

JOB SEARCH SKILLS



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ESSENTIAL STEPS OF A JOB SEARCH:

1. Get Focused

Do you know who you are and what you want? Have you identified your interests, skills, values and other important factors? If not, check out the packet, “**Major & Career Choice**” or utilize our on-line resources at www.ycp.edu/careerdevelopment under “**Major/Career Choice Resources.**”

2. Identify Potential Positions/Titles and Employers

You create your personal “box of professional opportunities” by the following three criteria:

- 1) desired job function
- 2) desired field or industry
- 3) desired geography

Once you’ve created your box, begin to identify potential employers using as many sources as possible.

3. Review Your Resume

Check your resume. Is it well organized? Does it highlight your skills and experiences that apply or are transferable to the types of positions you seek? Is it neat, easy to read, and visually appealing? Have you made sure that every word is spelled correctly? Have you considered developing several versions of your resume, depending upon the position or organization you are pursuing? Have another set of eyes, such as a Career Development Center Professional, review your resume. Stop by or call (717) 815-1452 to schedule an appointment, or e-mail your resume as a word attachment to careerdevelopment@ycp.edu and request a review.

4. Prepare Cover Letters

If you mail a resume, always send a letter with it. The letter should explain what position you are applying for and what experience you have that qualifies you for the position. Is the cover letter clearly written, in good business form and without spelling errors? Have you directed the information to an individual by name? If you have not, follow-up with that potential employer becomes difficult and is comparable to the use of “occupant” in bulk mailings. Check out the **Writing Successful Resume & Cover Letter** packet in the Career Development Center, and meet with a career counselor to have your cover letter reviewed.

5. Focus on Contacts/Networking

Make a list of the people who might be helpful in your job search. Including:

1. People close to you such as friends, relatives, in-laws, old acquaintances, and neighbors.
2. People you know such as a hairdresser, your doctor, your dentist, and clergy.
3. People you should know, such as the professionals who are currently in the occupations you are seeking.

Consider:

1. Researching the employers that interest you and approach those organizations.
2. Investigating volunteer, internship, part time opportunities with these organizations.
3. Determining if you know anyone who works in these organizations and set up an informal interview to learn more.
4. Arranging, through your contacts, to see the person there who has the power to hire.

This approach has an 86% success rate if faithfully followed. Called networking, it is a nontraditional job lead source which can reveal invisible job openings. Usually only 15 to 25

percent of the annual job openings are listed through visible sources. Networking expands your job search by adding extra “ears” to listen for job leads. Who are the people who can be part of your job search network? Remember, when networking, be professional and willing to accept advice. Have a positive attitude, and don’t ask too much too soon. Asking for a job will almost always result in a conversation ending abruptly. Instead, ask for advice. Regard anyone you meet as a possible networking contact.

6. Interview Successfully

Are you clear about the type of job you want? Can you speak with confidence about your skills and experience, and how they fit the job description and could benefit the employer? Have you found out all you can about the company before you have the interview? Be sure you practice interviewing in front of a mirror, with a friend or relative, or schedule a mock interview with a member of the Career Development Center staff. Another person can give you valuable information about how you act and sound. Try to anticipate some of the questions that might be asked-think about your strengths and weaknesses and be sure to have a few questions prepared to ask the interviewer. Read through the **Interviewing Skills** packet from Career Development.

LOCATING LEADS:

1. Traditional Job Lead Sources

To conduct an effective job search, try to use as many job lead sources as you can find. No single source provides all the job postings or leads. Ideally you’ll want to utilize at least 3-5 different sources. Never rely on newspapers or the Internet alone. If you possess 75% of the qualifications desired-apply. Remember, if you use posted ads, they give you access to only 15-20% of the employers in a particular area. Try these additional sources:

a. Job Listings with Organizations

Organizations provide college career centers and community agencies with announcements and job postings. These notices are often targeted specifically to the respective audience. For example, full-time positions requiring a college degree are listed with colleges that offer related degrees, whereas employers seeking attorneys list positions with law schools, etc. Career Development at York College posts such positions via College Central, which can be accessed through our website at www.ycp.edu/careerdevelopment

b. Third Party Recruiters and Employment Agencies

Employment agencies and third party recruiters are an excellent way of getting your foot in the door. Up to 40% of larger companies use them for their entry level hiring needs and these jobs often are, or become more permanent.

