

Liberal Arts Job Search Step by Step



The purpose of this guide is to support your search for meaningful employment. You are probably searching for a “real” job for the first time in your life, a task which likely feels unfamiliar and very daunting. Rest assured that there are MANY resources and tools out there to help you with this endeavor...you are not the first person to engage in a job hunt, and you need not do it alone. With the help of this guide and the resources suggested herein (as well as other resources on our website and in our resource library), you will be able to make considerable strides in your effort to identify potential positions that will challenge and inspire you. Good luck!

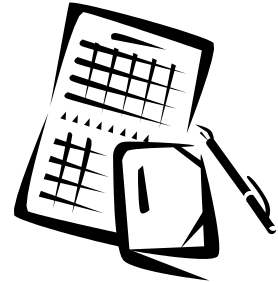
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Step 1: Prepare yourself for the reality of a job search.

Even in a strong economy, finding a job is rarely easy. During an economic downturn it becomes even more important to develop an effective self-marketing plan and an understanding of successful job search strategies.

The average job hunt lasts 2-6 months depending on the economy as well as various individual factors. Other sources say that the average search takes 400 hours—the equivalent of 10 weeks of full time “work” (hence the phrase “looking for a job is a full time job”). Research shows that two-thirds of job hunters spend 5 or fewer hours per week actively searching; at that rate it could take more than a year to find a job! The keys to successful job search are to have realistic expectations, to learn how to set yourself apart, and to do everything you can to get your foot in the door. Though the general economic outlook and outlook for a given field certainly have an impact on success, a negative economic situation should not be used as an excuse for not finding a job. Many factors that are within your control are known to have a far greater impact. They include:

- Quality of your marketing materials (resume, cover letter, electronic presence)
- History of relevant professional experience
- Time committed to active job searching
- Number and variety of job search strategies used
- Articulation of a focused career objective (whether it is actually on the resume or not)
- Understanding of the field and of entry-level positions within
- Effectiveness of interviewing skills
- Flexibility (geographic, financial, etc.)



There are many additional things that you should begin doing when you initiate your search for employment. Among them:

- **Prepare your materials.** It will take many hours and many rounds of revision to develop an attractive resume and an effective cover letter. The importance of these documents cannot be overstated, particularly in a tough job market. If you have limited professional experience it is even more important that your materials make a great first impression and highlight your transferable skills (see SMCM Guide to writing Resumes and Vitas.) You will want to revisit your resume after Step 2, and tailor your letter for each employer, but now is the time to begin. You should also begin identifying and contacting professional references.
- **Build a professional wardrobe.** Before you fill your closet, however, you may wish to evaluate the culture of the company that hires you, as dress codes vary; regardless, you will want a professional suit for interviews and job fairs.
- **Begin preparing for interviews.** Read online and print resources on the topic of effective interview techniques and begin honing your oral communication skills. You may be invited for your first interview with little notice so it is important to be prepared in advance.
- **Review your online presence.** And take steps to eliminate any negative impressions. Create a professional email address related to your name. While you are at it, be sure that your voice mail messages sound professional and that you get into the habit of answering your phone in a respectful way. Some good resources on this topic:
-Clean up your digital dirt msn.careerbuilder.com/Article/MSN-1705-Job-Search-Cleaning-Up-Your-Digital-Dirt/
-Social Networking Dos and Don'ts www.cnn.com/2008/LIVING/worklife/11/05/cb.social.networking/index.html



Step 2: Determine what kind of work you want to do.

Your liberal arts degree has prepared you well by teaching widely applicable skills that are applicable to most any workplace. Liberal arts majors tend to be creative and open-minded and to possess effective critical thinking, communication, and analytical skills...and employers know this. Overall, liberal arts majors are well-suited for a wide-range of entry level jobs and experience a great degree of flexibility in career choice because of the versatility of the degree.

