

Enhancing Professional and Personal Development

# JOB SEARCH TECHNIQUES



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**CAREER** Education. **CAREER** Experiences. **PRE-PROFESSIONAL** Advising.

Looking for a job can be a full-time job in itself! In today's job market, it is important to know yourself, what you want, what employers want and how to make a good match between the two.

## ***Step-by-Step Job Search Process***

### ***1. Identify your Skills and Abilities***

Self-evaluation is vital to understanding your unique occupational needs and desires. How can you seek a position if you don't know what you want from a job and what you have to offer prospective employers? In order to determine your needs and desires, take an inventory of your **skills, interests, and values**, and evaluate your temperament, passions, experiences and accomplishments. You can learn more about yourself by talking with a **career counselor** and/or using various **assessment tools** (FOCUS, Strong Interest Inventory, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) available at the Weigand Center for Professional Excellence.



### ***2. Specify a Job/Career Objective***

Once you have a better understanding of yourself, you can now begin to explore the "matches" between your identified skills, interests, and values and the demands of career fields and organizations. Are you satisfied with your current occupation? Would you like to continue your job in another industry? Would you like to try another job in the same industry? Or, do you need a complete career change?

- ▶ Use the **Occupational Outlook Handbook** and **“What Can I Do With this Major?”** to get job descriptions, future employment trends for over 250 of the most popular jobs in the workforce and connect majors with careers. These sites can be found on **ii Handshake**
- ▶ Research occupations, industries and companies using resources on the Internet.
- ▶ Conduct **informational interviews** with professionals working in the industry or your field of interest to inquire about current trends, get advice and other referrals. This could also lead to potential jobs (see Networking below)!!
- ▶ Perhaps the best way to explore career options is to try out intended jobs through **internships, cooperative education** positions, **part-time** or **summer** jobs, or **volunteer** opportunities.

### ***3. Create (or update) your Resume and Cover Letter***

Once your job goals have been targeted, resumes and application letters can be tailored to reflect your qualifications as they relate to the interests of prospective employers. Because employers will review your resume for an average of 30 seconds, use professional and powerful action words making the connection between the skills an employer will be looking for and the skills and experience you have had. Employers are more interested in your **results** and **achievements** than a list of your previous job responsibilities. Pick up a copy of the *“Writing an Effective Resume”* and *“Making your Cover Letter count”* handouts available at the Weigand Center for Professional Excellence or on



**ii Handshake** . We will also **critique** your cover letter and resume so that it is the best reflection of you. It must be perfect!!

#### ***How the Weigand Center for Professional Excellence can help you:***

- Arrange to take an assessment of your skills, interests and values
- Attend a resume workshop and have your resume critiqued
- Use the WCPE and **ii Handshake** resources for information on career-related topics

#### 4. Apply for Jobs

The best approach in searching for job openings is to commit to a variety of traditional and non-traditional methods. The most commonly used job search technique is to respond to advertised opportunities.

Job Search sources include:

- **ii Handshake**

- cccillinois.org online career center job listings
- LinkedIn
- Internet job boards (Glassdoor, Indeed)
- Campus interviews through CCCIllinois
- Publications from trade or professional associations
- Career Fairs
- Employment services (Placement and temporary agencies)



Unfortunately, the most popular method for locating positions, responding to advertised vacancies, is **not the most effective**. According to an article in the Harvard Business Review, nearly 80% of the openings available at any one time are never advertised. Job-seekers should respond to employment ads, but the main thrust of your efforts should be toward establishing networks and identifying the hidden job market. Review “*The Art of Networking*”- available at the WCPE or on **ii Handshake**

- **Develop a Contact Network**

Once you have targeted a career or specific position, you should develop a network of professionals in that field or organization. These professionals offer you an insider's view and can constitute your contact network, which can open doors that might otherwise remain closed. To begin developing your network, **secure names of specific individuals**. These names can be obtained through several means:



- ▶ Connect on LinkedIn.com
- ▶ Professors, friends, relatives, and former employers - or any professionals these people recommend.
- ▶ Members of professional associations.
- ▶ Community service agencies or area chambers of commerce.
- ▶ Alumni contacts - can be accessed through an appointment with a career consultant.

Once you have identified people with whom you wish to speak, **contact them** and request a 20 minute appointment to gather career information and to request names of other professionals that might assist you to learn more about the industry and know of available opportunities! Networking is key to job search success – **7 out of 10 jobs are received as a result of networking!!**

- **Contact Employers Directly**

Send your cover letter and resume to the Human Resources department or specific managers in companies you are interested in and have researched. The success of this method is greatly increased when letters are followed up by phone calls, which may result in an invitation to visit the employer.

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#### 5. Prepare for Interviews

One of the most common errors made by job seekers is inadequate interview preparation. To combat interview blunders and anxiety, review “*Keys to Interviewing Success*”-available at the WCPE or on **ii Handshake**. You can also set up a **mock interview** with the WCPE or practice an interview on STANDOUT to gain a better understanding of the types of interview questions to expect, get feedback on your answers, mannerisms and voice inflections. In addition, learn as much as possible about the company, specific job, and key individuals in the organization. After the interview, don't underestimate the impact of a **thank you letter**.

