in person.
- Ask if they can suggest any other people you could speak with in their organization or in other organizations and ask if you can use their name when contacting those people.
- Follow up with all referred contacts even if you don’t think they will be helpful, and let the referrer know what happened and that you appreciate their thoughtfulness in making the referral.
- Request just 15 minutes of their time and stick to it, unless the person tells you they would like to keep on talking.
- Research shows it can take 5-7 attempts to connect with someone. If you send an email or leave a voice mail and do not get a response within a week, follow up politely and persistently. You can alternate emails and voice mails, if you like.
- Prepare for your conversation. Be ready to introduce yourself with a brief overview of your experience, and the reason for initiating the contact. See the "30-Second Elevator Pitch" worksheet for an example.
  Click here to download a worksheet for your 30-Second Elevator Pitch

More resources on networking:

Quintessential Careers
Articles on networking etiquette, how to’s, etc.
www.quintcareers.com/networking_resources.html

The Riley Guide
Networking and interviewing articles and tips
www.rileyguide.com/netintv.html

JobStar Central
Tips on networking
www.jobstar.org/hidden/network.cfm

About.com
Making Connections
http://careerplanning.about.com/od/networking/a/networking.htm
Hiring practices vary from industry to industry, company to company, hiring manager to hiring manager, economic cycle to economic cycle. Managers at the same company may use a different approach. No two hiring processes are alike. However, there are a few common strategies and tools used in hiring. Recruitment, screening, and selection are three basic components of a hiring process. Let’s look at each.

**Recruitment**

Employees need an applicant pool from which to choose when filling job openings. Employers who do extensive hiring may be continuously recruiting applicants, even when there is not an immediate need. They simply want to maintain the pool of applicants. Employers who hire occasionally, or for very specialized positions, will usually recruit as needed. Some employers will recruit simply to test the market. They may be planning some future expansion and want to know if they could fill their labor needs. Therefore, when an employer is actively recruiting, they may not have an actual job opening.

There are many ways employers recruit applicants. Here are the most common:

- **Advertising:** Employers may advertise in newspapers, local community papers, trade publications, on radio or television, the Internet, or with universities and community organizations.
- **Internal Posting:** Some employers will post their jobs internally first so interested employees may apply. Many will also post on their own websites.
- **Referral:** Referral from a trusted employee, colleague or peer is the source preferred by most employers. Many employers actively solicit these referrals as part of their recruitment efforts.
- **Placement Service Providers:** Employers may use private and public placement agencies to recruit candidates.
- **Employment Agencies:** Many employers are turning to temporary and contract agencies for employee recruitment.
- **Job Fairs:** Job fairs are an excellent source for entry-level employees. Employers who recruit at job fairs are usually building a pool of candidates and may not have an immediate opening.

**Screening**

Once the employer has an applicant pool, it is narrowed down to the best qualified candidates. This is no simple task. The reality is that for any one job, an employer may have hundreds of applicants. Therefore, their first task is to eliminate as many as possible, as quickly as possible. During the initial screening, employers generally spend no more than a few seconds on each application. Employers will spend more time reviewing the small number of candidates left after an initial screening. They will look more closely at qualifications and may contact a reference and/or past employers. Some may call the applicant to conduct a telephone screening interview, or they may schedule an in-person screening interview. The point of screening is to narrow the pool of qualified applicants to those to be interviewed.
Selection

While every step in the process plays a part in the hiring decision, employers most often make the final selection based on the interview. At the interview, the employer is verifying qualifications and evaluating how the person will “fit” into the organization. When you are called for an interview, you can be reasonably confident the employer believes you are qualified for the job. The employer is interested in you or they would not be investing their time in an interview. The question is, “Are you the best qualified person for the job?”

“Best qualified” does not just mean skill, experience, and education. Employers are also looking for motivation, a passion for excellence, and a dedication to continuous learning and quality. They are considering how much a new employee will cost the organization. Hiring is a major “purchase” costing thousands of dollars per year. Employers want to make sure they get the best value for their investment. After all, most job seekers don’t come with a money back guarantee.

The Hiring Structure

Usually larger employers and those that do extensive hiring will have a formal hiring structure. Smaller employers and those who hire less frequently will have other hiring methods. Larger employers may have several people involved in the process, while smaller employers may have one person who handles hiring. There are also industry-specific hiring practices. Medicine, education, and government are industries that have unique hiring processes. Union contracts will also influence the process.

