



Career and Internship Services

Job Search Strategies

While the thought of searching for a job or internship can feel overwhelming, it can be managed successfully by approaching it like any major project or task. Ask yourself these questions to help you clarify your goals and develop your job search plan:

- What are the titles, characteristics, and general description of the position(s) I am seeking?
- Is my resume targeted to those positions by describing my relevant experience, skills and accomplishments?
- Am I prepared to use all the techniques of job searching: networking, job listings, direct employer contact, employment agencies, recruiting and career events?
- Have I developed a job search schedule that incorporates the job search techniques described above?
- Do I have a method of organizing my job search materials and records (contacts, resume submissions, etc.) so that I can effectively follow-up and retrieve them as needed?
- Do I have a support system to keep my confidence and enthusiasm up? Once you are able to answer "yes" to the above questions, you will be on your way to a focused and effective job search campaign. This handout will address each of the questions in order.

What Position(s) Are You Seeking?

Knowing what position(s) you are seeking and the required skills and experience of each position is a critical first step to beginning a successful job search. This knowledge will help you plan your job search, target employers, promote yourself, and develop an effective network to support your search. You can research the names and descriptions of positions that are suitable for you by utilizing many of the same techniques and resources you will soon be employing in your job search:

- **Network:** Ask classmates, friends, relatives, and acquaintances who work in similar industries and positions about suitable job titles and job descriptions for a person of your education and experience. Ask your professors! Often they are working in the field and can provide practical advice and suggestions.
- **Research the Field/Industry:** A number of online resources are available for you to expand your understanding of your field, potential career paths, and job titles and functions. Here are some to try: www.wetfeet.com, www.vault.com, www.hoovers.com, and www.experienzenetwork.com. Information on salaries can be obtained from salary surveys available at www.salary.com. Also, consult the Career/Internship Services' handout *Career/Job Websites*.
- **Read Job Listings:** Thanks to the internet, you can find job titles and descriptions by browsing the numerous online postings. Go to general job search sites, such as, www.monster.com, www.craigslist.org, or www.hotjobs.com. Also make a list of companies you are interested in, go to their sites, and read the postings listed there. An easy way to

create a list of large Bay Area companies to research is by consulting "The Book of Lists" which can be found in the career counseling offices.

Make a note of the job titles and list the skills and experience required for each position that interests you. Then list your own matching skills and how you can demonstrate them, either through classes, class projects, and extra-curricular activities, volunteer experience, internships, or previous work experience. If you find that you are interested in more than one position, list the qualifications separately for each one. As you pursue your job or internship search, you may discover that you wish to focus more on one, due to number of available jobs, available networking opportunities, or a better fit for your qualifications etc.

Is Your Resume Targeted to Those Positions?

Once you have a clear idea of the position(s) you are seeking, check your resume to make sure it is tailored to support your objective. Your resume should list skills, education, experience and accomplishments that meet the requirements of the position. If you are targeting multiple positions that have distinctly different requirements, you may want to create separate resumes customized to each position. If you would like further information on creating a targeted resume, please consult our handout, "Resume Writing," available outside the Career counseling offices or on our web page at <http://www.dominican.edu/careerservices>. Additional books on writing resumes and cover letters are available in the Dominican University career counseling offices. You can also attend a workshop on creating effective resumes (check for upcoming workshops and events).

Are You Prepared to Use a Wide Array of Job Search Techniques?

In order to maximize your chances of success, be prepared to use all of the job search techniques available to you. Here are some common methods:

NETWORKING

It has been estimated that about 80% of jobs are filled without ever being posted. Even jobs that are posted are often filled by people who have been recommended for the position by someone inside the company. In fact, many companies have begun encouraging employee-referrals by paying a commission to employees for recommending candidates who are eventually hired. This unadvertised source of jobs is referred to as the "hidden job market." In order to access it, you need to engage in the activity of "networking."

What is networking? Broadly defined, it is the cultivation and use of personal and professional contacts to share information relevant to one's professional success. It can take many forms. In the context of a job search, networking can result in leads about present or future job openings or recommendations for specific positions. When the networking tool of informational interviewing is used, it can yield important information about potential career paths and pitfalls, industry changes, new job search strategies and resources, as well as referrals to other contacts. Many people have some hesitation about the use of networking. They may feel that it makes them look weak or that they may be seen as attempting to "use" their friends and acquaintances. In fact, when networking is conducted appropriately, the opposite is true. Remember that networking is a relationship of mutual assistance, of both sides helping each other. While you may be the job seeker now, before too long you may be in a position to help those who assisted you or others who are just starting out.

