

DEVELOPING JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

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Skill development is one component of a job search. A professional resume and well-defined interviewing skills will enable the job seeker to move through several phases of the screening process. But the key to securing a job offer is to identify a number of employers offering career opportunities that match the job seeker's career interests and goals. Once organizations are identified, there is a need to understand the external and internal screens that exist to eliminate candidates. In order to do so, it is important for a job seeker to have a planned and organized approach to the job search.

A planned job search begins with a great deal of research and hard work. You must use a combination of job search strategies in order to develop the most effective approach to securing a position. After you have reviewed the information in this guidebook, you are encouraged to start planning your own search and speak with a staff member in Career Services.

The Hidden Job Market

You are probably aware of the uncertainty of the job market. The economy, the demand for goods and services and many other factors determine the stability of certain industries and the availability of positions. The "hidden job market" refers to the positions that are never actively advertised or released to the general public. Your awareness and understanding of both job markets can assist you in your search.

- ◆ 75% of all available jobs are never advertised. A job seeker must use more assertive methods to uncover these positions.
- ◆ Jobs can be created. With new products and services, re-structuring, layoffs and mergers, and grant funding, new positions can occur at any time.
- ◆ Jobs can open at any time. When you initially make contact with an organization, positions may not be available. If you have already made contact with a potential employer, timely follow-up can re-enforce your candidacy.
- ◆ Jobs come through referrals. Your ability to network and the individual and personal contacts you make can help you to get your "foot in the door" with an organization.

Getting the job is your responsibility.

Now that you understand a little about the hidden job market and that it is your responsibility to identify employers, you can begin your job search.

Researching and Prospecting

When you first embark on a job search, you need to consider "How much do you really know about the career opportunity you want to pursue?" Ask yourself the following question: Am I aware of the necessary skills, job responsibilities and duties, education and training required? Thorough research is necessary in order to be successful. Consider the following sources of information for your research.

People - employees, employers, competitors and customers

Corporate Websites - look for annual reports, corporate newsletters and other information on the organization

Written Resources - employer directories, professional and trade journals, reference materials and the list goes on

Professional Associations - consider becoming a student member. You will receive current information about new products, services, discoveries, etc., as well as information about conferences and conventions. Some associations may even have a job network or listing service.

Career Services - our library contains books, directories, job search resources and more for the interested job seeker. In addition, review our comprehensive office website at <http://www.uwgb.edu/careers>.

As you complete your research, your focus will turn to prospecting. When prospecting, you are trying to identify where opportunities exist and who are the individuals in the position to hire. Based on your earlier research, you will focus on specific organizations and industries. Any organization operating in your field could potentially have a job for you. Before developing your prospect list of organizations, consider the following information:

Develop an objective - What are you really seeking in a job? You should have specific ideas from your self-assessment and research.

Focus on a geographic area - You need to have workable limits. Your job search needs to be manageable. Select a region of the country in order to begin the search.

Identify kinds of organizations - Use employer directories, telephone books, and other organization listings to find those types of organizations that will meet your needs. Search the Internet looking at Chamber of Commerce listings and websites, as well as websites by career field or industry. Communications companies, financial investment firms, commercial banks, etc. - all represent different opportunities. Do not waste your time and energy if you really would not consider working for certain types of organizations.

Focus on specific organizations – Now it is time to create a target list. Identify those organizations you really want to contact. Once again you will need to be somewhat selective. A prospect list of 500 organizations is somewhat unrealistic, where as a target list of 25-50 employers is manageable. You should take your target list and separate it further to create several lists of 10-15 organizations that you begin to contact in stages.

Now that you have a prospect list complete, you are ready to examine and expand your personal network. You want to establish contacts with those organizations on your list.

Networking

This can be your most effective method for obtaining a job. It also is the most misunderstood term in the job search process. Networking effectively is a skill that many job seekers do not possess. Often times this is because networking is viewed as "unnecessary" and "time consuming." Remember the statistics about the hidden job market: 75% of all jobs are never advertised. Networking is the job search strategy to help you uncover these opportunities.

Networking is the planned process by which one becomes known, through in-person meetings in business and social settings, to people who can provide information about job openings, leads, personal contacts and start-up companies and who have the power to hire. Keep these objectives in mind when networking:

- ◆ To inform people that you are available for hire
- ◆ To uncover hidden jobs
- ◆ To open up channels of communication
- ◆ To increase your knowledge of companies and the industry
- ◆ To create a positive impression with an individual, especially if he/she has the power to hire - this opens the possibility of creating a new job
- ◆ To practice your interviewing skills

Networking requires initiative on your part; however, the time and effort is well worth the results. Your personal network is limited only by your willingness to contact individuals. Your personal network can begin with parents and relatives, teachers, supervisors, Career Services staff, UW-Green Bay faculty and administrators, friends, classmates, informational interview contacts, UW-Green Bay alumni, and community members.