With such an array of choices, it's important to have some idea of the kind of work you want to do. Generally speaking, if you don't know what you are looking for, it can be really hard to find it, and this holds true for the job search as well. For example, if you know you want to pursue a career as an archivist (someone who obtains and preserves historical documents) but wish to work in the field before obtaining a masters degree, you can easily find your way to the websites for relevant organizations (historical sites, museums, government agencies) and identify open positions for archival assistants. But if you don't know what you want to do, it's impossible to know where to start once you've finished browsing the local classifieds.

It might seem advantageous to be a liberal arts major without a specific career objective...after all, that means that many hundreds of jobs are open to you—thousands if you have no geographic restrictions. But this is far from the truth. You simply can't compete with other job seekers if you don't know what you want. Your lack of focus will be apparent in your materials and in your interview responses. So where to begin?

A necessary part of a successful job search is to first explore yourself. Having a clear understanding of your interests, values, abilities, and work environment preferences will help you to identify career areas, specific positions, and environments that will best reflect your attributes; understand and market your skills and strengths; and clarify questions to ask in the interviewing process to determine if a given position will meet your immediate and/or long-term needs. The CDC has many print and online tools that we can use to assist you with this process of self-exploration.

- **Career Planning Scale.** This brief self-administered assessment (available in the CDC) takes you through an active process of making career choices and helps you determine the areas of career planning on which you should concentrate (Knowledge of the World of Work, Self-Knowledge, Knowledge of Occupations, Career Decision-Making, Career Planning, and Career Implementation). It then offers strategies that will enable progress in each area.
- **FOCUS V2®.** SMCM now holds a license for the online career planning program, FOCUS (see link on the left side of our website). This interactive web site combines self-assessment, career exploration, and decision-making into one comprehensive program. If you have already settled on a major, Focus can help you identify occupational options that may be a good fit for your background and personal characteristics.
- **Online and print Resources.** The Career Planning page of the CDC website, and the shelves of the CDC resource library include several informative and interactive resources designed to assist you with self-reflection. Some particular books that we recommend for this step include:
 - Smart Moves for Liberal Arts Grads: Finding a Path to your Perfect Career* (Curran & Greenwald, 2006)
 - I Could Do Anything if Only I Knew What it Was* (Sher, 1994)
 - College Majors and Careers: A Resource Guide for Effective Life Planning* (Phifer, 2003)
 - College Majors Handbook: The Actual Jobs, Earnings, & Trends for Graduates of 60 College Majors* (Fogg et al., 2004)
 - Top Careers for Liberal Arts Graduates* (Ferguson, 2004)
 - Making Career Decisions that Count: A Practical Guide* (Luzzo & Severy, 2009)
 - Great Jobs for ___ Majors (Series); Several additional books specific to various career fields and majors*

Once you have some idea of your personal strengths and preferences, it is necessary to expand your knowledge of the world of work and of specific occupations. Again, the CDC has many resources to offer.

- The internet is an excellent resource for career research. We have compiled the most valuable tools on the career planning page of our website so we will not repeat them here.
- Browse the hundreds of books and videos in our career library and talk with a career advisor.
- Identify your "transferable skills" by working through the SMCM Guide to Writing Resumes and Vitas; then relate them to the world of work (using online tools) to determine occupations that might be a good fit.
- Focus your search on jobs that align with your education; you presumably have a strong interest in the field of study in which you majored, and your relevant background will strengthen your candidacy.

- If you are struggling to pinpoint a particular occupation that you wish to pursue, focus instead on settings or industries of interest. If you love to work with children and want to “make a difference,” consider looking to organizations that support children and families for meaningful work. If good benefits, job security, and advancement opportunities are important to you, consider exploring entry-level jobs with the federal government.
- What are you passionate about? Fashion? The environment? Women’s rights? What organizations relevant to your interests might have entry level jobs?