Networking is not just a job search technique but a tool for professional development. As you progress through your career, you will want to continually maintain and nurture your professional contacts. Although networking can feel awkward when one is starting out, it becomes easier with time and is an important habit to develop.

Steps for Successful Networking

1. Create a Business Card

You will want to have a supply of business cards to hand to your contacts so they will be able to remember you and contact you easily in the future. Business cards can be created very economically on a personal computer or through a service provider, such as, Office Depot. At www.vistaprint.com, you can receive 250 free business cards (pay only shipping cost). The format can be simple—providing your name, phone, email, degree and, perhaps, your field (for example, “Human Resources Generalist” or some descriptive words about your skills. You might also want to create a specialized logo for yourself, particularly if you are in a creative field, such as marketing.

2. Create a Professional Message for Your Telephone Answering Service

Check the message on your telephone answering service to make sure it has a professional tone. Re-record it if necessary. Your telephone message may be the first impression of you that employers and your networking contacts will receive when they call you, so make sure it is a positive one!

3. Create and Practice a 30-second Self-Introduction

In order to network, you will need to be able to introduce yourself and, within a few seconds, provide a brief description of your background, skills and objectives. With some practice, you will become very comfortable with this task. To prepare, you can write out an introduction for yourself, using this basic format:

My name is _____. In (date), I will be graduating from Dominican University of California with a degree in _____. I have a background (experience and/or education) in _____ and special expertise in _____. I am looking for a position as a _____ in the industry where I can focus on using my skills in _____.

This basic format sets the stage for more extended discussion, depending on circumstances and available time. The next step is to make a request for assistance. Here are some possible approaches:

- *Do you know anyone who works in this industry (field) that I might be able to speak to?*
- *Do you think your company might have any openings that would match my qualifications?*
- *Would you be willing to pass my resume on or recommend me to the hiring manager?*

You may want to practice your self-introduction with friends or family or even record it and play it back to see how it sounds.

4. Get Started

When you are comfortable with your self-introduction, it’s time to begin using it! You may want to first approach people you feel are “low risk” while you are developing your networking skills. Some prefer to begin by seeking out friends and relatives, while others feel more comfortable doing their initial networking with strangers. No matter what approach you take, remember that it gets easier with practice!

Here is a list of possible sources of networking: professors, classmates, friends, acquaintances, relatives, neighbors, shopkeepers, and service people organizations can also provide a rich source of contacts. Here are some possibilities: graduate and undergraduate alumni offices and organizations, professional and trade organizations and conferences, religious organizations, Chambers of Commerce*, volunteer organizations, school clubs, speaking clubs and honor societies.

*The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce sponsors a Job Forum on Wednesday evenings where job seekers can come to network and gain advice about their job search (go to www.thejobforum.org for more information).

Some people find that trade and professional organizations and conferences provide a comfortable networking forum since networking is often promoted as a reason for joining the organization. **We**

highly recommend that you join and become active in the appropriate professional organization for your field now! Student or new graduate discounted rates are often offered by these organizations. Plan on attending their conferences and local meetings. Consult your professors or department chair for advice on which organizations to join.

5. Grow and Maintain Your Network

Develop a system for tracking and maintaining contact with your network. Some people successfully use an e-mail list serve to send periodic messages to their network to keep them advised of their situation (make sure you are using blind copies so that the privacy of each person in your network is maintained). Others calendar themselves to send a note or make a call on a regular basis (from 1 to 6 months). Others may use a combination of the two systems. But, by all means, when you do land a job, spread the good news to your network!

6. Informational Interviewing as a Networking Tool

Informational Interviewing is a useful tool for networking. It is a technique of arranging a time to talk with contacts to learn about their career path, view of the industry, likes and dislikes about the field, as well as obtain job search suggestions, and other contacts to speak with. Since this form of networking is informational only, the candidate **does not ask about job openings**. Nevertheless, a contact is often happy to be updated about the candidate's job search progress and is a potential source of later referrals. For more information about Informational Interviewing, see *Informational Interviewing* handout available outside the Career Services offices or on our web page at <http://www.dominican.edu/careerservices>. Additional books on networking and informational interviewing are available in the Career Services offices.

7. Networking with Alumni and Other Professionals Online

Alumni are a wonderful source of networking contacts. Go to <http://alumni.dominican.edu/> to search alumni in various career fields.

