

Job Search

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Specifically, you should assess four key areas of yourself:

Skills –

what you're good at (organizing, designing, selling, counseling, writing, etc.)

Interests –

what fields you enjoy (entertainment, banking, education, science, health, etc.)

Values – what's most

important to you (money, prestige, success, enjoyment, work atmosphere, time with family/friends, etc.)

Personality –

what are your personal characteristics (flexible, social, sensitive, funny, caring, competitive, positive, laid-back, etc.)

Exploring the World of Work

If I had a dime for every time a student said, "I've been majoring in X for four years, but I have no clue what's out there for me," I'd be extremely wealthy! The fact of the matter is that the number one career need among college students is exposure to the world of work. Just think about it! Have you ever taken a "World of Work 101" class or any class like it? Most college students go through four or five years of college without learning more than a handful of occupations. What you must realize is that you must take the initiative to explore career options – with the help of Career Services, of course.

PACK YOUR BAGS

Now that you know where you are going, you can start "packing your bags" with everything you need on the trip. The most important item that you'll need on your job search is a resume. For more, check out "Building a Professional Resume" on page 6.

MAP OUT THE BEST WAY TO GET THERE

Get A Plan!

All right! You know where you're going and you have all your bags packed. Now you need to map out how to get there. The key is to develop a job search plan! Why is this so important? Just think about it! Nobody makes you spend time on your job search. It's not a test that you have to study for or a paper that is due next Wednesday. You could go through your entire college career without ever spending a second on a job search. Also, there are so many things that you need to do in a job search that it can feel overwhelming. Because of this, it's so easy to put the job search "on the back burner" and deal with it later. Realize that you're in control of your own destiny. You have to provide the structure needed to get things done within your search. It's critical that you develop and implement a task-oriented, deadline-oriented, personalized job search plan. And you need to schedule time each week to work solely on your job search. Set small, incremental goals and chip away at it.

"Failure to plan is planning to fail."

Joseph D. Kleha
Northwestern Mutual

Personalize the Job Search!

As you begin developing your job search plan, realize that the job search process is impersonal by nature. Think about it. The recruiter's first impression of you is formed by the words on a fancy piece of paper. Your resume and cover letter are being analyzed – not your enthusiasm, communication skills, positive attitude, self-confidence, interpersonal skills, or sense of humor. You must create situations where you, the whole person, are assessed and evaluated. This is called "personalizing" the job search. If employers are only assessing you on the basis of your resume, they are only getting half the story. Using your personal and professional contacts helps you to personalize the job search! These contacts can recommend you to colleagues and potential employers, pointing out your personal qualities and characteristics not expressed on your resume. They can also assist you in setting up information interviews and meetings with their colleagues and contacts.

"It's not what you know, it's who you know, and who knows you. In other words, networking."

Joseph D. Kleha
Northwestern Mutual

HIT THE ROAD

Well, you're all set to hit the road! When you map out the best way to reach your destination, you'll see that there are two main ways to travel: the interstate highway and the scenic route. The interstate is quick and easy, but it's usually congested since everyone knows about it. The big signs make it easy to follow for everyone. You know what to expect on the interstate. The scenic routes take longer, but not as many people know about these roads. Exploring the back roads on the scenic route is unpredictable – you never know who and what you may run into. It's exciting, one road leading to another. It's important to keep your eyes wide open and get off at places that interest you.

Similarly, there are two "roads" you can take on your job search. You can either search for jobs in the "Open Job Market" (Interstate Highway) or in the "Hidden Job Market" (Scenic Route). The Open Job Market consists of those jobs that are advertised and open to the public. The Hidden Job Market consists of jobs that are not advertised. Surveys will indicate that roughly 15-20 percent of all jobs are advertised. In a tight job market, this percentage is even smaller. This means that approximately 80 percent of jobs are obtained in the Hidden Job Market. However, most job seekers spend more than half of their job-searching time pursuing the Open Job Market – mainly because it's a quick and

straightforward process. You review job openings, apply, obtain an interview, and get a job. On the other hand, pursuing jobs in the Hidden Job Market takes much more time and many more steps to finally obtain that interview.

In general, pursuing jobs in the Open Job Market is reactive and impersonal. Pursuing jobs in the Hidden Job Market tends to be a more proactive and personalized process. While it's highly recommended exhausting all job search strategies in both job markets, you should keep in mind the statistics presented above. If you want an edge over most job seekers in a tough economy, spend more time in the Hidden Job Market!

Network, Network, Network

The King of the Job Search Jungle continues to be Networking. Most studies reveal that the majority of jobs are obtained through some type of networking. In a nutshell, people like to hire people they know. With all of the job-hopping going on, today's recruiters need even more assurance that you'll be a good fit. The best way to get this assurance is to hire people they know or who are recommended to them by people they trust. For you, the job seeker, networking serves as a personalized way to tap into the Hidden Job Market and learn about job opportunities. For more, read "Networking Your Way to Success on" page 7.

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