Employment agencies are either for long-term work or for temporary work (temporary agencies). Almost all contract or temporary agencies have permanent placement positions as well. Some agencies list many kinds of jobs. Most specialize, with typical specialties including accountants, office development, data processing, sales/marketing, health care/dental/medical, engineering, or construction. You can find them listed in the Yellow Pages, but talk with friends to determine which agencies they have used to get jobs. Interview several agencies to determine which ones you feel most comfortable with. Compare resources and development, and then select three to four to work with. Generally, any fees are paid by employers. Be sure to clarify if there are any costs to candidates. Also, remember that the loyalties of many agencies are with the employer.

Third party recruiters generally work with a number of employers to meet their hiring needs, similar to an employment agency. However, third party recruiters usually focus on professional positions, and often specialize in certain areas. They are generally quite selective in the candidates they seek, but often result in very high permanent placement rates.

c. State Employment Development

Each state has its own version of a Job Center. These postings are provided free of charge along with other development. Registration is usually required, but is often available through the Internet.

Pennsylvania	www.cwds.state.pa.us/ www.pennsylvaniajobs.com/
New Jersey	http://www.nj.com/jobs/ http://www.newjerseyjobs.com/
New York	http://www.nycareers.com/ http://www.newyorkjobs.com/
Maryland	http://www.marylandjobs.com/ https://mwe.dllr.state.md.us/
Federal	www.usajobs.com http://www.jobbankusa.com/

d. Civil Service

All levels of government post their vacancies through their respective human resources office. Often the process requires testing and therefore takes 2-3 months to complete.

Pennsylvania	www.scsc.state.pa.us
New Jersey	www.nj.gov/nj/employ/
New York	www.cs.state.ny.us
Maryland	http://www.dbm.maryland.gov/
Federal	www.governmentjobs.com

2. Networking and Informational Interviews

A networking or informational interview can be very important when visiting with people who have the ability to hire new employees or supply additional job leads and information for a given field. Begin networking by calling the person, using a script of your skills in a pre-set presentation, and asking to set up a meeting to gather information and advice from the person. A telephone call can gather information, but to be most effective, meet with the individual face-to-face. Dress as you would for a formal interview and always treat those individuals you meet professionally. Be sure to provide a resume to any of the networking contacts you meet if they would like one. Also, send anyone you meet or visit a thank you note. For some suggested networking questions, please see below.

After you have established a relationship with a person, remember that you should never tell a network contact who brings you information that you're not interested. Accept the news with a positive attitude and sincerely thank the person. Take time to review the information in order to formulate how it could be utilized in your job search.

Also, gain information from your network contacts on professional conferences, meetings, or association gatherings. These are good places to meet people who do the hiring.

Professional groups also keep you in touch with your profession's directional changes.

Some Suggestions For Your Informational Interview

(Select 3-4 from the first section, and 1-2 from each of the other groups)

I. Questions about his/her job

- What is your job title and what are the responsibilities of your job?
- What do you like most about your work?
- What are the major frustrations of your job?
- How is your time divided between working with people, data, things?
- Could you describe a typical day or week?
- How closely do you work with others?
- What are the toughest problems and decisions with which you must deal?
- What skills and talents are especially useful and necessary in your daily work?
- Is there seasonal pressure in your work?
- How severe is deadline pressure in your field?
- Who do you supervise, and to whom do you report?
- Are your hours flexible and are you able to work from home?
- How adversely would refusal to move affect your career?
- How long are your vacations, and how much flexibility do you have in arranging them?
- How frequently must you represent your firm or profession in a social capacity after normal working hours? Is it expected or demanded of you?
- Does your position, or positions similar to yours, provide you with any particularly attractive fringe benefits?
- How does your present position rate as a training ground?
- What are your career goals for the future?
- Do you work closely enough with others in other job functions to really understand what their jobs involve? Closely enough to know whether you would or would not like to do their work?
- To whom are you and your work visible, and what kinds of authority do you have? What type of position can you hire people for, or direct them to?
- How much contact do you have with people outside your firm? Who are they and what is your relationship to them?
- How much do you travel-how often, and for how long?