Not everyone in the hiring process has the authority to hire. Usually one person (most often the manager of the department where the person will work) makes the final decision. If possible, it is worth finding out who will make the final decision. However, treat everyone as though they are the hiring authority. You never know who has influence on the hiring decision. At the very least, you may be working with that person if you are hired.

The human resources department manages the hiring process, but may not be the hiring authority. Exceptions may be when hiring for an entry-level position, when the company has many positions open, or when the position is in the human resources department. Human resources will usually recruit, screen, and schedule interviews, and often has a great deal of influence on the hiring decision.

Today’s Job Market

The hiring process is more structured than it was in the past. Employers are generally more selective. Many factors have influenced the process. Large numbers of candidates, employment legislation, new technologies, employer liability, and organizational restructuring are a few of these influences. Employers no longer hire with the intent of lifetime employment. The average person will have many jobs and will change careers 3-5 times during his/her lifetime. To be successful in your job search, you must utilize all available resources, and remain flexible.

Advertised Jobs

Many employers advertise their job openings. The newspaper, trade journals, radio, libraries, and the Internet are all sources of advertised jobs. One limitation of advertised jobs is their overuse by many job seekers. Here are more limitations of advertised jobs:
• The competition is much greater because the ads are seen by more job seekers.
• They represent only a small percentage of available jobs.
• Many are “fake” openings. There is no real job, or the opening has already been filled.
  Employers may advertise to test the market, while some are required to advertise because of
  Equal Employment Opportunity requirements or Federal contracting.
• Some are undesirable jobs. They may pay low wages or the employer may have trouble
  keeping employees.

Despite this, there are many good jobs to be found through advertisements. Employers needing
specialized skills and those who are mass recruiting (seeking to fill many positions) will often
advertise. Advertisements are also excellent windows into the job market; they are one measure of
growth industries. Here are some tips for advertised jobs:

• Actively look for advertised jobs, but do not make them your primary focus.
• Pick your sources for advertised jobs follow them faithfully. Review listings frequently.
• Respond to new openings immediately.
• Don’t ignore “blind” ads (ads where you apply to a box number and do not know the
  employer’s name). Many good jobs are listed as blind ads.
• Look at all the jobs listed, not just those that fit your goal. You may find a company you want to
  pursue although they have not listed a job in your occupation.
• Research the employer and the job before you apply.
• Direct your application to a person by name. Call to find name and title.

Internet job search tips

More than half of 3,900 human-resource personnel and recruiters surveyed by Weddle’s, a
publishing, consulting, and training firm, in the first three months of 2005 planned to spend up to 30
percent of their recruiting budgets online. Of those surveyed, 84 percent said niche sites provide
access to the best talent while only 11 percent gave the nod to general-purpose recruitment sites.

• If using a main site such as Monster, HotJobs, etc. don’t get discouraged if you get matches
  that do not reflect what you seek. Instead, refine your search, update your resume, and take
  control of your search!
• Many companies post directly on their website, so finding these opportunities takes initiative on
  your part. A little extra effort is impressive to employers, and helps separate you from others
  just seeking “a job”.
• Try to bypass human resources by sending your resume directly to the hiring department.
  Many companies have an employee directory to help you with a targeted letter.
• Actively visit niche sites such as professional organizations, geographic areas, etc. Broaden
  your exploration base.
• Visit Weddle’s Tips for Success When Looking for a New or Better Job on the Internet
A goal of a job search campaign is to meet face-to-face with employers, resulting in an invitation to interview. The more interviews you have, the greater your chance for success. Most job seekers prefer a passive job search strategy. They submit an application or resume and wait. When they don’t hear anything, they repeat the process. Successful job seekers are proactive in their approach. They take the initiative to make direct contact with potential employers. Contacting employers directly is fundamental in a successful job search.

Direct contact is the logical conclusion to a successful networking campaign. As your networking pays off in referrals to employers, you will have to make direct contacts. You have the advantage of using the name of your referral to soften the contact.

