

A Guide to

**THE  
JOB  
SEARCH**



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# JOB SEARCH

This information is intended to help you get the job you want and deserve. The basic assumption throughout this guide is that you have made a thorough evaluation of your skills, interests, values, experiences, and accomplishments in order to arrive at some conclusions as the type of job you want.

Looking for a job is a lot of work, but it can also be an exciting and rewarding experience. At first glance, the job hunt may appear to be an insurmountable task. However, like many other major projects, the task becomes much more manageable when approached in a systematic, step-by-step manner. The information in this guide is intended to provide you with some practical suggestions on how to conduct an effective job search. While much of this booklet focuses on the full-time job search, many of the suggestions and strategies can be helpful to those students who are seeking a CO-OP/ internships.

There are several important points to keep in mind when planning your job search.

**Start early – Start at the end of your junior year.** Career exploration, as well as job hunting, takes time (*estimates report that it may take six months or more from the time you begin looking until you have a job offer*). Furthermore, you will have access to the many sources of information and assistance while still on our campus. In pursuing a CO-OP/ internship, you should start two semesters before you intend to intern.

**Know what you have to offer an employer** – The more you know about what you want to do and what you can do, the easier and more successful your job search will be. If you are having difficulties in determining your career goals, see a staff member in the Office of Career Services.

**Work at finding a job** – Job offers do not just happen; you have to get out there and look for them. Looking for a job will require a plan and sustained effort.

**Looking for a JOB is a JOB!!**

# THE JOB SEARCH

## *Steps in the Process*

The initial step in the job search process is a thorough **self-evaluation**. Until you can focus in on the kind of job you are looking for and what skills you can bring to an employer, employment possibilities will be unclear at best and your job search ineffective.

The Office of Career Services offers comprehensive services designed to assist you in evaluating skills and interests and making basic decisions necessary to begin the job search. In addition to scheduled workshops, the career counselors are available to work with you on an individual basis. **Obtaining a job is a process that actually begins from the day you decide to attend college.** If you are at the point where self-evaluation has been completed, you are ready to begin your job search. Utilizing the following information will guide you, step-by-step, through this important process.

### **STEP ONE: Evaluate the Job Market**

There is a “Job Market” but you must remember that it does not exist in any one centralized location. **To evaluate the job market effectively you should know:** (1) the job forecasts for a given area of work or particular industry; (2) the current conditions and variable elements that will affect the type of job for which you are searching, and (3) where the actual job you want exists.

#### ***Information: Resource Center***

The Office of Career Services has publications and employer specific literature that will provide you with a comprehensive overview of the job market. For instance, to be knowledgeable about career trends and projections, you should consult the reports issued by the Department of Labor and ***The Occupational Outlook Handbook***. The latter reference is published every two years and, in addition to forecast data, contains job descriptions, job requirements, and salary expectations. J. Eugene Smith Library is a great place to research jobs, industries and companies.

Other sources of information that can be helpful are the business section of newspapers and periodicals (***Forbes, US News and World Report, The National Business Employment Weekly, Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, etc.***). From these publications you can see which employers are experiencing growth and who is hiring; where the population is growing, and which urban centers are flourishing; as well as which employers are looking for potential employees.

The World Wide Web provides information on the job market in general, as well as information about specific employers. You can search by career field, geography, or in some instances by continent.

**THE JOB MARKET: ANTICIPATED, PUBLISHED, HIDDEN**

Jobs generally fall into three categories – *Anticipated, Published and Hidden*

The *anticipated* job market is the category where on-campus interviews fall and covers between **5-10%** of jobs available. Jobs that fall into this area tend to be positions within large corporations, accounting firms, engineering or technical companies, and the federal government. ***The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) and Job Choices are the best reference sources for the anticipated job market.*** They list employers who anticipate hiring needs from the next class of college graduates. The publication is available to students in the Office of Career Services.

The *published* job market only covers **5-10%** of jobs. These are the listings in the newspapers, journals, agencies and state employment services.