II. Questions about the career field

- What functions are performed by the industry in which you work?
- How good are future career opportunities in your field?
- To what extent are changes occurring in your field, and how much effort do you have to make to keep up with them?
- Do you foresee any big changes or developments occurring in your field in the future?
- How will these affect career opportunities in your profession?
- At present, is there an oversupply or undersupply of people in your field? Will this situation continue?
- What talents and personality traits are most likely to generate success and fulfillment in your line of work?
- What kind of educational preparation is necessary/desirable for entry and advancement in your career?
- What other career fields could you enter for which your experience would be relevant, valuable?

- How difficult would it be for you to find similar employment within the same profession?
- Are job opportunities cyclical in your field? How secure does employment tend to be?
- What are the opportunities for self-employment in your field?
- How much can one expect to earn in an entry-level position in your firm? After 10 years? After 20 years? At the top of the ladder?
- How fast can one climb up the ladder at the fastest, and on the average?

III. Questions soliciting advice

- If I choose this field, what suggestions for advancement would you have for me?
- What are the places to get the best initial training for someone who hopes eventually to move into a position like yours?
- How and where can I find part-time and summer jobs which might indicate whether or not I would enjoy a career in your field?
- Do you know the addresses of any trade or professional organizations I could write to for additional information on the current career opportunities within your field?
- May I call you if I have any questions about this line of work?
- I definitely want to find out more about this field. It interests me a great deal. Would it be possible for you to give me the names and telephone numbers of others in the field?

3. Proactive Job Searching Using the Telephone

Relying on mailing out resumes and cover letters alone creates less anxiety and is less threatening, but it is not a proactive method to job search. To obtain action and cut costs, use the telephone. Use your cover letter and resume for your initial contact, but take control over events by following up with a telephone call. In this way, you will reduce time lags and determine what needs to be accomplished more quickly.

Develop a short, 40-second presentation of yourself, your skills and your abilities. Have your resume in front of you for reference. Write out the answers to the following questions:

- A. Why am I calling? Are you scheduling a meeting, asking for information or advice, etc.?
- B. What do I want to tell him/her? Think of any special skills that you have, or are you interested in gathering information about the field in which the person works, etc.
- C. What do I want to ask? Do you hope to schedule a meeting, ask for information about the company, the names of other people to contact, etc?
- D. What if I can't get through to the person? It's a good idea to have a backup plan. You may want to ask for a more convenient time to call. Because company decision makers often work longer hours, try calling before the company workday begins or after it ends. It may be possible to reach these people more easily at those times.

It is in your best interest to speak with the people responsible for hiring. Often, however, you will reach support staff. Speak with confidence and state your first name and last name. If the person you are trying to reach is not available, ask for a more convenient time to call back. Try not to leave a message because you don't know if your call will be returned.

During your telephone call, use the name of the person who referred you (if there is one) and briefly state your 40-second presentation. Some people won't set up an interview until

they've seen your resume. If a resume is requested and you have not already sent one, send it immediately with a cover letter referring to your telephone conversation.

If you are able to set up an interview, be specific about where and when you will meet. If you need directions to the location, be sure to ask at that time. You don't want to have to call back for this information. Also, be sure to take several copies of your resume to the interview.

Tips about telephoning:

1. Always make the call from a private and quiet location. It is difficult to talk on the phone with the television, screaming children, or barking dog in the background.
2. Expect to hear rejections. **Don't take these negative responses personally!** Be sure to ask if they are aware of anyone else you might contact.
3. Pay close attention to the information being provided by the individual you have called. Gaining knowledge is as important as offering facts about yourself.

4. Targeting Organizations

A method of applying for jobs other than through newspaper ads, agencies, or personal contacts is to target employers in which you are interested. Send a resume and cover letter or go directly to the building of any employer that interests you. This is known as cold calling. It creates an opportunity for rejection and results in a fair number of "no's", but you may be lucky and find a company that has just posted an opening. It might also help you gain an interview, learn job-related information, or make networking contacts. If done properly, this method of contact has a 47% success rate. Remember to reflect self-confidence in your tone of voice. When a personal contact is not made, follow up a week after sending your resume and cover letter to find out if it was received, and if they in fact have any openings.