In addition to the people you already know, you can expand your network by connecting with employers, alumni, and other professionals in your field of interest. Job fairs, professional organizations, community events, and volunteering are all potential means of expanding your network of contacts.

You can also use tools like LinkedIn, a professional networking site with millions of members around the globe, to connect with UW-Green Bay alumni and other professionals in almost every career field.

Get connected through LinkedIn:

- ◆ Go to www.linkedin.com to create your profile
- ◆ Use the search box to find the "UW-Green Bay Alumni" group and request to join.
- ◆ Use keywords in the search box to find other people and groups in your field of interest.

Informational Interviewing

This is one of the main methods utilized by job seekers to obtain information. Informational interviewing puts you in direct contact with professionals in your field. This personal contact with professionals can be difficult and uncomfortable. There are several methods of making contact with a professional. The method of contact is selected based on the level of familiarity you have with the individual. Use your best judgment and professionalism when contacting these individuals.

Marketing Emails or letters may be the best approach of all. It allows you as a job seeker to communicate knowledge that you have gained from your previous research. Secondly, an email or letter is likely to receive direct, quicker attention from the individual contacted rather than a phone call. Marketing emails or letters allow the individuals to begin considering your request prior to your follow-up phone call.

Cold phone calls are those calls made where a referral from another professional was not received and where the person was identified from your career research. This can be a very awkward way of setting up informational interviews. It is important to also mention how you as the job seeker identified this individual as someone to contact. When conducted professionally, these phone calls can be quite successful.

Warm phone calls are telephone calls made to individuals who are a part of your personal network or to whom you have been referred. Begin the conversation by reminding the individual of your connection to the individual. Make reference to your research and your interest in the field. Close the conversation by requesting an informational interview.

Drop-ins/meetings occur when you stop by the office of a professional unannounced. At times, spontaneity is a plus. Your assertiveness can impress the professional. However, this may not be the best approach if you are not comfortable with face-to-face contact. This method requires that you think quickly and respond to the individual's questions.

Informational interviewing can be a risk for some job seekers. In this setting, the job seeker becomes the interviewer, controlling the agenda for the meeting and setting the course for what is to happen. Even though you are the interviewer, you will be evaluated. This individual will use the opportunity to evaluate your candidacy in case you apply for a position there in the future. Remember to make a positive impression and perform at your very best. Keep the following points in mind:

- ◆ Plan an agenda. You have asked for the meeting, therefore you need to be prepared with questions to ask the professional.
- ◆ The reason for the informational interview is to key into the expertise and knowledge that the professional has to offer. Be sure to ask a range of questions.
- ◆ You can learn a great deal through observation. Be sure to look around for you will gain insight into the work environment, stressors, peak times, etc.
- ◆ Perform any follow-up the individual might recommend. Send a thank you letter to the individual(s) you interviewed. As another job search tactic, be sure to keep in routine contact with the individual in case new information arises.

Phoenix Recruitment On-Line (PRO)

This is UW-Green Bay's on-line recruitment program for students offering opportunities for full-time post-graduate employment, student employment positions both on and off campus, and internships. All students have access to PRO with a pre-existing account, which provides a student with direct access to PRO using a campus ID number and birth date. (Students that do not have direct access should contact Career Services for an account in PRO). Navigate to the Career Services' web site at <http://www.uwgb.edu/careers> to log in. PRO allows students to post resumes on-line, review job listings, sign-up for campus interviews and connect with employers. Career Services staff conducts direct referrals from PRO and forwards resumes of students seeking employment directly to hiring officials with organizations. Email search agent technology allows a student to stay current with all opportunities posted in PRO without physically searching daily or hourly. Use of Phoenix Recruitment On-line is the best way to be connected with opportunities directed to UW-Green Bay students and to take advantage of the recruitment relationships that exist in the community and the region. If you have questions about using PRO, make an appointment to meet with a staff member to review the website and get tips about how to use it effectively.

Recruitment Programs Offered at UW-Green Bay

Career Services sponsors a number of programs that bring students and employers together. This is a prime opportunity for students to demonstrate their qualifications and for employers to educate students about their organizations and available positions. The following descriptions provide general information about the programs. For more details and specific dates, talk with a staff member in Career Services.

On-Campus Recruitment - During the spring and fall of each year, Career Services invites a number of organizations to come on campus to interview students for full-time permanent positions and internships. Accounting firms, government agencies, banks, private sector employers, and the Armed Forces are just a few of the types of organizations that recruit on campus. It is required to sign-up in advance for the interviews which typically last for 30 minutes. Some organizations will not conduct campus interviews, but will host **informational sessions or an informational table** on campus. All on campus visits and interviews scheduled by employers are listed in PRO.