JOB AND INTERNSHIP LISTINGS

You will want to locate job and internship listings which you can use to apply for positions. There are numerous sources of listings, many of which are now on the internet. The following list includes both paper and online resources available specifically for Dominican students and alumni:

Job and Internship Listing Binders (Campus and Community Resource Center) - Listings received for Dominican students include full-time, part-time, summer, temporary, and internship listings from the business, non-profit, government, educational sectors, and other career fields. These are held in binders for a minimum of 60 days.

www.monstertrak.com - Job and Internship listings nationwide targeted to college students. Dominican students should look under undergraduate schools, then highlight Dominican University of California, then, if using an off-campus computer, add the password "goodjobs".

Handout- Career/Job Websites. A complete list of recommended job listing links is available at the career and internship services.

Classified ads -These can be found in print newspapers but can often be accessed online as well. For example, www.sfgate.com provides listings from the San Francisco Chronicle which can be automatically emailed to you if they fit your criteria. Go to www.careerpath.com for links to other newspaper classifieds, such as, The San Jose Mercury and the Sacramento Bee.

Employer websites - Many employers list their positions on their websites and offer online applications. Develop your own list of companies/organizations that you would like to work for and visit their sites regularly. You will see many additional job listings beyond those posted on online job banks.

- **"Book of Lists"** by the San Francisco Business Times lists top Bay Area companies in business fields.
- **"International Business Directory"** put out by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. If you are interested in international companies, you can find a list of American companies that do business internationally and a list of international companies that do business in the Bay Area, classified by industry and country.

For information about how to format your resume for posting online and by e-mail, consult the handout, *Effective Resume Writing*. While some job hunters do find their jobs through internet postings, remember that hundreds and even thousands of people can be applying for the same position and companies are often overwhelmed by the volume of responses they receive. To maximize your chances of being considered for a position, try, wherever possible, to reach the hiring manager directly by using your network or other personal contacts.

DIRECT EMPLOYER CONTACT

As previously discussed, approximately 80% of jobs are not listed. In addition to the use of networking to tap into this "Hidden Job Market," you can conduct your own job search campaign by targeting companies that interest you and contacting them directly to inquire about employment possibilities. Develop a list of companies that you would like to work for. Learn the name, address, and phone number of the hiring manager in the department you are interested in. Depending on the company, this task can be easy or difficult. Companies vary as to whether they will provide this information by phone. If they do not provide a name, try simply asking to be connected to the hiring manager of the department. You may also be able to discover the information you need by researching the company website. Also, use your network to try to learn contact names. Develop a contact strategy that works for you. Some job hunters will send a letter outlining their qualifications and particular interest in the company and then follow up with a phone call. Others will call first and then send a letter. Some include a resume with the letter and others prefer to seek an opportunity to meet personally before providing a resume. Whatever strategy you use, it will need to catch the manager's attention, so make sure you develop an effective self-introduction and a customized contact letter which reflects your interest in and knowledge of the company. Also, be prepared to accept disappointments. You are on a treasure hunt and will need patience and determination to move beyond any negative responses. Remember, it will all be worth it if you finally connect with that one employer who just happens to need someone like you!

EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

Employment agencies can be a useful tool in your job search. These agencies work on a commission basis (employer paid). When searching for an employment agency, search one or more that specializes in your area and respects your career goals. Consult the Yellow Pages of the phone directory under "Employment Agencies" to obtain a complete listing of agencies. Another method is to call the human resources department of companies you are interested in and ask for the names of agencies they use for their hiring and temp needs (working as a temp can be a way to get a foot in the door of an employer). Meet with the agency recruiter and clearly state the types of positions you are seeking. If you are looking for an entry-level position, confirm whether the agency offers such positions. If you are international student seeking practical training or sponsorship, also inquire whether the recruiter can assist someone with your immigration status. After your meeting, assess whether working with the recruiter would be productive for you. If you conclude that it would, then maintain regular contact with the recruiter to show you are interested and available. Continue to assess whether the agency you have chosen is aiding your job search. For example, being sent to interview for jobs that are inappropriate is a waste of your time and the employers. Make sure the recruiter has a firm understanding of the types of positions you are seeking. Also, be aware that, due to the commission

that the employer will pay, the starting salary for a position offered through an agency may be less than if the company were directly hiring a candidate. Nevertheless, if the job is right, the lower salary could be worth it! **Executive recruiters or "headhunters"** work on retainer to locate candidates for employers. They are usually seeking to fill mid to upper level positions and are often conducting a very focused search for a select number of positions with an emphasis on a strong record of relevant experience. If you feel that you may be a candidate for an executive recruiter, consult "The Guide to Executive Recruiters" and the "Directory of Executive Recruiters" in the DU Career and Internship Services Center for a listing of executive recruiters in your field as well as advice on methods of contacting and working with executive recruiters. You can also find a list of local executive recruiters in the Yellow Pages of the phone directory under the heading "Executive Search Consultants." Then contact the recruiters to determine if your qualifications will meet their recruiting needs.