Keep in mind that the average graduate can expect 9-13 job changes, and even 2-3 shifts between career *fields* before they retire. So the job you pursue now is really just a foundation for what is to come. Many of you will eventually find yourselves working in jobs that *don’t yet exist*. So you need not feel paralyzed at the prospect of selecting a life-long career path.

Once you have narrowed your choices, gather as much information as possible about your options through online, print, and “live” sources. The process of gathering career-related information through a personal contact (in person or by phone) is known as Informational interviewing. Informational interviews can provide you with a better idea of your fit with different career fields and work environments. You can then use this information to make decisions, target your job search, and market your skills effectively. If you don’t currently have contacts in the fields you wish to learn about, find some! You may feel uncomfortable initially contacting people you don’t know with such a request, but just remember that people generally enjoy talking about themselves and their career field and they feel good about helping others. ALWAYS send a thank you note, and NEVER ask for a job. For more information see: jobsearch.about.com/od/infointerviews and *A Foot in the Door* (Hansen, 2008). The points and questions under Step 5, Expand your Network, are also helpful here (anyone you interview should become a part of your professional network).

The more you know about what you want and what you have to offer, the easier it will be to recognize suitable positions and to articulate your fit for those positions in cover letters and interviews. Once you know what kind of work you want to do, tell *everyone* what it is so that those you know can be looking and listening for opportunities on your behalf.

Step 3: Learn where to find advertised jobs (traditional approaches).

The job search strategies described in this section are the ones you are probably familiar with, the ones that you’ve seen others engage in, and the ones you’ve been expecting to focus on in your own job search. They are certainly worth using and describing here, but ultimately they are not the ones that are likely to land you a job. It is estimated that only 15-30% are broadly advertised. Why? Basically because it takes a lot of resources (time, money) for an employer to broadly advertise a job and weed through hundreds of applications in hopes of finding a well-suited candidate who isn’t just looking for any job available. As anxious as you may be about the hiring process, hiring managers are even more so (keep this in mind...it can be comforting in an interview!) because a new hire that doesn’t succeed reflects poorly on the manager and ultimate represents a waste of time and money (a search for a replacement will take more resources, after all). So employers are eager to hire people who are ambitious and proactive and who actually want to work for them. Resumes from such people may be deeply buried in the stack of applications for an advertised position, but they can be challenging to identify. As a result, many employers resort primarily to the means described in Step 4 whenever possible. That said, we’ve provided some tips below that will enable you to use these strategies as successfully as possible.

- **Newspaper classifieds.** This very traditional method can be helpful if you are looking for employment in a particular region, especially if it is a smaller town or city. (Many papers put their classified section online now, so you need not chase down a hard copy.) Beyond that, it doesn’t tend to be very successful because the number of applicants for each position is very high. If you do find an ad that appeals to you, make an effort to get more information about the position (by phone, email, or internet) before you apply. Print ads are generally very brief. If you have more information, you can determine if the job is a good fit, and write a more effective cover letter to set yourself apart.
- **Internet job boards.** Many large employers that choose to advertise broadly have replaced their old newspaper classified ads with those posted online to sites such as www.monster.com. The CDC website includes links to the most well-known and reputable job boards, including some that are focused on entry-level jobs. As with newspaper classifieds, the rate of success here doesn’t tend to be high, but it this method does work for some. You can post your resume to most online job boards, but such resumes are rarely viewed by employers. There is also some risk to posting your resume for public view, so think strongly about it before doing so. Note that the federal government sponsors its own job board at a www.usajobs.gov, but many federal jobs are posted only on department web sites (see the government page of our web site for details).