Job Fairs - These events provide for less structured, yet professional interaction with a wide variety of organizations that are looking to connect with UW-Green Bay students. Fairs allow students to review and compare diverse organizations with different careers and opportunities. It is an excellent opportunity to ask questions, network and to initiate an application with an organization. Two Job and Internship Fairs are held each year – once in late September/early October and again in late February/early March.

Teacher Recruitment Fairs - The annual **Wisconsin Educational Recruitment Fair (WERF)** is held in the spring each year in the Madison area. WERF is a unique opportunity for candidates seeking teaching positions. It is a day during which teachers can make personal contact with school recruiters from Wisconsin and throughout the United States. The method of selecting candidates is a combination of open sign-up and screening of candidate resumes during the morning with an open fair type atmosphere during which students can browse and talk to district representatives. Interviews begin late morning and continue through the afternoon. Candidates register through Career Services at UW-Green Bay. More detailed information about WERF is available at <http://services.education.wisc.edu/werf/>.

Direct Application – Many organizations have comprehensive websites that allow candidates to search online for available positions and apply directly. Many organizations do not accept direct applications from candidates if positions are not currently **OPEN**. You can utilize a variety of strategies to locate organizations but the most effective method is use of the Internet. Consider going to Chamber of Commerce websites to locate organizations or simply try to conduct an on-line search for the organization to see if the organizational website has employment information listed. You can also use websites like www.INDEED.com that will search corporate and other websites to list positions that are posted. There are also numerous regional and national websites that list available positions. Consider checking those websites listed on the Career Services' website at www.uwgb.edu/careers.

With today's use of technology, the old tried and true direct mail campaign is not very effective where a candidate sends directly a letter of interest and resume for consideration. If you plan to do this, it is advised that you email people initially to inquire about openings, procedure, etc. If you are interested in conducting a direct mail effort, keep the following points in mind when doing a direct mail campaign.

- ◆ All letters should be addressed to an **individual**. If your research has not uncovered the appropriate person, call the headquarters or branch. Ask for the individual responsible for college relations/recruitment, personnel or human resources.
- ◆ Remember the steps discussed in the prospecting section of this guidebook. Be selective. Initially send out 10 - 15 resumes in a mail campaign. This allows for adequate and timely follow-up.
- ◆ Find your competitive edge. Your qualifications need to stand out from all the other candidates. In doing so, your letter should demonstrate a match between your qualifications and the potential position(s) available with the organization.
- ◆ Follow-up your direct mail letter and resume with a telephone call. This gives you the opportunity to reinforce your interest in the company and verify that your credentials were received.
- ◆ Be polite with the individuals you speak. It may take several attempts before you reach the individual who received your letter.

More on Employer Databases and Searching On-line

Technology can be a very valuable tool to assist you with the job search process. With the extensive number of websites and resources available on-line, at times using technology in your job search can be overwhelming, especially if your search is not focused.

A number of organizations sponsor employer databases or job listings. In some cases they will charge you to participate or have your resume forwarded to a select grouping of the employers. Other databases merely make it easier to extract information for research purposes. They may be large-scale national job posting boards, listing positions across all types of career fields, geographic areas and required levels of education and experience. You may also find that some web-based databases or listings will allow you as a candidate to directly apply for a position on-line. There are also sites on-line that can

also assist you in researching salary or relocation information. Regardless of the information you want to gather, here are some tips for making this process less confusing.

Job Search by Career Field - There are a variety of sites dedicated to specific career fields, allowing individuals to conduct employer research and review position listings. These range from the arts, biotechnology, and communications to education, government and social services. Simply stated, there is "something for everyone."

- ◆ Search for organizations or associations appropriate for your chosen career field(s). Often there will be a section titled "Careers" or "Job Opportunities".
- ◆ If viewing large-scale national sites, many will allow you to narrow your search for positions by selecting the type of industry or career field you wish to pursue.
- ◆ View various Internet resources at www.uwgb.edu/careers.

Job Search by Geographic Preference - If you have a particular geographic preference for your job search, you may find some of these types of sites useful:

- ◆ Local: Area newspapers or Chambers of Commerce often sponsors these sites.
- ◆ State: One example is the Wisconsin Job Center which has a site dedicated to positions within the state that are compiled by the state's Department of Workforce Development, commonly referred to as Job Service. If conducting a job search outside of Wisconsin, you may want to see if you can find your desired state's comparable site.
- ◆ National: Many of these sites will allow you to narrow your search by geographic area, either by regions, states or specific larger cities across the United States.
- ◆ International: These sites may be sponsored by organizations that specialize in assisting candidates with locating positions overseas, through embassies, or international organizations. Note: Due to the nature of this type of job search, you will want to thoroughly investigate the details involved with working in another country (work permits, visas, etc.) An excellent resource is Going Global.

