

Career & Job Search Guidance

1. Define Clear Career Goals

- a. Investigate the types of jobs within your field. **Determine which types of jobs would be a good fit for you.** If you are not certain as to the types of jobs available, see if you can interview some professionals in the industry or seek advice from your advisor.
- b. Investigate the industries available within your field. **Determine which industries interest you** and which ones don't. If you are passionate about the products or services within an industry, you will be more successful in that industry.
- c. **Think about where you see yourself in five years.** Your first job should be a stepping stone to that goal. You don't want your first job to be a dead-end.
- d. **Don't focus on the money.** You need to like your job and be in a position to reach your ultimate goal. If you are happy with what you are doing, it will show in your passion for your work and the money will follow.

2. Identify Your Strengths and Weaknesses

- a. **Identify what type of person you are and what types of jobs you would be well suited for.** For example, if you are a people person, you don't want to be working in a job where you will not be interacting with others.
- b. **If you have certain skills, seek jobs that will utilize those skills.** For example, if you have good organizational and people skills, you might want to think about a job in project management.
- c. Everyone has accomplishments, yet often we are unaware of them. **If you are particularly proud of something you have done, it is probably an accomplishment.** Write it down for use on your resume or in interviewing.
- d. **Understand your weaknesses and think about the ways in which you cope or how you might overcome them.** For example, a person who does not have a good memory will be organized and will write everything down to not forget things. If need be, set some goals for learning new skills to help overcome your weaknesses.

3. Network

- a. Make **industry contacts** within your target industries and **clearly express your career goals** to those individuals. A company/department may not meet your needs but they might be able to refer you to a company/department that can.
- b. **Contact several recruiting services** to see what positions may currently exist in the industry. Be sure to discuss your career goals with them so they can help find the best fit for you. Most recruiting services will also offer assistance with resume writing and advice on interviewing.
- c. **Set up meetings with people within the industry** even if it is "just to see what they do". Develop a relationship and ask if you could keep in touch. This may also help you to further refine your career goals.
- d. **Keep in touch** with all of your good contacts. A company may not have an opening when you first make contact but one may open up in the future.

4. Polish Your Resume

See Resume Writing Guidelines and Sample Resumes.

5. Nail the Interview

See *Interviewing Guidelines*.

6. Follow-up

- a. Always **follow up with a written letter** thanking the interviewer for his or her time. Reaffirm your interest in the position and how your skills would lend themselves well to the job. Also address any concerns that the interviewer may have had at the interview.
- b. **Follow-up even if you are not interested in the position.** Thank the interviewer for his or her time. If you like the company, express what you like about it. Fully explain why the position is not right for you. You never know what other positions they might have available in the future.
- c. Again, **proofread your letter** and if possible, have someone review it for you. Any correspondence with mistakes can kill your chances of obtaining the job.

6. Be a Professional on the Job

- a. **Communication is critical.** Communicate regularly with your supervisor and teammates. If you have any issues, the sooner they are addressed, the better. Don't be afraid to ask for help or guidance if needed; that's what teammates are for. Also, make sure your supervisor is aware of your progress and accomplishments.
- b. **Always do your best.** Work hard and make every effort to meet your career objectives. Most jobs require dedication and hard work to be successful.
- c. Make sure **you are happy with your job and career direction.** If not, discuss it with your supervisor. There may be ways in which you can work towards something that will be more meaningful to you. The happier you are with your job, the more successful you will be.
- d. **Dress professionally.** Business casual dress is the norm at most companies, however, the key word is business. You want to come across as a professional, especially if you are younger than most of the other people you will be working with. It is okay to display your own style as long as it is professional. A good rule of thumb is to wear something slightly dressier than what others are wearing. Avoid jeans and t-shirts. And avoid showing tattoos or body piercings. Those are not appropriate in the workplace.
- e. **Keep your conversations professional.** It may be okay to talk about outside interests and hobbies once in a while but you are there to work and most of your time should be spent on that. Lunchtime conversations in the lunchroom or cafeteria may be about outside interests but be careful to keep the conversation appropriate for the workplace. Be considerate of others who may be within earshot.