Basic Principles of Direct Employer Contact

- Preparation is critical to success. Research the employer, the industry, and the job.
- Direct contact may be in person or by telephone. However, the ultimate goal is a personal interview.
- How do you find the right person to contact? Katharine Hansen (*Sleuthing Out Hiring Managers is Key to Job-Search Follow-up* www.quintcareers.com/hiring_managers.html) identifies these key strategies:
  - **Make a phone call**-directly ask for the information. Make sure you are courteous and respectful to the person answering the phone.
  - **Ask for help**-ask for assistance in connecting with the right person.
  - **Tap into your network**-ask your contacts if they can help.
  - **Become a proficient researcher**-learn how to navigate the web to locate this information.
  - **Try the “top down” approach**-address your letter to the president and she/he will forward it to the appropriate person.
  - **Search using a fax number**-“Google it” and discover the company name.
  - **Find the company website**-is usually part of the company’s email address.
  - **Decipher that acronym**-play detective to find out about the advertising company.
  - **Be as specific as possible**-if you can’t find specific name in a department, use a specific name in human resources.

- When you make direct contact, do not begin by asking if they are hiring, or by saying you are unemployed. Capture their attention with your qualifications and ask for an interview.
- Plan your follow-up. If you are granted an interview, this is your next step. Otherwise come to an agreement with the employer regarding when you will call back.
- Sell your qualifications, send your resume and plan your follow-up even if an employer is not hiring. You never know what will happen tomorrow.
- Whenever possible, the next step is your responsibility – not the employer’s. For example, if an employer says, “We will call you in a couple of weeks,” you could respond with, “Would it be all right if I call you two weeks from today?” If they say “Yes,” then you have agreed on your follow-up and the responsibility is yours.
- Expect rejection! It goes with the territory. Don’t take rejection personally.
Telephone Communications

The telephone is a critical tool in a successful job search campaign. It is almost guaranteed that you will talk to a potential employer on the telephone at some point in the hiring process. Shrewd job seekers use advanced telephone marketing techniques in their job search. They use the telephone to make direct employer contact and to open the doors of opportunity. The telephone is a powerful tool in presenting your qualifications to an employer. Effective telephone techniques are critical skills all job seekers need.

Good telephone communication requires skills – skills that can be learned. Just because someone talks on the telephone a lot does not mean he/she is an effective communicator. In fact, many people who use the telephone frequently have mastered some very offensive habits. It is never too early or too late to learn good telephone communications. Telephone skills are marketable job skills many employers value.

In a comprehensive job search you will be using the telephone to conduct research, cold call employers, make networking contacts, schedule meetings, and to interview. Using the telephone is an efficient and effective use of your time and resources.

Scripting

Preparation is critical to good telephone communication. It is not wise to call someone and just start talking. This may work for family and friends, but it will kill a job search. Telephone communications in a job search campaign are business calls, not personal calls. Actually, they are sales calls. Some people have a hard time with the idea of telephone sales. None of us likes a pushy telemarketer. But many of the same concepts and strategies that go into telephone sales should be used in your job search campaign. A business or sales caller has about 20 seconds to capture the listener’s attention. Therefore, communication has to be to the point and concise. There is no time to wander. Scripting is the answer.

Scripting is simply planning what you are going to say. Most people script important conversations; they just don’t realize that is what they’re doing. Have you ever made an important call and found yourself hesitating to dial the last number? You were probably scripting in your mind what you were going to say. You may want to take it a step further and write down what you plan to say. That is what skilled telemarketers do; they have a script that they follow.

Basic Principles of Scripting

Have an objective for the call. You may be seeking information, trying to schedule a meeting, or present in your qualifications to a potential employer.

Have a secondary objective. Often you will not achieve your primary objective, but every telephone call is an opportunity to solicit information.

Know the name of the person to whom you wish to speak. If you do not know the person’s name, then obtaining it becomes your first objective.

Outline in writing what you want to say. This is important in the early stages of cold calling or when the call is very important. Later on, you will script most of your calls in your head. Do not read your script. Your presentation should be natural, with your script as a guide.
The script will depend on the goal of the call and whether you know the person you are calling. A good script should include the following:

**Introduction:** Tell the person who you are.

**Lead Statement:** A quick statement designed to get the person’s attention.

**Body:** State your purpose for the call.

**Close:** Accomplish your goal, ask for information, schedule the meeting, etc.

**Script for Contact Information**

**Caller:** “Hi. This is Jerry Job. I am trying to contact the person in charge of marketing. Who would that be?”

**Receiver:** “That is John Smith. He is the director.”

**Caller:** “I would like to speak with him regarding some marketing. Does he have a direct number or extension number?”

**Receiver:** “His number is 555-5555. Would you like me to transfer you?”

**Caller:** “Yes and thank you for your assistance.”

**Script for Follow-up Information**

**Caller:** “Hello. This is Jerry Job. I interviewed for the computer programmer position last week. I am calling to see if a hiring decision has been made.”