- **Community web sites.** Many communities have websites such as Craig’s List and Southern Maryland Online (www.somd.com) that include a section for job classifieds. These are basically similar to newspaper classifieds, though they often have more detail and you can more easily determine when they were posted. Be on the outlook for scam advertisements which are common on these low-cost sites. Some are obvious, some are not. Never provide personal information such as a social security number.
- **Field-specific resources.** The sources described above (and below) cater to many types of jobs and employers and students with all majors. There are many additional resources that are specific to various career fields. The most comprehensive and well-organized online listing of these sites is here: www.rileyguide.com/jobs.html. This one is worth a look too: www.acinet.org/crl/library.aspx?LVL2=41&LVL3=y&LVL1=8&CATID=20&PostVal=2. You should also ask your teachers, employers, or other contacts if they know of any professional association websites or list-serves that post or circulate entry level position announcements. You can also browse categorized listings of professional associations from these links: www.careers.umbc.edu/students/majorsheets/links.php www.scholarly-societies.org
- **Job fairs.** A job fair is an event generally lasting a half day to three days at which various employers gather to promote their company and recruit for open internships or entry-level positions. Each employer generally has a table of materials and one to three representatives. The most broadly appealing job fairs—those that have dozens to hundreds of employers—tend to be hosted in metropolitan areas and organized through collaboration of multiple schools. Fortunately for you, such job fairs are generally free and open to the public because the host understands that high attendance is what encourages return participation by employers. Such job fairs can be difficult to learn about, however, because they are seldom advertised beyond walls and website of the host. The SMCM CDC website includes an entire webpage devoted to listing job fairs in the local and regional areas; it provides some preparation tips as well (read them!). You should also check the career services pages of any colleges in the area(s) where you would like to live. A visit to a job fair can be well worth your time if you prepare appropriately. You should identify employers of interest (listings are generally available online) and research them in advance. Dress professionally, bring copies of your polished resume, and be prepared to ask questions that demonstrate your interest in and knowledge of the company. Get a business card and follow up. Many students do not take job fairs seriously, so by doing these few things you can really set yourself apart. Job fairs occur infrequently and tend to be attended primarily by large-scale employers, however, so they should not represent your only job search strategy.
- **On-campus recruiting.** Employers often contact the CDC about coming to campus to host an information table, information session, or even on-campus interviews (generally scheduled in advance). Check the Events page of our website (and your email) frequently for announcements. This can be a great way for you to make a good impression with someone from a company that is looking to hire St. Mary’s students. If you are interested in such a position, dress professionally, do your research, and be prepared to ask questions. Get a business card and follow up. If you are scheduled for an on-campus interview, treat it as you would any other job interview. Avoid falling into the pattern of interviewing with every employer that comes to campus simply because it seems easier than conducting an active search. The employers that come to campus represent only a very small proportion of the kinds of jobs available, and you should only apply if the job is truly of interest to you.
- **Campus advertisements.** Many additional employers do not come to campus to recruit, but do provide us with descriptions of open positions or special hiring programs. Some contacts come from major employers who do a nation-wide hiring blitz every spring, others are more targeted emails from alums or employers who have had previous success with St. Mary’s students. Currently we are distributing open position announcements through biweekly “help wanted” emails, but soon they will be posted online to the SMCM Opportunity Network (“OpNet”).

Step 4: Learn where to find *unadvertised* jobs (untraditional approaches).

If only 15-30% of jobs are externally advertised, how do you find out about the *rest* of them? These unadvertised positions comprise the “hidden job market,” which is accessed only through word of mouth, referral, and in some cases, employer websites. For reasons explained in Step 3, reliance on the smaller pool of candidates that materializes through this hidden market is more likely to result in hiring success than is casting a wide net for candidates through the newspaper or internet. Because many of the jobs you may be most interested in are never broadly advertised, or even posted on the company website, one of your most fruitful job search strategies will be to identify the “hidden job market” in your desired field.

Many of the jobs well-suited to liberal arts majors are with small companies that often hire only as turnover requires (it is quite likely, in fact, that you are not even familiar with the company that will your first employer). They do not have the resources or need to engage in substantive internet or campus recruitment campaigns because they know that the individuals who are most interested in working for them are likely to find their way to the job on their own. There are many satisfying job opportunities to be had, but you must do your work to find them. Here are some ways to do so.