You may find it helpful to review sites for content and information and bookmark or make a list of those sites you may wish to visit again in the future. Depending upon the database or job listing size and how it is maintained, you may find it most useful to check your list of sites once every week or two so you can view the most current openings. Many sites allow users to define search agents or job scouts. This allows you to specify criteria for jobs that you would consider. The search agent or job scout will notify you by email when a position has posted that matches your criteria.

By tapping into the expansive resources made available through technology, you will be able to review on-line job announcements, subscribe to list serves, or access other on-line databases. It is highly suggested that you check out the "Job Searching On-Line" link on the Career Services website for information about various databases and sites appropriate for college students.

Advertisements and Job Listings

Classified ads in newspapers are another source for identifying job openings. It is usually the Sunday editions of national and regional newspapers that list the most openings. In addition to their convenience, ads in various newspapers list openings in any geographic area in which you may be interested. Classified ads cover only a small percentage of the employment openings. The people who screen the responses are not always those who are in the position to hire you.

- ◆ Do not limit yourself to just a few papers. If you have a geographic area in mind, subscribe to all the local and regional papers.
- ◆ Respond to advertised positions up to one month old. You may never know when the screening process has been delayed or if a qualified candidate was not been identified.
- ◆ Wait seven to ten days to respond to the advertised listing if you have time before the application deadline. Most people respond immediately, and your resume and letter of application will arrive after the initial wave of applications.
- ◆ Respond to ads that are one to two levels above your qualifications as well as ads at a lower level. You may receive referrals for positions or if an internal candidate has been identified, you may be in a position to be reviewed for the recent opening.
- ◆ Do not mention any salary requirements when responding unless requested by the employer. Otherwise, salary information is inappropriate at this point in your contact with the organization. If this information were requested by the organization, research appropriate salaries for that type and level of position and geographic area, and provide a salary range in your cover letter. You may note that salary is negotiable.

Third Party Recruiters/Employment Agencies/Executive Search Firms

These types of agencies can be very helpful and are worth considering. It is important that you do not use these agencies as the sole source of your job search. Most executive search firms only deal with middle to upper level management positions, and therefore will be unable to assist you. The quality of these services varies widely. It is wise to do research before signing on with any particular agency. Ask several individuals in the area about their impressions of the local agencies. Call the Better Business Bureau or other regulatory agency to check for any recent complaints. You are selecting an organization that will represent you as a candidate for employment, and you need to feel confident about their abilities to do so.

Inquire about fees - Some agencies charge you (the client) for their services and some charge the company that employs you. We recommend that you do not pay any fees to search firms. There are good search firms that have "company fee paid" policies.

Be clear on their methods of referral - Are you told about opportunities prior to the agency sharing your qualifications with the organization or are you contacted only if an organization expressed an interest in your candidacy?

Understand how your qualifications are presented - Some agencies may use a data sheet. Others may re-work your resume or use your own resume.

Additional Job Search Strategies

Volunteer - This can sometimes turn into a paid position. You gain experience and increase your personal network.

Part-time/Temporary Employment - By working part-time, you can earn money and still have time to pursue permanent full-time employment - A part-time position can also become full-time after the organization has been witness to your abilities.

Professional Association Membership - Through these memberships, you can meet other professionals in your field of interest. These professionals may become part of your personal network.

Internships - These allow you to gain experience that many employers require while also adding to your network. Internships may turn into future job offers.

Conclusion

Looking for permanent, part-time or temporary employment is not easy. It is time-consuming, exciting, frustrating, tiring, fun and sometimes painful. Try to maintain a positive attitude. Hard work and perseverance **will** pay off. A typical job hunt looks like this:

NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO YES

According to Tom Jackson, author of Guerrilla Tactics in the Job Market, you should try to get more No's faster. This increases your chances of getting a Yes.

Lastly, become a job search specialist. Companies hire those that best present themselves. Find your competitive edge! Consider these final eight points:

- 1) Prove that you offer the potential of a strong ROI - return on the organization's investment.
- 2) The employee is the most costly and complex asset of a company.
- 3) Interviewers want to know what you can do to make the company more profitable.
- 4) Most jobs are filled before ever becoming published openings.
- 5) Don't let job specifications screen you out.
- 6) Be patient and be respectful of a professional's time.
- 7) No news from an employer is generally good news. They are fast with turn downs, slow with offers.
- 8) Graduating from your particular school offers certain strengths and liabilities. Recognize both in your search strategy.

There are several things that a student can do to ensure an effective and organized job search. A job search is no easy task, and it can be more or less effective depending on the student's motivation, skills, and organization. Remember that the employer will not find you - you need to find the employer!