**Receiver:** “Not yet. We anticipate making our final selection this Wednesday.”

**Caller:** “I’m still very interested in the position. You are doing some very innovative multimedia work that’s on the cutting edge of today’s technology. Best of all, you have a bright and energetic technical staff that understands the importance of team production. I’m sure we would work well together. Would it be okay if I called you on Wednesday? What would be the best time?”

**Basic Principles of Telephone Communications**

**“Buy” Signals** – A “buy” signal is evidence that you have captured the person’s attention. “Buy” signals usually take the form of questions. When someone is asking questions about your qualifications, they are, for the moment, interested in you.

**Objections** – Objections come in many forms. “We are looking for someone with more experience or education,” or “Sorry, we’re not hiring right now.” Press on to your goal and continue to sell your qualifications. Look for ways to eliminate the objection.

**Location** – Call from a quiet place where you can concentrate. Do not call from a noisy restaurant, bus station, street corner, when the kids are yelling, or when the dog is barking.

**Interference** – Don’t call from a cell phone that is breaking up.
Listen Carefully – Communication is what is said, how it’s said, and the body language used (even if you can’t see it, it can be heard in your voice). It is important to listen carefully to what you are saying, how you are saying it, and how you are being received. If you sense you have called at a bad time, politely ask if there is a better time. It may be useful to tape record yourself while conducting a simulated call.

Organization – Have all your job search materials nearby and take notes.

Follow-up – It is the persistent 20 percent who make 80 percent of the sales. The best time to plan a follow-up is when you make the contact. While you have the contact on the telephone, agree when you will call back. Keep a follow-up calendar and maintain a record of your contacts. If you agree to call back, be sure to do so. If someone agrees to call you, state the best time to be reached. The last thing you want to do is sit by the telephone waiting for a call that may never come.

Practice – Telephone skills, like all skills, have to be practiced to be mastered. Start with low-risk calls. Practice your presentation with a friend and read your script out loud.

Voice Mail – Whether you like it or not, voice mail is a part of our lives. Speaking to a machine adds a new dimension to telephone skills. It is a good idea to know what you will say if you get someone’s voice mail. Having a script ready will enable you to leave a message that is upbeat, simple, clear, and concise. Your message should be 30 seconds or less. It is amazing how an otherwise skilled telephone user comes across as monotone and unsure on a message machine. Make sure your own voice mail message is polite and professional, and be sure to answer your messages daily.

Additional Telephone Tips

Wear a smile while on the telephone – your listener may not see it, but they will hear it.

Dress for telephone contacts as you would for an interview. Your professionalism and preparation will be heard (If it’s a local call, you may be asked to come right down).

Treat the front line receptionist with respect. Don’t insult the person by asking for “someone who can help you”. That person is paid to know what is going on. Enlist their assistance and honestly thank him/her for his/her time.

Look for ways to compliment the person or the company.

Don’t apologize for making the contact. You have a product they need and a right to present yourself.

Don’t sell yourself from a position of weakness or apologize for what you do not have or have not done. Sell yourself from a position of strength and stress those skills, attributes, and accomplishments attractive to the employer.
One of the best and most overlooked ways to get accurate information about a career is to interview professionals who are actually working in that career. An informational interview has multiple advantages for your career exploration and development, which include getting "inside" information about what a career is really like, networking with professionals in the field and enabling you to gain experience and confidence with interview situations that may help you prepare for future job interview.

Since informational interviews can be a source of valuable information about careers, the following informational interview assignment is recommended.

1. **Select a career that you may be interested in pursuing.**
   Even if you are currently keeping your career options wide open, pick a career that might be a possibility.

2. **Find someone who is working in the career you selected and set up an informational interview with that person.**
   To locate possible interview candidates, consider family members, friends and friends of family members. Your professors, ZIPD, the Career Development Center and Alumni Affairs may also be able to provide you with alumni or professionals working in the local community who are willing to talk about their careers with students.

3. **Conduct an informational interview with a professional who has agreed to speak with you.**

   **Suggested strategies and potential questions for use during your interview include:**
   - Thank the person for taking the time to speak with you.
   - Take notes during the interview.
   - Prepare your interview questions in advance.
   - Write a thank you to the person for donating his or her time.