- **Using job search engines.** Websites such as www.indeed.com and www.simplyhired.com look a lot like the job boards described in Step 3, but they are a bit different in reality. Though the large job boards do search and pull ads from other sources such as online classified newspapers, they do not generally pull from employer websites. Ineed.com and simplyhired.com actually search the employment pages of many thousands of employer sites (as well as association pages, classifieds, etc.) according to your search terms, and assembles the results in a convenient list that resembles the postings on a job board. I would not presume that such a search is exhaustive, however, so it is no replacement for finding relevant companies on your own, but it is certainly a valuable tool considering the minimal amount of work required to use it. If you see outdated or advanced position advertisements for companies that are of interest, follow the links anyway and see what you find. What buzzwords or job titles do you see that could help in your search? Follow up with the organization to see what their current hiring needs are.
- **Targeting relevant employers.** Assuming you have determined in Step 2 the kind of work you want to do, the most useful approach to your job search will be to identify employers that may offer the sort of work you are looking for in places you are willing to live. If the jobs are common (e.g., nonprofit program coordinator) and your geographic restrictions are few, you could (and should!) spend a lot of time on this step. Here are some places to look.
 - **Yellow pages** (www.yellowpages.com). URLs are not always provided, so once you have secured the names of relevant companies you may have to Google them.
 - **ReferenceUSA** (www.referenceusa.com) An easy, comprehensive, and infinitely searchable database of potential employers. Only licensed for use on CDC loft computers (come by any time!).
 - **Print directories of employers.** We have several such directories at the CDC including various encyclopedias of associations and organizations and directories related to sports, performing arts, conservation and the environment. The SMCM library and public library may have additional directories.
 - **Other online directories of employers.**
 - www.manta.com: Directory of small and midsized businesses searchable by state and industry.
 - www.wetfeet.com: Alphabetical listing of employer profiles.
 - www.careerinfonet.org/employerlocator/employerlocator.asp?nodeid=18: Employer locator tool searchable specific location and occupation.
 - www.vault.com: Extensive searchable employer information, including some recruiting videos from major employers. Some access requires paid membership.
 - www.hoovers.com: We have the 2007 print volumes in our resource library. Or, you can search the database on the website. You need not pay for full profiles, however, as the College has access to Hoover's reports through ProQuest (www.smcm.edu/library/databases.html). ProQuest has limited search features, however, so you may want to start your search at the Hoover's site.
 - www.scholarstuff.com/colleges/colleges.htm: Directory of college home pages, if you are interested in work in higher education.
 - www.collegegrad.com/employers: A long list of the major employers that do a lot of hiring at the entry level. Includes links directly to company career pages.
 - www.blackcollegian.com: Click on "Mother lode of career opportunities" for a list of recruiters.
 - <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/bestcompanies/2008>: 100 best companies to work for, according to Fortune Magazine.
 - www.rileyguide.com/research.html: A very thorough directory of directories from the Riley Guide.
 - www.2chambers.com: Directory of Chambers of Commerce. Helpful for locating local businesses if you know where you plan to live.
 - www.onedayonejob.com: This unique blog-style "insiders guide" provides subscribers with a daily entry/email that includes an extensive employer profile. The site has a browsable archive. Subscribing to this list-serve is a great way to learn about jobs/companies in a manageable way.
 - www.usa.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml: Index of Federal Depts. & Agencies (see the CDC website for details on the federal job search process).
 - www.statelocalgov.net: State and Local Government index.