5. Non-Traditional Job Lead Sources

- Make note of stories indicating possible vacancies. Look for press releases announcing promotions, corporate moves, and relocations.
- Look at internship opportunities-many are for graduates
- Consider volunteering to gain career-related experience
- Take a related job, even if at a lower level, that may lead to your goal
- Consider continuing your education or obtaining specialized training
- Talk to former employers about opportunities
- Join professional networking organizations or job search support groups

DEVELOPING A PLAN AND TRACKING YOUR PROGRESS

1. Stay Organized

To reduce frustration and anxiety, you must know where you've been, what's working and what's not working (see the sample job search log). Keep detailed, consistent records of:

- Organization name/address
- Position applied for
- Contact person
- Contact telephone number
- Date and method of contact
- Follow up activities
- Comments

Combine this method of tracking your efforts with a calendar planner in order to more efficiently access times, dates, scheduled meetings, and other job search activities. Use these tools to balance your time and reduce anxiety. Also, don't forget to keep copies of all letters sent and want ads to which you respond. Dedicating a specific time throughout each week to research leads, send correspondence, and to do follow up activities will be very beneficial.

2. The "Thank You Note"

Always send a thank you note to anyone who has done a favor for you of any kind in your job search. Either typed, emailed or handwritten, the object is that the note be sent immediately, or at the latest the very next day after visiting an employer or contact, and it should always be signed (rather than a typewritten signature). Keep it short, expressing your appreciation and thanking the individual for their time and the information provided.

RESEARCHING POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

1. How to Research Organizations

To prepare effectively for a successful job search, you need to know as much as possible about the organization of interest to you. By doing your homework, you show your interest and enthusiasm to the employer and establish a common base of knowledge from which questions can be asked and to which information can be added, allowing both you and the employer to evaluate the "job fit" more carefully.

2. Good Sources of Information:

The Wall Street Journal	Chamber of Commerce Directories
The New York Times	Dun's Career Guide
Encyclopedia of Associations	Harris Directory
Peterson's Annual Guides	National Association of Colleges & Employers
Standard and Poor's Register	Hoover's Handbook of American Companies
America's Fastest Growing Employers	The Hidden Job Market (annual publication)
Moody's Manuals and News Reports	Annual Reports and other company literature (available on the Internet)
The 100 Best Companies to Work for in America	

3. Things to look for:

- Age of organization
- Reputation
- Development or products
- Sales, assets, and earnings
- Size
- Philosophy, mission, and culture
- Number of employees
- New products/projects
- Number of locations
- Growth patterns

4. Job Hunting and the Internet

Online development can be used as a job search aid in the following ways:

- Online development are a place to post your resume
- They may be used to search for vacancies listed by employers (for example collegecentral.com/york or monstertrak.com)
- On-line job-hunting assistance or career counseling is available (beware-just as in the real world, not all advice is competent)

- They are a good source of information about companies or organizations (if you are adept at using the Internet, there are a variety of business reference sources available such as hoovers.com, LexisNexis reference search, etc.)
- They are an additional source of contacts through forums, chat-rooms, discussion boards and newsgroups devoted to your area of interest.

The number of Internet job search sites changes almost daily with new sites developing and groups joining forces. Be aware that not all sites are effective for all levels of education and levels and types of positions.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

1. Be Persistent and Patient

A few job search statistics:

- One job-hunter out of every three gives up too soon.
- In the United States, a job search typically lasts from eight to twenty-three weeks-or longer.
- 35% find a position within five weeks.

Looking for a job is a full-time job. Be prepared to spend at least 20 hours each week on your job-hunt. Ask the one person out of three why they abandoned their search, and they will say that they didn't think it would be as difficult or require so much time. Be mentally prepared for whatever it takes to find the position you are seeking. Set a daily or weekly schedule of job-hunting activities for yourself. **Don't give up.** Remember that persistence is the key to a successful job search.

2. How to Avoid Feelings of Depression

If your job search seems to be going slowly and has become a tedious process, consider the following to aid in lifting your spirits:

- Get plenty of sleep
- Spend time outdoors in the sunlight
- Get regular exercise-take walks
- Drink plenty of water and eat balanced meals (consider eliminating sugar as much as possible)
- Keep your physical environment neat and organized
- Volunteer-it will help you avoid self-pity
- Find or create a support group for yourself

3. Re-Evaluation

Things to consider if interviews or offers are not forthcoming:

- Does your resume accurately and clearly reflect your skills and experience?
- Does your cover letter clearly explain your qualifications and interest in the job?
- Are you applying for jobs for which you are qualified?
- Have you applied to as many companies or talked to as many people as you could?
- Are you handling yourself well in the interview?
- Do you communicate interest, experience, and stability to an employer?