   **Questions you might consider asking:**
   - How did you decide on your career?
   - What was your career path?
   - What qualifications or prior experiences did you have that enabled you to enter your career?
   - What specific steps did you take to find your current position?
   - To what professional associations do you belong?
   - What do you wish you had known when you graduated?
   - What advice would you give to college students about things they could start doing now to help them prepare to enter your career?
   - What personal skills or qualities do you see as being critical for success in your career?
   - During a typical day’s work, what do you spend most of your time doing?
   - What do you like most about your career?
   - What are the most difficult or frustrating aspects of your career?
   - How does someone advance in your career?
   - Are there any moral issues or ethical challenges that tend to arise in your career?
   - What impact does your career have on your home life or personal life outside of work?
In a tight economy, creativity becomes even more important as a tool for searching for a job or internship. It is always important to have error-free, eye-catching résumés and cover letters as well as strong interviewing skills, but brainstorming additional methods of standing out from the mass of job seekers is essential to a successful job search.

Utilizing social media like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter can help to both notify others of your job search and research potential career opportunities. For more information on how best to utilize social media to your advantage in a job or internship search, check out www.mashable.com and http://learn.linkedin.com/jobseekers.

The most important aspect of job searching in a tight economy is to ensure that you remain positive and enthusiastic in all of your communications with potential employers and people in your network. It can be challenging to do this in the face of hardships resulting from not being employed, but employers can pick up on any negativity or stress you may be feeling from what you say and even your nonverbal actions.

**Here are some tips to remain positive during your job search:**

- Talk with a career counselor or professor to strategize a job search plan.
- Talk with a counselor or pastor to vent and process negative feelings about the job search process.
- Take breaks from your job search.
- Engage in activities you enjoy such as working out or cooking to get re-energized.
- Keep a journal.
- Set daily or weekly measurable goals to ensure you are making progress.
- Reward yourself.
Rule of Thumb for Résumé Showcasing

Pick up your résumé. Where are your thumbs? They are probably at about the midpoint of the page. Most employers spend 15 – 30 seconds when first examining résumé, and only seeing the top half of your résumé. Therefore, everything above your thumbs should be the most important information that you want to convey to the employer, and everything below your thumbs should support the message you are communicating.

In this short amount of time employers determine your strengths and if you have something to offer. If they feel that you do, they will look at your resume in more depth. If not, you will be filed away. You need to make sure that the employer knows what you are capable of doing. If you don’t tell them, no one else will. Employers want to QUICKLY screen you out. Your goal is to get screened IN.

How do you fashion your résumé so that it gets noticed? The employer doesn’t have time to search your résumé for pertinent information – you must provide it on a silver platter – easy to obtain and elegantly presented.

Take the time to craft a résumé that is an accurate reflection of you. Don’t do it alone! Tap into book and web resources, and ask others for input. Remember that you have the final say on your résumé’s appearance – you must like it. When you look at it, you should say, “Wow, I’m good!!”
What is a Résumé?

IT IS NOT

- Your Autobiography
- Your Complete Obituary

IT IS

- A Document Starting Your Professional Credentials

ITS PURPOSE IS

- Not to Obtain a job
- To Obtain an Interview (YOU get the job)

Your Résumé Is Your Advertisement

In most instances your résumé is your first contact with an employer. Make sure that it gives a positive, professional impression. Your résumé is your advertising tool and should provide:

- **A sense of purpose** - Why are you sending the résumé?
- **Focus on achievements** - What separates you from everyone else?
- **Accuracy** - Was it 2003 or 2004? Find out!!
- **Clarity and Simplicity** - This is not the time to try to use the word *antidisestablishmentarianism* in a document.
- **An attractive package** - No jelly or coffee stains, please.
- **Salesmanship** - What measurable facts can you provide?
- **A sense of person behind the resume** - This flat piece of paper needs to sing and dance so the employer will want to meet you in person.
- **Credibility** - More than 80% of résumés contain some stretch of the truth. Don’t do this. If you lose your professionalism, it will be nearly impossible to get it back.
Why Do I Need a Résumé?

Employers are contacted by many applicants and have little time to thoroughly screen each applicant. Employers want to know exactly how you can be useful to them without having to read through excessive or unrelated details. A one page résumé is ideal for those with little experience: two pages are maximum for anyone.

A résumé should provide a positive impact by being clear, accurate, and relevant to the job objective and focused on one industry or employer.

- **YOU** are the best person to write your résumé.
- In most cases your résumé is your first contact with an employer.
- Your résumé is a communication tool. Effective communication requires you to be responsible for conveying a clear message. If your reader doesn’t get the information, you didn’t communicate successfully.
- Your résumé summarizes who you are and what you can do.
- Your résumé helps the employer decide whether or not to interview you.
- Your résumé focuses on the employer’s needs, not yours.

