

The job search requires a great deal of time and effort. The amount of disappointment can be reduced if the job seeker understands the career development process. The following overview outlines the necessary steps involved in successful career planning and job hunting.

Step 1. **SELF-AWARENESS**

Knowing what you like to do and can do well is important in focusing your career objectives. Therefore, it is necessary to get in touch with your feelings about work. How do you feel about values such as money, prestige, and creativity? Do you prefer working alone or in a team setting? What are your goals one year from now, five years from now? What are your preferences concerning geographic location, environment, type and size of organizations? All of these factors - values, goals, work preferences, personal traits, interest areas, and skills - influence your career objectives.

Step 2. **DEVELOP A RESUME AND/OR CURRICULUM VITAE** (See the Resume and CV Handout)

Step 3. **UNDERSTAND THE METHODS OF LOCATING JOBS**

Job seekers use many methods of finding employment, including candidate referral databases, listings in newspapers, Internet and professional magazines, employment agencies, executive search firms, consulting firms, outplacement firms, temporary employment agencies, informal inquiries, mass mailings of resumes, and formal and informal networks. You should use as many of these as you can.

Step 4. **UNCOVER UNADVERTISED JOB OPENINGS**

Unadvertised job openings - the "Hidden Job Market" - exist because employers often hire qualified people they know or who have been recommended to them. You can make yourself known to potential employers before jobs are widely advertised by developing a contact network. To advertise the fact that you are in the job market, you should get the names of professionals in your field. Ask faculty, alumni, and peers for possible contacts. Directories, association listings, professional societies, alumni associations, job-search clubs, and telephone books are other good sources of names. Avoid human resources offices whenever possible, as they are often not very knowledgeable about individual positions. Try to contact the individual(s) who can give you the most specific information about your type of work; generally this person would be the supervisor/manager of the position you are seeking. To obtain the name of the director of health education of a city health department, for example, call the department and ask the receptionist for that person's name and title. Mention, if asked, that you need some specific information that only this person can provide. Don't mention the word "job!"

Begin contacting these persons using one of the following methods:

- a. Letter, which may include a resume, followed up by a telephone call (the most accepted method).
- b. Telephone call (time-saving).
- c. "Drop-in" visit (not recommended because it is not very considerate of the employer's time).

The sole purpose of this initial contact is to obtain an audience with the employer. Stress early in the letter or conversation that although you are seeking employment, you understand that there may not be any appropriate job openings available at this time. Ask for a few minutes to meet with you to discuss his/her organization and to give you advice and suggestions on your job search. Make sure to research the organization and prepare specific questions *before* visiting/calling the employer.

In this way, you are letting everybody who is anybody in your professional field and geographic preference area know your availability. Sooner or later, you will encounter an employer who is thinking about hiring

someone, is already in the market for someone, or will want to hire someone shortly after you visited him/her, and hopefully, will remember you favorably.

Step 5. **PURSUE ADVERTISED JOB OPENINGS**

When following up on advertisements, you can use the same contact methods as listed in step 4 (letter, telephone or drop-in visit). Again, the purpose of this contact is to obtain an interview. Employment ads can be found through newspapers, journals, publications of professional associations, the Internet, and the eRecruiting system.

Step 6. **THE JOB INTERVIEW**

Learn as much as possible about the position, the organization and the employer, and prepare questions *beforehand*. In the interview, stress what you can do for the employer in order to convince him/her that you are the best person for the job. (See the Interviewing and Behavioral Interviewing Handouts).

Step 7. **THE JOB OFFER**

When an offer is made, ask for several days to think it over. If you have several alternatives to choose from, consider the positive and negative aspects of the following factors:

use of skills	size of organization	stability of the organization
growth possibilities	location	amount and level of work
working conditions	supervision	freedom on the job
salary and benefits	travel	philosophy of the organization

Step 8. **CONTINUING CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

Statistics show that the current trend is toward changing jobs several times in one's lifetime. Therefore, constant re-evaluation of your short- and long-term goals as your skills, interests and values change is necessary to help you achieve career satisfaction.