If you believe you are diligently doing all the right things and still have no job offers, you might want to consider going to a qualified career counselor for more specific suggestions.

By no means give up!

THE TOP FIVE LIST OF EFFECTIVE JOB-HUNTING RESOURCES

5. The **Career Development Office** of your alma mater
 - These offices often have bulletin boards or books listing job vacancies (Leads to employment 21% of the time)
 - Attend *Career Expo*, York College's career fair, held each spring, as well as other York College sponsored Job Fairs. (Please note these events are for York College students and alumni only)
 - Schedule an on-campus interview with one of the many recruiters who visit each semester
4. **Relatives** (Leads to employment 27% of the time)
3. **Friends** (Leads to employment 34% of the time)
 - Ask every friend and relative you have to make you aware of job openings.
 - Be sure to tell them exactly what type of a position you are seeking.
2. **Pick employers that interest you** from the Yellow Pages and Chamber of Commerce and call or visit them (Leads to employment 47% of the time)
1. **Creative job-hunting**
 - Determine your best skills and research any employer that interests you-utilize the Internet by accessing job posting and employer sites.
 - Approach that organization and arrange, through contacts, to see the individual responsible for hiring. (Leads to employment 86% of the time.)

WHERE ARE YOU IN YOUR JOB SEARCH?

The list below is designed to help you find where you may be off-target in your job search. Don't be intimidated by some of the questions, though they may seem somewhat assertive. This is simply "food for thought" to aid in your progress and may yield some important clues. Answer each question "yes" or "no". Tally your "yes" answers at the end of the list and discuss the results with a counselor in the Career Development Center.

I. What you know about yourself and your preferences

1. _____ Can you clearly state your career goals?
2. _____ Can you explain why you chose your major?
3. _____ Can you describe your greatest strength?
4. _____ Your greatest weakness?
5. _____ Can you name the work activities that you do best and most enjoy?
6. _____ How about non-work activities? *
7. _____ Can you list at least five job skills and abilities you have?
8. For each of your most important job-related experiences, can you list:
 - a. _____ Five things you did?
 - b. _____ Five things you learned?
 - c. _____ Several contributions you made or things you accomplished?
9. _____ Have you clearly defined your geographical preferences and limitations?
10. _____ Have you determined the salary range you will consider?
11. _____ Are you familiar with the professional associations and publications in your field?

II. What you know about employers

12. _____ Can you name at least three fields of employment into which you might fit?

13. _____ Can you name at least five kinds of employers that might hire a person with your background?
14. _____ Can you name at least five position titles that might fit your interests?
15. _____ Do you know four or five resources to help you find the answers to questions 12, 13, and 14 above?
16. _____ Can you name at least four sources of information that could help you discover potential employers in a particular geographical area?
17. _____ In the past month, have you talked to at least three people who are employed in your field of interest with the purpose of learning more about what they do?
18. _____ Can you name at least three employers to whom you have applied for work in the past two weeks?
19. _____ Are any of these employers curious as to how your skills could help their organization?

III. Your job seeking contacts to employers

20. _____ Have you developed a “network” of friends, relatives, and instructors who are familiar with your field of interest?
21. _____ Do you use more than just advertised job vacancy listings as a source of job leads?
22. _____ Has your resume been critiqued?
23. _____ When you apply to an employer, do you address your cover letter to a specific person?
24. _____ Are you familiar with the organizational structure, development, programs or products of the employers to whom you are applying?
25. _____ Do you know the questions employers are likely to ask you in an interview?
26. _____ Can you clearly state why you are interested in working for each employer to whom you apply?
27. Have you used any of the following methods to prepare for an interview:
 - a. _____ Practice interviewing with a friend or relative?
 - b. _____ Practice interviewing by yourself in front of a mirror?
 - c. _____ Writing out answers to common interview questions?
 - d. _____ Booklets and development offered by the Career Development Center?

Add up your “yes” answers for each section and record them as follows:

I. Yourself _____
II. Employers _____
III. Contacts _____
Total _____

TOTAL SCORE 26-32: On the right track. Keep up the good work!

TOTAL SCORE 15-25: Close. Why not discuss with a Career Counselor?

TOTAL SCORE 14 or below: Definitely discuss with a Career Counselor!

(From the California State University Long Beach Career Development Center)