**THE 20 SECOND RULE**

The personnel directors of America’s top corporations say again and again that *if you haven’t presented the most important information about yourself in the top half of the first page of your resume, you can probably forget about getting the job.*

The head of personnel management for one of the largest and most prestigious employers in the Washington, D.C. area told the authors that she allows 20 seconds to scan each resume she receives. If in that brief time, she does not see anything that gets her attention, she rejects the resume.

Taken from *The 110 Biggest Mistakes Job Hunters Make* by Richard L. Hermann and Linda P. Sutherland

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Carry résumés with you when you are canvassing companies for job openings. Submit them with your application materials. When you send a résumé by mail or email, always include a cover letter to identify the job for which you are applying, and why the employer should hire you. Keep copies of your résumé in your car and have it available at a moments notice.
References - Why Have Them?

- References are great resources – they know people in your field of interest.
- People who are evaluating your candidacy may know your references.
- They indicate the breadth of your experiences (professional, academic, personal, etc.)

Who Should Be Included?

- Current Practitioner - Someone who is doing what you’re applying to do. Do you have what it takes to do the job? This person should be able to say an unqualified YES!
- Academics - Someone who can attest to your academic proficiency.
- Work - Someone who can speak to your qualities as an employee.
- Personal - Someone who can speak about your character.

Who You Should NOT Include

- Relatives and/or parents.
- People who don’t know you or who you haven’t contacted recently.
- “Big Name” people you don’t know.

Reference Page

- It’s essential to develop a separate page that lists your references.
- This page should be included with any application material you submit.
- It should be done on the same type of paper as your resume, and should have your name at the top.
- You never know who knows someone else.

You Should Always

- Follow directions and supply the type of references the employer requests.
- **ASK** your references if they feel comfortable being your reference.
- Give your references copies of your resume as well as a description of the job you are applying for. They are doing you a favor- help them!
- Thank your references!
Interview Tips and Strategies

- Establish natural, relaxed, personal rapport at the start of the interview. ("Chemistry" is the key to success)

- Maintain good eye contact and positive body language (smile, lean slightly forward, look interested).

- Find out as much as possible from the interviewer. Establish what he/she is looking for, and then integrate this information into your responses.

- Know as much as possible in advance about the position and the organization. Research the organization in the library, online, or through contacts.

- Have a clear idea of the key points you want to make which will convey a potential benefit to the employer - and then make them.

- Anticipate possible negatives and address them early in the interview.

- Deal directly with problems and attempt to turn them into possible advantages.

- If appropriate, bring examples of your work to demonstrate your accomplishments and talents related to the job.

- Discuss possible problems that might face the organization and suggest ways in which you might contribute to the solution.

- Be prepared to answer tough questions such as why you left your last job. Some possible answers to that question might be:
  - Desire to have more responsibility
  - Limited opportunity
  - Changes in management/corporate restructuring/downsizing

- Never apologize, speak poorly of former employers, or bring up negative points that can be used against you.

- Watch for nonverbal cues (finger tapping, eyes wandering) to check how you are coming across. To recoup, change the subject or ask a question.

- At the closing, make sure that you ask when a decision will be made so that you are not stuck sitting at home waiting for the phone to ring.

- Immediately after the interview, write a "thank you" letter.
Most Frequently Asked Interview Questions

1. Why don't you tell me about yourself?
2. Why should I hire you?
3. What are your major strengths?
4. What is your greatest weakness?
5. What sort of pay do you expect to receive?
6. How does your previous experience relate to this job?
7. What are your plans for the future?
8. What will your former employers (or references) say about you?
9. Why are you looking for this sort of position and why here?
10. Why did you leave your last job or why did your last job end?

Ten Major Fears Behind the Interview Questions

1. You lack the skills to do the job.
2. You won't put in a full working day.
3. You'll be out sick or absent a lot.
4. You won't stay with the company very long.
5. It will take you too long to learn the job and cost the company money.
6. You won't get along with other co-workers or your boss.
7. You will not work hard and do only the minimum job requirements.
8. You will not show initiative and have to be told what to do all the time.
9. You will have a work-disrupting character flaw.
10. You will bring discredit upon the company, department, or supervisor.