- **Apply for jobs...and potential jobs.** Once you developed an initial list of employers that interest you (you should continue to put more time into this activity), identify, online or by phone, any suitable openings and submit or deliver a tailored cover letter and resume to apply. For those companies that do not have open positions, you can nevertheless send (or better yet, hand-deliver) a resume and tailored letter requesting an interview (this is known as direct application or direct contact). Or you can call to talk about the possibility of future openings. Make sure to demonstrate your knowledge of and interest in the organization, and follow up in about two weeks. Though you may be skeptical about applying for an unadvertised job, research shows that this strategy is surprisingly effective, partly because the competition is low. Showing genuine interest in a company, even when it may not have an available vacancy, proves that you are serious about seeking a position. Employers look very favorably upon such initiative, and presume that you will be similarly determined if you are hired. This link provides some good tips for figuring out who to contact and how: www.collegegrad.com/jobsearch/Getting-Inside-Hiring-Companies. (Note: The mass-mailing or emailing of resumes and generic cover letters to several employers is not generally advised. It doesn't demonstrate much effort on your part, so it rarely leads to success. Think quality over quantity here; the employers you target should be carefully selected, and the basis of that selection should be detailed in a letter.)

Step 5: Expand your network.

As noted earlier, the best jobs are not always advertised, so it is essential that you do everything you can to tap the "hidden job market." When companies seek to make quality hires, they often circulate job openings only internally (not even on their own web site) and welcome referrals from current employees (who may even receive a bonus for each hire). When an employee gives a strong endorsement of someone, most employers are more comfortable with the prospect of hiring that individual. It is estimated that about 70% of jobs are filled through personal contacts. If you do not already know people in the field in which you wish to work (and even if you do), it is important for you to begin building a professional network. The key to effective networking is to realize that it isn't about asking for a job. It's about gathering information and advice. It's about making connections and then uncovering opportunities through those connections.

You need not start from scratch in building your network...you already know hundreds of people who can serve as valuable contacts for you. Some may offer advice, some may offer additional contacts, and someday, someone, may offer a job. In addition to aiding your immediate job search efforts, effective networking can open doors of opportunity as you progress in your professional career. Do not abandon your network once you have found your first job!

The bullets below can help you develop a list of "first line" contacts that you already know. It will serve as the nucleus from which your network will expand.

- Family: Parents, extended family, siblings, in-laws
- Friends: Recent graduates, high school friends, family friends, neighbors, siblings' friends, friends' parents
- College: Alumni, former teammates, coaches, faculty, staff
- Former jobs: Part time employers, internship supervisors, coworkers, clients, competitors, other associates
- Community and religious organizations
- Volunteer positions and special interest clubs
- Other professionals: Doctor, dentist, accountant, lawyer, banker, insurance provider

What should you say when you make contact? There are many great resources out there on effective networking, but here are some questions to get you started (also see information about informational interviewing under Step 2).

- How did you come to be in your line of work? Would you make the same choices again?
- What was your first job after college? How did you find it? What advice do you have for current job seekers?
- What is your current role in your organization? How did you get to that level?
- What do you enjoy most about your work? What is the greatest challenge?
- What recommendations would you make to a new graduate looking to enter this field?
- Do you know anyone at X company? Or...What employers do you know of that hire new graduates in your field?
- I'd love to learn more about what you do. Would it be possible for me to shadow you at work some afternoon?
- Based on our conversation today, what other people would you recommend I speak with? May I use your name as a referral in contacting them?
- [For people you've just met] I'd really like the opportunity to follow up with you if that would be alright. Would you be willing to provide me with your business card? Or...Can I find you on Linked-in?

When contacting individuals you don't know personally, you'll want to begin with a well-articulated personal introduction that explains the following:

- Who are you? (name/major/graduation)
- How did you find/receive the contact's name and information?
- What is your reason for calling/writing?

