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Guide to the Job Search

Note: Request an electronic copy by emailing psyadv@iupui.edu. It will make following the numerous links in this document much easier.

Steps in the Successful Job Search

Advertised VS. Hidden Jobs There are many different ways to discover job openings. While employers advertise some job vacancies, a vast majority (60-80%) go unadvertised. In order to tap into these “hidden” job opportunities, job seekers need to employ less conventional methods that rely on a personal touch. Using a combination of methods for a diverse approach is highly recommended.

Plan

Select the job search methods you want to use. This handout describes the primary methods people use in their job search. Successful job seekers utilize several different methods, tapping into the hidden and advertised job markets.

Make a schedule and stick to it. Plan to start your search several months before you would like to start. Between searching, interviewing and waiting on offers, it can take several weeks to months to secure a job. Establish a routine to check your job leads regularly. Here lies one of the most important aspects of your job search – how much time you devote to your search directly influences how quickly you’ll see results.

Develop a record keeping system. It is critical that you keep track of the people and companies you have contacted and where your resume is posted. You may want to use a spreadsheet program to keep track of your job search.

Search

Search for employment opportunities. Use the job search methods you have chosen from this handout and visit <http://sciencecareers.iupui.edu> and <http://www.jagjobs.org> for a list of on and off campus jobs.

Remember to research organizations and companies. Search online for companies, review employer directories, read newspapers and trade journals, and talk with others about potential employers.

Make all of your communications as personable as possible. If you have the opportunity to visit with an employer in person, take it. If you were encouraged to apply for a position or have a contact who can refer you to the hiring supervisor, mention that person’s name. (Be sure the person knows you will be mentioning their name.) Also, personalize all correspondence; don’t send “form” cover letters and resumes.

Follow up

Follow-up with employers and contacts. Tenacious job seekers follow-up with an email, letter, visit or phone call. The personal touch is still the most effective way of marketing oneself.

Send thank-you notes to whomever you speak. This really is a forgotten form of job search etiquette. It is a great way to stand out among other candidates and can be the one factor that tips the hiring decision in your favor.

Evaluate offers as they come. Remember that when you evaluate job offers, you need to ask yourself if you would truly be happy at this job.

Advertised Job Searching Strategies

Looking for advertised jobs is best for candidates who meet or exceed the stated job requirements, people in fields of high demand or turnover, and government job seekers. The downside to applying for advertised jobs is the large amount of competition for these vacant positions because it takes such little effort to find them.

Jag Jobs and Science Careers These are both employment websites hosted here at IUPUI. Both sites feature vacancies for full-time and part-time jobs, work study opportunities, internships, research positions and volunteer opportunities. JagJobs is more comprehensive and serves the entire campus with listings from childcare to alumni level jobs. ScienceCareers is more focused on jobs for students majoring in the School of Science. Once you create a profile, you can upload your resume, set up a job agent (when jobs post with your requested criteria you receive a notice), and search and apply for positions directly on the site.

<http://www.JagJobs.org>

<http://ScienceCareers.iupui.edu>

Meta Search Engines These are job search engines are websites that include thousands of frequently updated job vacancies. You can search these positions by selecting a number of criteria including geographic region, occupation, industry, educational level and more. They are easy to use but there is a high level of competition and users report getting few interviews or offers this way. Be aware that not all postings are “real” jobs and some may be scams. As always, use discretion when giving out personal information and be sure to research the companies you apply to.

Examples:

www.monster.com

www.careerbuilder.com

www.collegegrad.com

www.jobweb.com

www.americasjobbank.com

www.indeed.com (which searches many of these sites at once)

Career Fairs In any given academic year there are several FREE career fairs held on campus. Career Fairs bring together employers and recruiters from various companies and organizations to meet with student and identify potential candidates. Many students make the mistake of not preparing appropriately for the careers fair (ex. polished resume, pressed professional dress, prior company research to name a few things). There is a lot of work that goes into preparing for a career fairs. We recommend you pick up a copy of the **Guide to Career Fairs** to make sure you are best prepared for these terrific opportunities to meet face to face with potential employers. Meeting face to face can help differentiate you from other candidates applying for the same position.

Career and Employment Campus Calendar

http://events.iupui.edu/calendar_group/?group=131

Company/Professional Organization Websites If you have a specific employer or industry in mind that you wish to work for, you may go online to search for job vacancies posted on the website of the company or professional organization. Just search online for the employers name or professional group and click on the Employment or Careers section of the website.

Hidden Job Searching Strategies

Informational Interview: Informational interviewing involves directly contacting a professional in your field or a company of interest and requesting time to ask questions about their career journey (not to ask for a job, but to learn more about the field or company). This is a great way to gain insight from an insider’s perspective on a position or company to help you determine fit. Informational interviews will also expand your list of contacts, help you become more connected in your field, and build your confidence in approaching others. Refer to our **Guide to Informational Interviews** for tips and strategies. This is one of the most powerful ways to build your career networks.

Networking: This simply means connecting with others on a professional persona, or social level. This method can help you obtain advice about industries, how to find positions within your area of interest, and gain knowledge about particular employers. A majority of vacant positions are filled without employer advertising. Networking puts you into contact with people who can help you pursue job leads while improving your communication skills. This is by far the most effective job hunting strategy. In fact, most people use this method without even knowing it. It is how promotions and job changes happen within organizations and most people report that they hear about jobs or get referrals from friends and family. Individuals with wide networks consisting of several sources of information and resources are more likely to experience career advancement (Podolny & Baron, 1997).

Develop a brief introduction (elevator pitch) of who you are, your career, interests, and how the contact can help you. This communication should be polite, concise, and appreciative. In addition, you should have some questions prepared to ask a contact if you meet them at an event or informational interview.

Online Networking: This is essentially electronically networking with others using social and career networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter as well as other tools such as online professional associations, alumni organizations, message boards, and blogs. When connecting with employers online, you have more time to craft your responses. Virtual networking also allows you to interact with hundreds of people from all over the world that you might not have otherwise known. Be very cautious about how your online presence represents you. Try to Google yourself and make note of what you see. Is there anything that might cast a negative light on you to an employer? Employers report using social networking sites to review candidates when making hiring decisions.

Putting it all together

Finding a job takes time and unfortunately, there is no one method which leads to immediate success. Keep the following in mind as you approach your job search:

Change it up: If you find yourself only using one job search strategy that is not yielding any results, try a different one. Taking a diversified approach to the job search leads to the most success.

Do your homework: Learn the trends of your intended field or industry and consult with those who have been through the process before to gain the “insider perspective” on how to go about your job search. See [Guide to Information Interview](#).

Get support: A support system can keep you motivated and positive, so find encouraging friends or family members who know you are on the job search. If you’re dealing with a lot of stress and anxiety associated with the job search, see an advisor in psychology for help.

Stay positive: It can be tough to face rejection, but remember to stay confident and positive about your candidacy. If you don’t believe in yourself, it will be hard to convince others.

Get professional advice: Meet with Mikki Jeschke in the Psychology Department or a Career Specialist in the School of Science Career Development Services in Taylor Hall (B006D).

Be enthusiastic: Employers are looking for motivated, energetic and eager people to join their team. The energy and enthusiasm you bring to your cover letter, employer communications, and interview can make up for other deficits (like related experience) and help you land the job!

Adapted from Missouri University Career Center. (2010). *Career Specialist Training Manual Appendices*. Also available at <http://career.missouri.edu/handouts>. Special thanks to MU for freely sharing their resources.

Podolny, J. M., & Baron, J. N. (1997). Resources and relationships: Social networks and mobility in the workplace. *American Sociological Review*, 62 (5), 673-693.