Address the Fear Behind the Question…

1. Understand what is really being asked.
2. Answer the questions briefly.
3. Address the hidden concern by presenting your skills. Focus on your key skills and give examples.
What is a Thank You Letter?

Set Yourself Apart From 99.9% of Other Job Seekers

This is one of the most important yet least used tools in a job search. It is used to establish good will, to express appreciation, and/or to strengthen your candidacy. The basic rule of thumb is to send a letter to everyone who helps you in any way. When used to follow up on employment interviews, thank you letters should be sent within 24 hours to everyone with whom you met. Be sure to send thank you letters to each contact who granted you information interviews, and to people who provided references for you.

Hints For a Thank You Letter

- Make it brief.
- If you feel you have a personal relationship/friendship with the person with whom you interviewed, then a hand-written (if legible) “thank you” note card is appropriate.
- Note the date of your interview in your letter. It will help the recipient remember who you are.
- Highlight a key point from your interview that you believe the interviewer will remember, and therefore remember you.
- Re-state your strong interest (if you have one) in the position, and highlight your qualifications once again.
- Try to be specific about why you are interested and how you are a good fit for the organization.
- Thank everyone with whom you interviewed.
- Send one even if you don’t want the job. You never know when you will meet the person/people again.
Characteristics of a Good Salesperson

- Knows the product (key skills, translates features into benefits for the employer)
- Believes in the product (convincing)
- Positive, can do, upbeat attitude (handles rejection, doesn’t take it personally)
- Professional appearance
- Well mannered
- Natural and sincere
- Good communication skills (clear, concise)
- Enthusiastic, eager, creates excitement
- Paints a picture (show the vision)
- Professional appearance
- Knows that sales is a number game, knows how to find his/her market
- Self confident (believes in self)
- Self motivated, hard working, persistent
- Organized, uses time wisely (has tools, paperwork in order)
- Prepared to make the sale (research)
- Dependable – delivers the goods (keeping the job)
- Personable, friendly, likeable, smiles a lot
- Uses psychology (Calls customer by name repeatedly – our favorite word is our name)
- Good listener
- Asks probing questions to determine the customer’s needs (open and closed, uncover hidden fears, objections)
- Uses supporting statements (empathy, acknowledges need, and introduces benefits)
- Differentiates self from the competition
- Good eye contact and body language
- Closes the sale (summarizes the benefits and asks for the order)
- Good follow-up after the sale (thank you note, call back)

The interview is your sales call.
Remember . . . usually the best salesperson gets the job!
Some Final Suggestions

1. Get an answering machine or voice mail. Make sure the message is professional. Do not allow small children to answer the phone or create a message. Do not answer the phone if you are out of breath. Always answer the phone in a pleasant voice. Do not answer the phone if you are sleeping. If it is past 8:00 in the morning, let the answering machine pick it up or get up early. Employers will hold it against you if they think you are sleeping at 9:30 or 10:00 am, no matter what the reason.

2. If you include a professional e-mail address, make sure you check it daily. Employers are looking for quick turnaround. If you only check it once a week, you may miss your opportunity.

3. Be prepared for a telephone call or a telephone interview at any time. Employers will call you for telephone interviews, even at 10:00 pm at night. This is a very popular way to screen candidates out, without having to go through the costly interview process. Don't be caught off guard; know something about each company you sent a resume to, know why you would want to work there and be prepared to come up with quick responses.

4. Be prepared for group interviews during the interview process. The employer is looking for consistency of answers, to see how you will fit in with the team and if you have the energy and drive necessary for the job. When you set up the interview, ask who you will be interviewing with - get specific names and titles.

5. Arriving early to an interview shows professionalism, but also gives you an opportunity to check out the workplace environment. Do the people look happy, tired, complaining, friendly, etc? How people treat each other or feel about their jobs is a good indication of what it would be like to work there.

6. Employers DO check previous employers and references. Make sure you have provided accurate information and have asked your references if they feel comfortable representing you.

7. Never criticize your previous employer. If you were fired, you need to approach it in a factual format, with no emotion. Be honest; do not lie. Tell what you learned from it and how you are better because of it. Contact Alumni Career Services for help with this.

8. Be professional from start to finish.

9. Do not send anything more than a resume and cover letter, unless the employer asks for it. Reference sheets, letters of recommendation, etc. should be brought to the interview.

10. Always follow up to see if your resume was received. Indicate on your cover letter when you will be calling. When you call, ask about the status of the interview process.