Also be prepared to discuss:

- What sets you apart? (unique experiences, personal strengths)
- What is your objective? (short- and/or long-term goals)

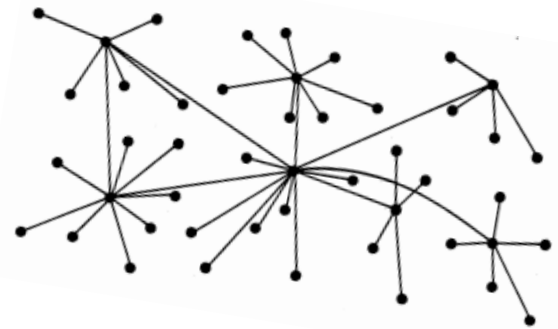


One of the many tools available to you on the CDC webpage is MentorNet, a searchable online database of alumni, parents, and other friends of the college who are willing to assist students and recent graduates. These individuals can assist you with your career decision making and job searching, and may be willing to have you shadow them on the job. In addition to providing an opportunity to learn first-hand about a given company and occupation, connecting with alumni can be an effective way to expand your professional network. The database was recently cleared for updating, but new mentors are joining every day. There is a link to MentorNet on the left side of our webpage. Email the CDC to obtain a unique username and password. The CDC also has copies of the SMCM Alumni Directory (soon to be launched online) which includes thousands of listings. There is also an alumni group on the professional networking site www.linkedin.com.

Do not expect immediate replies from new contacts; people are busy. Be sure to keep careful record of all contact information and correspondence. Be sure to send a thank you note and to let the person know if their information or referrals get you any results.

For more information see:

- Fundamentals of Networking jobcircle.com/career/coach/jf_2002_02.html
- Advanced Networking jobcircle.com/career/coach/jf_2002_03.html
- Collegegrad.com networking strategies
www.collegegrad.com/jobsearch/Network-Intelligence-Gathering/
- Networking and Your Job Search www.rileyguide.com/network.html
- A Foot in the Door* (Hansen, 2008)
- The College Grad Job Hunter* (Krueger, 2008)



Step 6: Make a job search plan.

Know that you are armed with the tools you need to be successful, where do you start? You may find it helpful to create a Job Goal Statement, which is a carefully developed "declaration of how you will incorporate your education, experiences, interests, skills, and values ...into the work you accomplish after graduation. It may include elements of your long term career plans, but most importantly, it focuses on the first career step." The worksheet at this link will help you to develop a goal statement: http://www4.uwm.edu/cdc/documents/upload/Worksheet_B.pdf

Such a statement can help you do articulate where you are going, but you still need to make an action plan for getting there. Your first job search will almost definitely not be your last, so work on developing a multifaceted and flexible approach that you can easily implement as needed in the future. Your job search plan should include each of the following:

- **End goal.** What are you working towards? By when do you expect to achieve this goal? Be realistic. ("To accept an attractive offer for a job in or around Baltimore in 4 months time.")
- **Sub-goals.** What are your daily, weekly, and monthly goals? Some of these may be developed along the way ("Today: Identify 10 relevant employers in the Virginia Beach area. Tomorrow: Contact the 10 new employers.") but others can be set in advance ("To get at least one interview by the second month of my search."). Remember to include development and revision of your materials and time for interview practice. Be realistic, but do challenge yourself.

- **Rewards.** What rewards will you give yourself for reaching your sub-goals? These can be things you really enjoy, or better yet, things that may help your job search such as a new suit or bag, for example.
- **Schedule.** How much time can you commit to your job search and when will it occur? If possible, set aside time every day. If you are not employed or in school, searching should make up the most significant portion of your day (remember... “looking for a job is a full time job.”). If you are job searching part-time, be sure to choose the time of day when you are most productive, and to also include some time during normal business hours. Make a schedule and stick to it. If you are serious about your job search it cannot be your last priority.
- **Methods.** Many different job search strategies are described in this guide; you need not engage in all of them to be successful. But you should use as many different methods as you can, and you should invest the most time in those methods that work the best (namely, building your network and targeting employers of interest), not those that seem the easiest or most familiar (see Step 3). The average job hunter uses only two strategies, but research shows that the greater number used, the greater the likelihood of finding a desirable job.
- **First steps.** What will you do today? Tomorrow? Next week? Develop some initial momentum to get the ball rolling.

