



**Compiled by the Career Development & Counseling Center
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Strategies for a Successful Job Search

The Job Search Process

Preparation for your first job in your chosen field of interest should begin before you stroll across the stage at graduation. A successful job search starts with good information and well developed job hunting skills. Being a successful job seeker requires you to have an awareness of your goals and skills, an understanding of the labor market and a well planned job search process.

An ideal strategy would be to test and explore your career interests concurrently with your actual course of study. Whenever you begin the job search process, it begins with a process of self-assessment and exploration. Test your readiness to enter the highly competitive job market by asking yourself the following six questions.

- 1. Do You Know What You Want?** You might think that employers will appreciate your “I’m willing to do anything” approach to getting a job. However, most employers interpret that as a sign of desperation and lack of focus. Or, that you are willing to take a shot at whatever you stumble across.

Conduct a self-assessment by identifying and listing your values, temperament, interests, skills, accomplishments, experience and goals.

Values:

Temperament:

Interests:

Skills:

Accomplishments:

Experience:

Goals:

If you are unsure about the type of job you want, now is the time to work with a counselor in the Career Development & Counseling Center, Room 121, Founders Hall. You can set up an appointment by calling (860) 343-5826. There, you can take a career assessment test, learn how and why informational interviewing can help you gain focus, and, talk over your specific concerns with someone who is trained to help you.

- 2. Do you have Experience?** Employers look for evidence that you have gained experience in your field through internships, practica, co-ops, part or full time jobs and even volunteering. If you have not picked up this type of experience yet, it is a good bet that many of your peers have and will likely have an edge over you in the entry-level market. Don't despair if you lack experience. You can get it now or after you graduate by doing a post-graduation internship, volunteering or temping.
- 3. Do You Know Your Chosen Field?** Imagine going into an interview and saying, "I love this field and know a lot about it- that's why I want to get into it myself." The interviewer replies by saying, "Interesting. Tell me what you know." If you have been BS-ing to that point, you're in trouble!

Once you have chosen the field you plan to work in, study it thoroughly so prospective employers know you understand it. Research the field's major players by reading industry publications, visiting industry websites and by participating in professional organizations, attending their conferences and seminars.

- 4. Do You Have A Strong Resume?** You may be the best entry-level job candidate the world has ever seen. But if you do not effectively market yourself through your resume a cover letter no one will ever know. You need to make the resume the best that it can be and tailor it to each specific job you pursue. Contact the Career Development & Counseling Office and pick up the handout *How To Write A Resume*. If you need help with the resume, arrange an appointment with a counselor.
- 5. Can You Back Up Claims You Make On Your Resume And In Interviews?** Employers have met all kinds of candidates, including some who have flat out lied about their accomplishments. It is only natural for employers to be a bit skeptical. That is why you have to effectively support any claims you make on your resume or in an interview with specific examples. A good strategy is to put together a career portfolio to prove your past achievements.
- 6. Are You Prepared For Your Encounter With The Real World And To Get The Most Out Of Your Opportunity To Interview For Your Dream Job?** At times, the real world can be a very strange place because of people's diverse personalities, agendas and work styles. Sometimes decisions that ought to be made based on tangible information and logic are made based on office politics. Your success (or lack of it) on the job will depend as much on your people skills as your technical abilities. It is a good idea to role play and practice for the interview. Again, the Career Development & Counseling Office has a handout

called *Interview Preparation* that will be useful in guiding you through the interview process.

Tactics for an Effective Job Search

The common approach to seeking a job is to scour the newspaper classifieds sending off cover letters and resumes for all the job opportunities that remotely seem to fit your interests. Today, you may also want to post your resume and look for opportunities on the many available online job boards (such as Monster.com, or Hotjobs.com). But there are many more things you can do to look for your ideal career position. Here are several effective tactics that will enrich your job search.

- 1. Get in Touch with Professional Organizations in Your Field.** Professional organizations on the local, regional and national level exist in part to help their members with career development. Many organizations regularly publish job opening information on their website or in their printed publications.
- 2. Visit Company and Organization Websites.** Many companies and organizations post their job opportunities on their own websites. These are usually listed under an “Employment” or “Career Opportunities” link.
- 3. Apply Directly to Organizations That Interest You.** If you know you want to work specifically for “Organization X” or “Company Y”, send a well-written cover letter and your resume directly to the company. Typically, this is sent to the attention of the Director of Human Resources. However, the most effective strategy is to send your material directly to the hiring manager for that part of the organization that interests you. This person is sometimes hard to identify, so you will have to do some digging. And the best way to dig is to Network.
- 4. Harness the Power of Networking.** Networking is simply talking to people to either track down helpful personal contacts or learn about job openings that may not necessarily be widely advertised or advertised at all. You can start by talking to your own family, friends and acquaintances. Let everyone in your life know you are looking for a job. Take the time to give them a good idea of the type of job you want. If there is a professional organization in your field, join it. Start participating in its meetings and other events so you can get to know people in your area of interest. Tap your professors’ connections. They are a good source of job leads and may be able to identify alumni that would be willing to work with you on your job search.
- 5. Participate in Job Fairs.** Many larger cities are host to Job Fairs throughout the year. Many colleges and universities sponsor Job Fairs individually or in collaboration with other institutions. This is a rare opportunity to have employers come to you, so attend Job Fairs as often as you are able.
- 6. Register with Placement Agencies and Recruiters.** There are companies out there that specialize in helping people find jobs by matching skills to specific needs of employers. Personnel Recruiters (often called “Headhunters” or

“Shoulder Tappers”) usually collect fees from the employers they represent and not from candidates or job seekers. Some even focus on working with college students and recent grads. However, a word of caution. A growing number of agencies bill candidates directly for their services. It is wise to ask the question up front- who is paying for services rendered. In Connecticut, CAPS, the Connecticut Association of Personnel Services, provides leadership, education and ethical standards oversight to firms within the Personnel Industry. CAPS provides a list of member firms and their placement specialties. Their website is www.caps.org.

7. **Temping May Get You Working in your Desired Specialty.** By working briefly as a temp, you can often position yourself to be hired for a full-time permanent position that opens later on. However, even if that does not happen, temping can help you see several companies from the inside, meet people in your area of interest, and, earn money!

8. **Visit the Career Development & Counseling Center in Founders, room 121.** The Career Development & Counseling Center maintains information on regional and national employers. It is part of a consortium of colleges that share position listings over the internet via College Central Network, CCN.

The more diverse and creative your job search methods are, the more opportunities you will uncover, and, the greater the chance is that you will find, and land, the job of your dreams.

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