The *hidden* job market is where you should concentrate most of your job search efforts and where you have the best opportunity for finding the job you really want. This market covers between **80-90%** of jobs available. These are the unadvertised openings that result from retirements, reorganizations, promotions, expansions or the need for new and additional talent. Potential candidates for these positions can be found from resumes on file, prior contact with an employer, and networking referrals. **It is much more profitable for you to pursue jobs in the hidden market because there are more of them, and fewer job seekers take the time to discover these opportunities.**

***The Job Market***

**Anticipated**

- 5-10%
- Campus Interviews
- Government Exams
- Large Training Programs

***Published***

- 5-10%
- Advertisements
- Employment Agencies
- Placement Offices
- Professional Journals and Newsletters
- State Employment Service

***Hidden***

- 80-90%
- Corporate Expansion & Development
- Promotions & Lay-offs
- Reorganizations
- Retirements
- Turnover
- Direct Contact by You

## STEP TWO: Explore and Establish Job Search Strategies

What follows are specific strategies you can utilize in your job search. Keep in mind that you should combine strategies in order to maximize your efforts for the best results. Be creative! Use these approaches as a foundation for developing you own unique strategy in order to obtain the best results (*they are not listed in order of effectiveness*).

1. **The Office of Career Services**
  - Individualized counseling.
  - Resume/cover letter review service.
  - Useful resource information for employers, employment trends, and job strategies.
  - Workshops on resume writing, interviewing skills, and job search strategies.
  - On-campus interviewing.
  - Job listings on the Web.
2. **Pre-professional Experiences – CO-OPS, Volunteering, Community-Service**
  - Serving as an unpaid volunteer, intern or CO-OP employee can be helpful in gaining experience, making contacts, and demonstrating capabilities.
  - May possibly lead to full-time employment.
  - Helpful for all majors.
3. **Want Ads**
  - Represents a small percentage of job market.
  - Respond to listings in newspapers, trade journals, and professional journals. Refer to the source of the ad in your cover letter.
  - Can provide information on trends and the qualifications employers look for in a candidate.
  - Can provide you with a list of target positions for which you are qualified.
4. **Cold Calls – Door-to-Door**
  - Direct “in person” visit to employers.
  - Useful in small towns or small businesses. Useful as follow-up to other contact methods.
  - Very time consuming and not very effective.
5. **The Media**
  - Review the Business section to look for promotions and appointments.
  - Look to radio/TV & newspaper for announcements of expansions, awarded contracts, new products or services.
  - Read beyond the “surface news”. Identify potential employment opportunities or employee contracts.
6. **Mass Mailings – Broadcast Letters**
  - Market yourself through direct mail contact with a large number of employers. Send a cover letter, or letter of application with your resume. Try to address to a specific person.
  - Allows contact with large number of employers fairly quickly.
  - Low percentage of response (less than 10%). Can be expensive.

7. **Targeted Communications**
  - Similar to mass mailings, but limited to a select group of employers of whom you have more knowledge.
  - Requires research and information gathering before contacting.
  - Requires effective, individualized letters that demonstrate knowledge of employer and field.
  - Much more effective than mass mailings.
  - Based on search parameters you establish.
  
8. **Human Resources Offices**
  - Refer to larger employers, provides contact with the department that does initial screening.
  - In some businesses, it may be the only access for entry-level positions.
  - Stiff competition because the office receives many applications daily.
  - Make initial contact by cover letter and resume, follow-up by phone call or in person.
  
9. **Government Agencies & Listings**
  - Primary source for government positions. Not all jobs are listed; waiting lists can be very long.
  - Provides information on Civil Service Tests
  
10. **Employment Agencies**
  - More effective for those with experience or in high demand fields.
  - Agencies work for employer, not the applicant.
  - Try to get recommendations or referrals on which agencies to use.
  - May be helpful if searching out-of-state.
  - Never pay a fee.
  
11. **Internet**
  - Discussion groups provide information on particular topics.
  - Web sites are available that allow you to conduct a search of available jobs.
  - Employer web sites provide background information.
  - You can create your own home page.
  - The internet and World Wide Web do not replace the more effective job search strategies such as networking or direct contact.
  
12. **Referral Campaign – Networking**
  - Making and using a network of personal contacts to obtain information, leads, and additional referrals.
  - Provides “inside” information. Utilize informational interviews.
  - Time consuming and requires a willingness to put in the effort to make and follow-up contacts.
  - A substantial number of jobs are filled through this approach.

## STEP THREE: Taking Action

### *Develop Your Specific Strategy*

A truly effective job search probably does not consist of exclusive reliance on any one of the strategies mentioned earlier. Rather, the most effective job search will include a variety of strategies. The specific mix will vary from person to person and from one field to another. An effective approach might look something like this:

- **Research** the field and **identify** a fairly large number of **prospective employers**.
- Of these employers, identify a manageable number to research more thoroughly (*through networking, reading, the internet, etc.*).
- **Contact** the employers on your list using a mass and/or targeted mailing approach.
- Watch newspapers for possible openings, and apply as directed in the listing.
- Always **follow-up** on your initial mailings (*whether a targeted communication, mass mailing, want-ad, or referral contact*) with phone calls or personal visits after your resume is received.
- **Keep** accurate **records**; your contact date, contact person, and content of conversation.
- **Be persistent** until you have job offers in hand. The objective is to get as many as possible so that you can choose the best position for yourself.
- Every week send out resumes, follow-up on resumes, and make phone calls.