11. Always be polite and gracious to a receptionist or secretary. They have a lot more power than you may think. It is best to assume that anyone you speak with or encounter in an organization has the power to veto your resume.
12. Do not starve while job hunting. Do not wait until the last minute (a day before graduation or before your unemployment runs out) before you start looking. The employment process takes time; it may take an employer from 1-6 weeks to make up his/her mind once resumes have been received. The rule of thumb is that it takes much more time than you think it will. Employers like to see that you have not been sitting at home, waiting for them to call. Take contract work, participate in a co-op or internship to get experience and network.

13. Consider benefits when deciding to take a job. They count as much as the salary does. If you have a great salary and no medical insurance, consider how much your out of pocket expenses are. Be realistic with salary. How much do you want, how much do you need, and where do the two meet?

14. If you are really interested in working for a particular company, check back with them every few months or so. Many times they may hire someone who doesn’t work out. Showing them that you are sincerely interested in THEIR company will impress them.

15. Remember that attitude is everything. Be positive, be motivated, know what you want, but always remember that in this market it’s not what you want, but what you can do for the employer!

16. Don’t underestimate the power of informational interviews and networking. Employers are more willing to provide information and mentoring first, and then employment opportunities. Show them the type of person you are and the type of worker you will be.

17. Job hunting is the hardest job you will ever have. The more time you spend in your job search, the more you increase your chances of finding a good match. A job search should take up to 40 hours per week.

18. Think of your job search as a job. Get up, shower, get dressed and be ready to work at 8:00 or 9:00 am. Find a place (like an office) you can use as your “place of employment.”

19. After you have worked a regular week on your job search, give yourself a reward.

20. Planning your job search will give you direction and make you feel good at the end of the week that you have made real progress toward finding a job.
How Not to Get Hired in 12 Easy Steps

The economy is getting tighter and the competition for jobs is getting stiffer. This means your success depends on how professionally you present yourself throughout the entire job search process. However, if you DON'T want to get hired, make sure to follow these steps:

1) Lie on your resume or application. So you didn’t really win the Nobel Peace Prize. Who is going to check? Which is more important- looking good on paper or being a credible candidate?

2) Misspell everything. You aren’t applying for an editing job, so don’t worry about it! The employer will be so impressed by your skills and false credentials, they won’t care about anything else, right?

3) Put down a few famous people as references. A Nobel Prize Winner must list at least one president or dignitary, right? For those references you actually know, make sure you don’t let them know you are job hunting. That way they will be surprised when asked to come up with good things to say about you!

4) When you get called for an interview, make sure to be highly inflexible. You can’t possibly interview before 10 am or after 1 pm because you have OTHER things to do.

5) Come to the interview with your cell phone and make sure to leave it on. That way when the phone rings, the employer will get a chance to hear “The Brady Bunch” theme too!

6) Make sure to be polite only to the person you think is making the hiring decision. Treat secretaries, administrative assistants, office managers and all others with disdain, since you believe they have no power (think again!).

7) Address the interviewer by his or her first name, even if he/she hasn’t told you to do so. Better yet, shorten his/her name and use that instead (ex: if her name is Deirdre, just call her Dee)

8) During the interview, appear to be disinterested and above everyone else. Save your enthusiasm for something really important, like the next time “The Brady Bunch” theme plays on your phone.

9) When asked to describe a weakness, make sure to pick something scary, such as “anger”(especially effective if you want to be a teacher), or something cute such as “chocolate” (you’ll be viewed as highly professional with this one).

10) When the interview is over, make sure to tell the interviewer how glad you are to be done with such torture. Also make sure to indicate you would rather have a root canal than work in this environment. To seal your fate, look at your watch, exclaim your delight in having enough time to get ice cream and then skip out of the office.

11) Make sure to be polite only to the person you think is making the hiring decision. Treat secretaries, administrative assistants, office managers and all others with disdain, since you believe they have no power (think again!).

12) When asked the salary question, provide a figure close to the national debt. Don’t research the salary range, and by all means don’t even consider benefits as part of the package! If offered a great opportunity, make sure to turn it down if they won’t pay you what you’re “worth”. There are plenty of other employers who will!

Ok, you get the picture. Employers hire people they believe to be competent. If you conduct a job search with minimal effort, are you indicating you will also work with minimal effort?
Why People Stay Unemployed

- 40% present a poor personal appearance
- 80% cannot describe their job skills
- 85% do not look hard enough for work
- 90% cannot answer problem questions in an interview

What About You???