

Job Search 101 – Understanding the Basics

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This is the companion document to the presentation:
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Advice to Job Seekers in Covid-19 Times

- For many, a job search is a 4-6-month process.
- Develop and stick to your job search project plan.
- Some firms are still hiring and planning future hires despite the Covid-19 virus.
- Many of the people you need to network with are available by phone.
- There are plenty of online workshops and coaching available. Take advantage of them.
- Create and stay connected to a support team.

Five Key Changes in the World of Job Search

#1 Paper resumes are largely a relic of the past

Actions: Customize your electronic resume for each opening. Focus on your accomplishments, not a list of job duties. (You do need a printed resume for the interview)

#2: Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)

- ATS systems do the first sort on your resume.
- Highlight key words or your resume will never be seen by a human!
- Recruiters don't read your resume – they spend about 10 seconds skimming, so make it reader friendly!

Actions: Create an ATS ready resume.

#3: Employee Referrals

- Many jobs never get posted – they are found and filled through networking
- Knowing someone on the inside can get you hired – referrals account for at least 50% of hires at many firms

Actions: Network! Network! Network!

#4: Online Video Interviews

- Very common, especially as a first-round interview.

Actions: Practice! Learn what makes for a good video interview.

#5: Use of Social Media

- LinkedIn is your best resource to build relationships and networks.
- Recruiters/HR professionals use social media to screen applicants

Actions: Become a proficient LinkedIn user and clean up you Facebook page.

Common Job Search Mistakes

- Networking the wrong way
- Spending all your time applying online
- Neglecting LinkedIn
- Resume Errors:
 - Including irrelevant, old jobs
 - Focusing on job responsibilities more than specific accomplishments

Key Job Search Strategies

- Know what you want & your added value!
- Networking is the key to many successful landings.
- Target the right positions at the right companies
- Use the job requirements/posting as guidelines
- Be prepared for the phone & face-to-face interview

Key Steps in Job Search

1. Understand and be able to articulate your strengths with concrete examples
2. Define target opportunities by position and industry
3. Develop written documents – resume and handbill
4. Line up references
5. Network, network, network
6. Execute plan
7. Interviews – prepare for phone, video and/or face-to-face interviews
8. Evaluate & negotiate job offer

Key Pieces of a Job Search Project Plan (Items 1-3 from above)

- A. Determine your professional objectives
 1. Identify what YOU want
 2. Include in your handbill (but typically not in your resume)
- B. Create positioning statement
 1. Elevator Pitch
 2. Handbill with your photo, capabilities, and target companies
- C. Determine target markets/geography
- D. Develop a list of specific competencies for your handbill and resume.
 1. Best as a skill, task and certification (examples: supply chain, P&L, project management PMP, strategic planning, LEAN/Six Sigma, or Mass Data)
 2. Avoid adjectives and overused terms like: results driven, team player, hard working, versatile. These are important attributes to highlight during the interview.

Summary of Resume Advice

- A two-page maximum and strive to make it compliant with the Applicant Tracking System technology and guidelines.
- Strategically prioritize your “space”, giving the most impressive and most marketable experiences the top half of page one.
- Focuses on achievements and relevant capabilities.
- Realize a resume is a “living document” and can/should be updated as you get reactions, suggestions and new experiences, but do not get overwhelmed by “resume-itis” and refrain from using it!
- Does your resume cause prospective employers to say “WOW” – I can’t wait to get this person in for an interview.
- Take advantage of the many offerings for resume review.

Elevator Pitch

- The elevator pitch is a short statement that to positions that you are in job search and will bring great things to your next position. It also asks for assistance.
- People are often willing to help you, but they need to understand what you are looking for and that you are competent.
- The elevator pitch is a great tool to share widely and to change you focus to what you will bring to the next position.
- No more than 30-seconds.
- Consists of:
 - Your name
 - A clear statement of the position sought
 - A brief statement of your added-value or brand
 - A short ask for advice
- A job seeker needs at least two different versions, one to give to general audience and a second to give to an industry knowledgeable person (where you might use industry specific terms and abbreviations.)
- Examples:
 - “I am Amy Smith and I am seeking a position as a sales executive in a technology firm. I would welcome any advice for my job search.” (OK but would be better with a value-add statement.)
 - “I am Amy Smith and I am seeking a position as a sales executive in a technology firm. I win major deals by bridging the gap between executive goals and technical capabilities. I would welcome any advice for my job search.” (Much stronger.)

Networking

- **For most industries, networking is by far the largest source of landed jobs**
- Your first task in job search is starting a list of people you have worked with in the past.
- Many job seekers are hesitant to contact friends and strangers to seek help. You need to overcome this fear and realize that many people are willing to help.
- Cast a wide net. Seek out people you worked with 5 and 10 years ago. Don't limit yourself to people in the Chicago area.
- Many positions are never posted. Networking is the entry point.
- Focus on networking during the day. Apply to online posting after 5 PM.
- Networking is not about asking for a job. Network for:
 - Professional advice
 - Career alternatives/positions
 - Approaches for reaching key individuals
 - Target organizations
 - Top recruiters in your industry/field

Interview Issues

- Your goal is to position the capabilities you can bring to the job.
- For many questions, give a concrete example of past behavior. Use S-A-R format:
 - Give a SITUATION you were involved in.
 - Give an ACTION you took to address the situation.
 - Give a specific RESULT of your action.
- Remember: past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior.
- Read your audience: do they want the 60 second answer or the 90 second answer? Be concise.
- Understand potential issues and concerns behind questions.
- Be specific on why you are in job search. Be brief, be believable and bridge to your future success.
- Be prepared to answer: "What are your three greatest work accomplishments."
- Prepare for every video interview. Google: "video conference tips"

Partial List of Available Resources

- College placement offices and alumni associations
- Temp agencies/contract work
- Professional organizations (great for networking)
- Libraries – research, job search tools
- Illinois WorkNet Center - Arlington Heights - www.worknetncc.com/
- Job fairs and want ads
- Career & Networking Center www.careernetworkingcenter.org/
- Barrington Career Center www.thebarringtoncareercenter.org
- Holy Family Job Support Ministry – www.hfjobsupport.org/
- St. Huberts Job Support – www.sainthubert.org/job-networking
- Willow Creek Employment Service - www.willowcreekcarecenter.org/