Please note that this is only one possible “combination strategy” but one that can be quite effective in many career fields. You should realize, however, that the “job market” operates differently for different fields and different people. For example, when an industry is experiencing rapid growth, it invests time and money into on-campus recruiting programs. Other industries, although hiring, may not come to campus, but hire through the more traditional channels. You should try to tailor your approach to “your” job market.

### *Establish Your Networks*

In order to secure a great job, it is essential to **build a ‘network’** of people who can assist you in learning about career fields and provide you with possible job leads. Contact friends, relatives, professors, former employers, neighbors, parents of friends, and anyone else whom you think would be willing to help you in your job search effort. **Let these people know you are searching for a job and the position of interest. They can act as your extended eyes and ears. Some can best help you just by informing you of an opportunity they heard about from another person. Although you should let everyone know you are job searching, do not directly ask your contacts for a job...but for help and advice that might lead to a job.** Most importantly, your contacts can refer you to other people whom you might contact. Keep working at expanding your network by talking to people, asking questions and asking for referrals. Present yourself in a professional manner and always follow-up with a thank-you letter.

### *Conduct Informational Interviews*

Utilizing this important strategy will enable you to observe and interview people in a particular position, career, or business in order to gain inside information on specific career fields, job opportunities, or develop valuable contacts. **The primary purpose is to gain valuable information that will aid in the formulation of career goals.** It is not the intent of this strategy to identify specific job leads. You will find that people are generally responsive to this approach

because you are saying, in essence, that you value their judgment and expertise. Use your “network” of contacts as a starting point for arranging informational interviews.

***Write an Effective Cover Letter***

The cover letter is essentially your introduction to a potential employer. Each letter should be different and should summarize your experiences, abilities, and the reasons you would like to work for that specific employer. It should be sent with your resume to the person who has the authority to hire or to the Human Resources department. Make every effort to address a specific person.

***Follow-up with the Telephone***

The telephone can be an effective job search tool that requires advanced planning. Put yourself in the place of the listener. **Prepare an introductory statement that will attract the attention of the listener.** You must have a specific position in mind or specific questions that would lead to a meeting with the individual. Strive for an appointment to discuss employment possibilities or to obtain information and suggest some dates and times. **Do not** ask the employer if there is an opening for you. The point of the telephone call is to . . .

a) secure an appointment so that you can make direct contact with an employer b) become a real personality to the employer and stimulate the employer’s interest in you, your abilities and potential.

***Write a Thank-You***

As simple as this activity is, it is all too often neglected in the job hunt. A thank-you note will remind the person of you, and will serve to foster a positive image with the prospective employer. **A thank you conveys the notion that you are really interested in the employer and the job.**

***Required Necessities***

You should have a designated and organized work area, as well as access to a computer and/or typewriter. Two interviewing outfits are suggested. An answering machine is a must if there is no other way for a caller to leave you a message during normal business hours (*make sure your answering machine message sounds professional*).

***Get Organized***

An index card or chart with pertinent information about your contacts, informational interviews, and networking experiences will assist you in keeping track and up to date on your job search activities. It will help you to remember data about interviews, persons with whom you have spoken, calls made, and calls yet to be made. Being organized makes your job search orderly and easier to complete. You may use the following sample or any system that works for you

Contact Date	Name of Contact	Interview Date	Follow-up Call Or Visit Date	Thank You Note Date	Comments

### ***Have Patience***

Since searching for a job takes much energy and hard work, time and constant enthusiasm, the process can often be tiring or even psychologically exhausting.

The best way to alleviate any frustrations is to **keep to a schedule** (*dedicate only a certain amount of time per week*), take breaks often, and reward yourself with some enjoyable activity that relaxes you. Then renewed, in spirit, start again! Until you are successful, you should maintain reasonable goals knowing that you cannot expect overnight results, but also knowing that every effort you expend will be worth it. Identify several personal support people with whom you can discuss your job search efforts – successes as well as frustrations.

### ***Visit the Office of Career Services***

The Office of Career Services provides a variety of services aimed at maximizing your talent and efforts in determining a career and obtaining a job. You should not delay your visit to our Office. In addition to “How to/Self Help” books available, you will want to register for on-campus interviews (seniors) and/or the Cooperative Education Program.