## Principles for Job Search Success

1. **Be patient and persevere:** Expect at least three months of hard work before you connect with the job that's right for you.
2. **Be honest with yourself and others:** Honesty is always the best policy, but do not focus on your weaknesses.
3. **Don't be discouraged with setbacks:** You are playing the odds, so expect disappointments and handle them in stride. You will have many "no's" before uncovering the one "yes" which is right for you.
4. **Develop a positive attitude toward yourself:** Nobody wants to employ guilt-ridden people with inferiority complexes. Focus on your positive characteristics.
5. **Associate with positive and successful people:** Finding a job largely depends on how well you relate to others. Avoid associating with negative and depressing people who complain and have a negative attitude.
6. **Set goals:** You should have a clear idea of what you want and where you are going. Without these, you will present a confusing and indecisive image to others. Set high goals that make you work hard.
7. **Plan:** Convert your goals into action steps that are organized as short, intermediate, and long-range plans.
8. **Be energetic and enthusiastic:** Employers are attracted to positive people who appear energetic and demonstrate drive. Generate enthusiasm both verbally and non-verbally.
9. **Ask questions:** Your best information comes from asking questions. Learn to develop intelligent questions that are non-aggressive, polite and interesting to others. Don't ask too many questions and thereby dominate conversations and become an annoying inquisitor.
10. **Be a good listener:** Being a good listener is often more important than being a good questioner and talker. Learn to improve your face-to-face listening behavior and use information gained from others. Make others enjoy talking with you.
11. **Be polite, courteous, and thoughtful:** treat gatekeepers, especially receptionists and secretaries, like human beings. Avoid being aggressive or too assertive. Try to be polite, courteous and gracious. You are always on stage!!
12. **Maintain a professional stance:** Be neat in what you do and wear, and speak with the confidence, authority and maturity of a professional.
13. **Do not overdo your job search:** Occasionally take a few days off to do nothing related to your job search. Develop a system of incentives and rewards if you accomplish your targets.
14. **Be open-minded:** Too much planning can blind you to unexpected and fruitful opportunities. Learn to re-evaluate your goals and strategies and seize new opportunities when appropriate.
15. **Evaluate your progress and adjust:** Take a few hours once every two weeks and evaluate what you are doing and accomplishing. If necessary, tinker with your plans and reorganize your activities and priorities. Don't become too routine in your search and therefore kill creativity and innovation.

Now that you know the steps and principles used in a successful job search, it is time to take action. The task ahead may seem overwhelming and discouraging, however it can be done! So, take a deep breath, and take one step at a time by breaking down your day into small, accomplishable goals. Inevitably, your efforts will lead to the "right" career!

## ***Tips for Transgender and Non-Gender Conforming Job Seekers***

The Weigand Center for Professional Excellence provides career development resources for all Elmhurst students and alumni, including support for those applying for jobs and internships. Transgender and non-gender conforming applicants may have unique circumstances to navigate when seeking employment and should consult advisors and/or online resources to learn their rights. Although this information is primarily for job seekers, those applying to graduate and professional school may also find it useful.

### **Before Applying**

- Each applicant must decide how much information they are comfortable sharing with an employer. It is a personal decision that deserves reflection prior to beginning the search process. Knowing the company or organization culture could influence that decision.
- When asking references for support, applicants should decide who would provide the best positive recommendation of them taking into account what that person may or may not know about the applicant's gender identity.
  - If an applicant wants to disclose or has already disclosed that they have transitioned or have a preferred gender to this reference, it is important to discuss with them if you want that information shared with employers.
  - Alternatively, if the reference does not know about an applicant's gender identity, there could be confusion with what the reference shares and demographic information noted on the application. This may influence who an applicant requests to serve as a reference.
- Resumes are not official legal documents so applicants may use preferred names on them if they would like. Some applicants will use the first initial of their legal name followed by their preferred name. For instance, C. Jordan Martinez for Charlie Jordan Martinez.
- Past employment under a different name can still be added to a resume or application.
- Applicants should know their rights by reading up on discrimination laws governing their state.

### **During an Interview**

- Professional attire is expected for any in-person or video interview. Candidates can dress in clothing for their preferred gender or gender-neutral clothing.
- It is illegal to ask a candidate about their gender identity. If someone inquires during the interview, applicants have a few options for how to approach the situation.
  - One can answer the question directly if they are comfortable. (*My preferred pronouns are...*)
  - One can redirect the line of questioning. (*Having a diverse team to work with is important to me too. One unique way I can contribute to a team is through my experience working on...*)
  - One can ask a follow-up question. (*Are there any requirements related to my gender identity for this role? I am very excited about the position and feel my past experiences relate to the job duties. For instance, when I was working at...*)
  - One can decline to answer. (*I would prefer not to speak about my gender in relation to the position, but I would be happy to discuss my professional experience. For instance, I am currently working on a new project...*)
- If an applicant feels the conduct of an interviewer was inappropriate and/or illegal, they may elect to report it to the Human Resources Department of that organization. In addition, that person may need to decide if the culture of the organization would be a good fit for them.

## **After Being Hired**

- New employees often fill out several documents when hired. An employee's legal name is used on forms related to background checks, social security, and insurance. If someone has legally changed their name, they can use that new legal name on these documents. A preferred name can be used for e-mail addresses, directory information, and organization information.
  - Human Resources is required to keep certain information confidential, but there may be a degree of disclosure required to fill out some of this information depending on where you are at in your transition.

## **Resources**

- The WCPE team members are happy to help students and alumni with mock interviews and support for those applying for jobs and internships.
- Below are some resources where students and alumni can learn more.

[National Center for Transgender Equality](#)

[Lambda Legal: Job Search FAQs](#)

[Out and Equal](#)

[Trans Can Work](#)

[Equality Illinois: Transgender Issues Brochure](#)

[Inside Higher Ed: Navigating Gender Identity and Expression During a Job Search](#)

[Deal Aid: Most LGBTQ+ Friendly Companies That Go Above & Beyond Pride Collections](#)