Some additional tips for getting started:

- **Get organized.** Set up a space in your living area dedicated to your job search and stock it with whatever materials you may need. Retain copies of all correspondence sent and received, and create a record-keeping system to keep careful track of each contact you make, each action you take, and dates of intended follow-up. If you are truly proactive in your job search there will be a lot of details to manage and you will definitely need a way to keep it under control.
- **Pair up.** Individuals who participate in job search support groups tend to maintain greater persistence and positive attitude and to be more successful in their job search. Meet weekly to share resources and contacts and discuss your progress.
- **Get experience.** You may find it financially necessary to take a part-time or temporary job while you look for a job in your preferred field. Remember that every job is an opportunity to continue building skills as well as possible references for your next job. Try to find work that is relevant to your goal. Perhaps a company of interest has part time work, or a temporary staffing agency (such as Kelly Services) fills positions that would allow you to build relevant skills. If you don't have to work to pay the bills, commit most of your time to your job search. But do get “out there” somehow; continue to grow and strengthen your contacts through volunteer work and community involvement.
- **Look good.** Look as sharp as you can at all times while you are looking for a job. You need not wear a suit and tie to the grocery store, but you should be well-groomed and conduct yourself in a respectable way. You never know who will see you or who you might meet when you are out.

Step 7: Follow up.

This section is short that the content probably could have been folded in elsewhere, but it's so important that we wanted it to stand alone. The importance of following up cannot be overstated. Some specific tips:

Inquiries

- Following up after sending a resume or making some other initial contact with an organization is something most jobseekers are reluctant to do. Many feel as if they are being a pest. In reality, the person who gets the job is frequently the one who makes two, three, four, or more follow-up calls over the course of the hiring process. If you feel uncomfortable calling back, you could ask, "Is it okay if I call back in two weeks to check again?" This persistence demonstrates your enthusiasm, interest, and professional skills.
- Be gently persistent and willing to return a few times to the places that really interest you to see if the “no vacancy” situation has changed. (Or find a way to stay around by volunteering!)

Thank You

- Send thank you notes, letters, or emails every night to *everyone* you made substantial search-related contact with during the day...not just those who have interviewed you. People like to know that they are appreciated when they extend their time and effort, and a formal note of thanks leaves a great impression. It also helps to keep you fresh in their mind.



For more information see:

- Will a Thank-you Note Help Me Land a Job? online.wsj.com/article/C50708QANDAINTEVI.html
- A Foot in the Door* (Hansen, 2008)
- What color is your Parachute* (Bolles, 2008)

Step 8: Get more information.

There is lots to know about the job search, far more than can be covered in a handout. This document is intended to serve as an overview, not a comprehensive guide. There are many books published on the subject, and we suggest that you consult them. We've included some books and URLs in this document, but the references are not exhaustive. There are hundreds of books on our shelves (we've mentioned several of our favorites already), hundreds of links on our website, and thousands more resources out there at libraries, bookstores, and online just waiting to be discovered. Many resources are discipline-specific, such that they may be perfect for you, but impossible for us to catalog; it is up to you to find, evaluate, and use them. Put your liberal arts skills to work in your job hunt: If you do some research and apply what you've learned you are sure to find success.



Ten Secrets of the Successful Job Search

(Adapted from Job Search and Career Checklists)

1. You have established your job search goals and objectives.
2. You can articulate what you are looking for.
3. You can discuss your strengths and qualifications with networking contacts and potential employers.
4. You know how to research job targets and identify job leads.
5. You feel positive about your job search direction and strategy and are able to manage negative feelings.
6. You have a network of people you can contact and a strategy for developing new contacts.
7. You go "face-to-face" whenever possible.
8. You are willing to work hard to find a job.
9. You have the ability and desire to learn from your mistakes.
10. You are able to motivate yourself and take responsibility for your actions.