

HOW TO LOOK FOR A JOB!

Searching for a job can be a very trying, tedious task that seems discouraging at times. Hopefully the tips included in this document will ease the process and introduce you to new or different techniques for searching for that ever-elusive job!

Your success in the job market will depend on three main things:

SKILLS • **ADAPTABILITY** • **PERSONALITY**

To start your job search, you will need to:

- Learn about yourself and careers
- Prepare a resume
- Network with people to discover hidden jobs
- Locate companies that have openings
- Complete an application form
- Participate in a job interview

Job hunting is a lifelong process that seeks to answer three questions:

1. Who am I? (What do I value? Like? Dislike?)
2. Who will recognize and appreciate my skills?
3. How will I convince that person to hire me?

*There are jobs available, but the key is gaining access to the countless opportunities that are out there. The two most effective ways of accessing the job markets, especially the hidden ones, are **Networking** and **Informational Interviewing**.*

NETWORKING

The most effective way to research the job market and to get a job is by networking. Actually, 95% of people who find their dream job is through someone they know! Talk to people about your job search and your skills, i.e.: friends, relatives, neighbors, acquaintances, teachers, career center counselors, and employers.

Three networking questions:

1. Do you know of any openings for a person with my skills? (If “No,” continue)
2. Do you know of someone else who might know of such an opening? (If “Yes,” get the name or names; if “No,” continue)
3. Do you know someone who knows a lot of people? (This usually works!)

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

This is a technique for gathering information about jobs, and for expanding your network to potential employers. This kind of interview is the opposite of an employment interview. You are asking the questions of the employer to get information about the job. **You are not there to apply for a job or to discuss your skills.**

Prepare a set of questions about a specific job, and about a company. Some examples:

- How did you get your job?
- What is the best thing about your job?
- How does this company train its employees?

***See the Information Interviewing handout for a more complete list of questions.*

FIVE BASIC RULES:

1. Ask questions; do not talk about yourself.
2. Keep the interview brief – 20 minutes or less.
3. Ask for the employer's advice to people entering the field.
4. Ask for another contact (another person to interview)
5. Send a Thank-You note.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK – PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT!

- Find out what you can about a potential employer.
- Practice your internet research skills.
- Spend some time before your interview reviewing possible questions with a friend – you will be more confident in your answers.

BE EARLY!

- Always be 10-15 minutes early.
- Get good directions or take a practice drive to where your interview will take place.

APPLICATIONS

If you are offered an application, fill it out. Some companies want to see your ability to follow directions, how well you can write/spell. Never write "See Resume" on an application.

BE HONEST

If there is something that requires discussion, such as your reasons for leaving a position, write in "Will Discuss," do not lie in the application process.

MONEY

Keep an open mind. Salary requirements can be "open" for negotiation, allowing flexibility for the right person.

SHOW INTEREST

A firm expression of interest goes a long way towards getting you that offer. A simple “Thank you for your time, I am interested in being considered for the position” is excellent.

IF YOU ARE OFFERED THE POSITION

If you are offered the position, and you want it, accept it. If you are not sure, ask the interviewer for a day to think about it. Set a time and call them back.

JOBS ARE WON OR LOST AT THE GUT LEVEL DURING THE INTERVIEW

It is the face-to-face contact that really matters to recruiters, hiring managers, and employers. Unfortunately, most job-hunters put most of their effort into resumes, either online or in print. It is easy to understand why – selling yourself is easier done from a distance. When you do not have to watch someone reject you, you can lull yourself into that false belief that, “I am trying as hard as I can to find a job – I’m sending out resumes!”

The reality is much different. Job boards are not the best use of the internet in job hunting. They are useful in locating jobs, but they can only do so much in your search. Use the net as a source of information about:

- Your field of interest.
- Companies that are involved in that field.
- Relevant positions with those companies.
- Addresses, phone numbers, e-mail contacts of people doing your desired job.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Half of your time job hunting should be devoted to *researching* (see the items above) and practicing your face-to-face interview style. Not getting interviewed is depressing, but even more depressing is getting rejected frequently at the interview stage. This is where a lack of research really shows.