RECRUITING AND CAREER EVENTS

Career Fairs Dominican's Career and Internship Services sponsors two career fairs each year on campus: a fall Internship Fair and a spring Career Fair. Also, employers are invited to meet with students on campus in Caleruega Dining Hall on most Wednesdays.

In addition, off-campus recruiting events are regularly presented in the Bay Area by commercial and non-profit sponsors. You can find these posted on the bulletin board at Career and Internship services, in the relevant job binders, and in the SF Chronicle and local newspapers. Career fairs can be a good way to gain information about an employer, learn more about opportunities in your field and make face-to-face contact with a number of employers over a short period of time. Careful preparation and follow-up is the key to success. Defining your goals, researching and targeting specific employers, and being ready with a 30-second self-introduction are tools that will help you make the most of these events. For more information, see our handout, *Career Fair Guidelines* which is available from the Career and Internship Services office.

FOLLOW THE NEWS

Successful job searching involves staying in touch with the economic and political news of the day. Political and economic changes affect the job market. Follow the news through the business sections of local papers as well as national papers and magazines, such as, the Wall Street Journal and Business Week. Learn which companies are growing, moving in, moving out, restructuring, or reducing their workforce. Read the local business newspapers, such as the North Bay Business Journal and The San Francisco Business Times to broaden your understanding of local business events. Changes in the political and business landscape can point the way to new avenues of opportunity in your job search!

Do You Have an Effective Job Search Schedule?

Your chances of success in your job search are increased if you approach it like a job, developing a schedule that you can adhere to which allots time appropriately to different elements of your search. To begin, make a list of the different activities in your job search: networking, researching and responding to job postings, company research, direct employer contact, employment agencies, and recruiting events. Then decide how much time you will spend on each, allocating time according to the importance of the activity in your job search. For example, since networking is one of the most effective tools of a job search you will wish to allot more time to it than other activities, such as, attending career fairs.

In setting your schedule, take into account the best days and times to call employers. Many times hiring managers can be reached early or late in the day, when they may be answering their phone rather than taking voice mail. Notice which activities are most challenging for you and make sure you build in a reward for accomplishing them. For example, if calling employers is difficult for you,

make sure your next activity is pleasant, for example, checking internet listings or even taking a break to have lunch with a friend. You may want to exercise before making those difficult calls since physical activity can be energizing.

Make sure that your schedule includes regular physical exercise. Walking, running, swimming, dance, martial arts, aerobics and sports all contribute to mental and physical health, helping you to maintain the momentum of your job search and a positive attitude.

This may also be a time to incorporate a volunteer activity in your schedule if you have not already done so. Volunteer activities offer many potential benefits. In addition to providing a break from the demands of the job search, well chosen voluntary work can also offer the opportunity to build skills and experience that will strengthen your resume. Voluntary activities may also be a source of networking contacts. The sense of purpose and well-being gained from helping others can also do much to offset the frustration and sense of isolation that can accompany a job search.

Do You Have an Effective Method of Record-Keeping?

Keeping track of your job search can be a major challenge. When an employer calls you, you will need to be able to readily retrieve the information (job listing, copy of your cover letter/resume etc.) and you need to respond effectively. You will need a system to record and manage your networking contacts, with a schedule for maintaining regular communication with them. Develop a system that works for you. Alphabetized binders, spreadsheets, index cards, and calendars for follow-up are some of the tools that can be used to establish your system. Strive for simplicity--make sure that it is neither chaotic nor so complex that you spend hours maintaining it that could be better spent on your job search.

Do You Have a Support System?

Last but not least--it is said that searching for a job is one of the hardest jobs there is. Make sure you're not doing it alone! Identify and stay in touch with supportive people you can talk to about your job search. Limit your contact with people who drain your energy or respond negatively to your situation. Many people find that a job search support group which meets regularly can be a wonderful boost. Often members of the group can provide feedback, ideas, networking contacts, practice interviews and a sense of community to each other that is a constant source of new energy for the job search. You may want to simply organize a group of your fellow students who are interested in participating in such a group or you can contact the California Employment Development Department (EDD) which sponsors Experience Unlimited networking groups (for a list of Experience Unlimited networking groups, go to www.edd.cahwnet.gov/jshow.htm).

NOW YOU ARE READY TO GO--GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR SEARCH!

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