Employers will not be ‘wowed’ by the mere fact that you found them on the web. What will impress them is your effort to gain knowledge about the industry they are in, their relative place in that industry, and the position itself. All of this shows your desire and passion for the job – something they cannot train you to have. Everyone loves to be flattered, and knowing a company like the back of your hand gives an employer that warm and fuzzy feeling you want them to have during the interview.

The employer's gut level decision-making process is less rational than you might think. Once you have made it into the 'acceptable candidate pool', getting the job is a matter of striking the right chords with the Hiring Manager. Most of them will be looking you in the eye and asking, "Can you do the job?", all the while wondering whether they can trust your answer - or you.

PREPARATION

Take the time to prepare for the interview before you arrive. Research the company's background, specialties, and, if possible, goals for the future (look for their mission statement, this often gives a feel for where the company wants to go). This info will also help you decide if the position is a good match for your own personal goals. Ask questions during the interview and show initiative.

Prepare yourself for questions that are out of the ordinary. These may not have a right or wrong answer, but are aimed at uncovering your value system or your ability to think on your feet.

Develop the ability to transition a challenging answer into an opportunity to share an example of a previous success. For example you can begin with "While I can't speak to that exactly, in a similar situation at ..." and then present your experience. It is also a good idea to prepare to discuss a situation that may not have been an obvious success, but was a valuable learning experience. Show that you can turn adversity into a future strength.

PRACTICE

Take the time to look over a list of potential interview questions and practice answering them out loud to a friend or family member, even a pet, as this will help you become more familiar with your own qualifications, and more comfortable speaking about yourself.

Preparation will give you the confidence to interview calmly, thoughtfully and will make a lasting impression.

ONLINE JOB SEARCH: ONLINE NETWORKING

According to James Van, a former HR recruiter, the overall trend is that online job boards are slowly dying. Job boards are becoming increasingly more costly, while yielding less than optimal results. With the Web 2.0 platform, the trend is that savvy candidates and employers are migrating away from traditional job boards to cheaper, more targeted alternatives.

- *Talent Hubs*: career related sites that grow groups of people based upon class of work rather than specific job title. Search functions are more targeted and effective than those on job boards and Google searches online
- *Forums, bulletin boards, trade organizations, etc.*: these sites may cater to a specific population, and offer tips, education, instruction, tools, and resources to its members.
- *Job sites*: offer extensive job seeker profiles beyond the traditional resume and contact information. Employers are increasingly looking for more information than what is on a resume. These job sites can help the job seeker create an online profile for the employer to see. Examples include:
 - Jobfox.com
 - Itzbig.com
 - QuietAgent.com
 - Climber.com
 - MyPerfectGig.com
 - Vitruvia.com
 - Jobzerk.com

How can others find you?

Create a **digital presence** online. This is the ability to make yourself visible on the world wide web. This is a chance to create an online billboard. By creating a website, your profile is searchable on the World Wide Web by employers. Increasingly, this is done in a Web 2.0 format, which is moving from a text-based online “brochure” to a more interactive site. This allows more control and input from the job seeker, as well as the employer (video, graphics, audio, blogs, wikis, chat, etc).

Online Social/Professional Networking: A way to network online—to find others and to let others find you in an appropriate setting. Examples include:

- LinkedIn, nuResume, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Ryze
- Trade Associations
- Alumni Organization
- “Affinity sites” (such as Women in Technology, for example)

Online Social/Professional Networking Tips

- Be careful what you post on sites, as it is accessible to a vast audience!
- Create material on your profile that is compelling, the same way you would when writing your resume. Use descriptive words and action words that best describe facts that you would like to highlight.
- Complete your profile: an incomplete profile might make you seem lazy.
- Make sure others can proofread and critique your profile.
- Use “status updates” to your advantage: you can advertise if you are looking for work (but only if your current employer knows you are leaving, or if you have already left).
- Link blogs and other appropriate content to your profile.
- Connect other networking sites to your profile.
- Recommend others, and let others recommend you.
- Participate in discussions and forums, when knowledgeable on chosen topic (more exposure).
- Invite your real-world contacts to connect with you on trusted networking sites.

List of online resources available on Foothill Career Center Website:

<http://foothill.edu/career/library.php>