

# Job Search Guide

“There may be others out there who could do this job better than you. Who gets hired is not necessarily the one who can do the best job, but the one who knows the most about how to get hired.”

-Richard Bolles

## How do people get jobs?

Mark S. Granovetter, a sociologist at Harvard University, investigated how people get jobs. His study included professional, technical, and managerial workers who had recently found jobs.

Granovetter’s data also indicated that of the people who found jobs through personal contacts, 43.8% had new ones created for them.

Granovetter concludes: “Personal contacts are of paramount importance in connecting people with jobs. Better jobs are found through contacts, and the best jobs, the ones with the highest pay and prestige and affording the greatest satisfaction to those in them, are most apt to be filled in this way.”

## Which job search method should I use?

**Use all techniques in proportion to their effectiveness.**

Only 18-20% of all job vacancies are ever listed. 80% of all openings are never listed anywhere. The only way to find out about this “hidden job market” is by using the informal methods of job hunting listed below.

**Informal** - 74% of your job search effort.

People generally prefer hiring people they know to hiring those they do not know. It is important to make yourself known to those who have the power to hire, or those who know someone with that power.

**Examples:**

Networking, Internships, Externships, Volunteering, Temporary Work, Promotion, Conventions, Conferences, and Career Fairs.

**Advertisements** - 10% of your job search effort.

When answering an ad, be sure that your resume, letter, and application are specific to the exact details of the listing. If at all possible research the employer before you apply. Your resume and cover letter will be the only chance you have to stand out from the multiple applications, so tailor them to the employer’s specific needs.

**Examples:**

PITZERLINK (*for Pitzer students and alumni*) Online websites, Employer websites, Professional Association Newsletters and Journals, and Personnel Office Listings.

**Employment Agencies** - 9% of your job search effort.

Research agencies carefully. Determine who pays the agency’s fees, you or the employer, and if their motivation is in your best career interest.

**Examples:**

Personnel Agencies, Temporary Agencies, Headhunters, Corporate Recruiters, and Federal and State Employment Agencies.

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## How do I conduct my job search?

### 1. Determine what type of work you want to do

- Conduct self-assessment
- Brainstorm possible options
- Research different careers

### 2. Determine where you want to work

- Generate a list of prospective employers
- Research different employers

### 3. Develop Self-Marketing Techniques

- Write an effective resume & cover letter
- Learn and practice interviewing techniques
- Build a professional wardrobe
- Network every chance you get
- Make sure your social networking sites are either private or at least professional when viewed by potential employers.

### 4. Take Action

- Develop and carry out a daily action plan
- Contact job leads
- Follow up any contacts, interviews or meetings
- Constantly network
- Reward yourself for hard work -- job hunting requires determination and energy

### 5. Don't Do It Alone!

- Choose a support person for your job hunt. Ask if they are willing to help you. Assuming they say yes, schedule a regular weekly date when they will guarantee to meet and discuss your progress. Ask for help with refocusing if you've done little or nothing since your previous week's meeting. The more gentle but firm a taskmaster this confidante is, the better.

- 6. Keep a careful record of each job search action you take, and retain copies of all correspondence, both sent and received. After each contact, make notes about what you learned and the next action to be taken.

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## How long will it take?

A job search can take a day, six months, or a year depending upon how hard you work at it. The average job search takes 400 hours. That is ten weeks, working eight hours per day. Studies indicate that two-thirds of all job hunters spend five hours or less a week on their job hunt. At this rate it could easily take one and a half years to find a job!

It is very important that you get started as soon as possible and steadily pursue your search. Plan to do something every day. Get into a routine. Set achievable goals for yourself. For example, "Today I will make three appointments and send out four resumes."

## What do I do if I get stuck?

Do not be discouraged if things do not happen overnight. Structure other activities that make you feel successful and satisfied so that you can pursue your job hunt within a context of overall happiness and self-esteem.

Maintain a positive attitude. Expect some disappointment and rejection. Do not become defeated. If you start feeling discouraged, talk with a career counselor. You may have overlooked some possibility that could be a turning point in your job search.

If you find yourself thinking that you can't find a job because you don't have enough education, experience, contacts, or some other reasons, remember that everyone has a handicap of some type.

- 1 Use as many different methods as you can.
- 2 Invest the most time in those methods that work the best.
- 3 As much as you can, go face-to-face with people -- rather than inserting a piece of paper (i.e. your resume) or an instrument (i.e. the telephone) between you and them.
- 4 If your problem is getting an interview for a job, you will have to work hard on alternative methods of your job hunt, which ignore the question of whether or not an employer has a vacancy. In other words, you will need access to the *Hidden Job Market*. (represents 80% of job listings.)

5 If you have no trouble getting interviews, but nothing ever comes out of them, work on your interview techniques.

6 If you are truly at the desperate/survival level, be willing to take any job temporarily, so long as the job is something you can handle.

8 Volunteer! It's a great way to get experience and develop contacts. Volunteer positions sometimes become paid jobs too.

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## Job Hunting Hints

- 1 No one owes you a job; you have to fight to win a job.
  - 2 By and large, the major difference between successful and unsuccessful job hunters is the way that they go about their job hunt - and not some factor "out there" such as a tight labor market.
  - 3 Take the degree/job label (e.g., I am a sociology major/ a sales rep.) off of yourself. You are a person who is skilled at.... who enjoys....
  - 4 The more time you spend on figuring out what makes you stand out from the nineteen other people who can do what you do, the better your chances.
  - 5 Forget "what's available out there." Go after the job you really want the most.
  - 6 If a thing turns you on, you'll be good at it; if it doesn't you won't.
  - 7 Figure out whether you're best with people, with things, or with information. It makes a difference.
  - 8 In trying to change careers or go into a new field don't look for the rules or generalizations. Look for the exceptions to the rules. The rule is: "In order to do this work you have to have a master's degree and ten years experience at it." You search for the exceptions: "Yes, but do you know of any one in the field who hasn't got all those credentials? And where might I find him or her?"
  - 9 Go after organizations with twenty or fewer employees. That's where two-thirds of all new jobs are. You will want to see the boss, not the personnel department. (Only 15% of all organizations, mostly large organizations, even have a personnel department.)
  - 10 Two-thirds of all job hunters spend five hours or less a week on their job hunt; determine to spend six times that much.
  - 11 Job hunters visit an average of six employers a month; plan to see at least two a day.
  - 12 Expect that your job hunt is going to take some time. The average job hunt lasts between six and eighteen weeks, depending on the state of the economy. Don't count on the "six weeks" minimum. Be prepared for eighteen weeks or longer.
  - 13 Look as sharp as you can at all times while you are out of work. Be neat, clean, and well-dressed whenever you are outside your home; you never know who will see you and possibly recommend you to someone who is hiring.
  - 14 Go after many different organizations, instead of just one or two.
  - 15 Meet face-to-face with employers, whenever possible, rather than sending a resume.
  - 16 The major issue you face with employers is not what skills you have, but how you use them: whether you just try to "keep busy" or try to actually solve problems, thus increasing your effectiveness and the organization's effectiveness too.
  - 17 There are not only two things which will get you a job: Training or Experience, but three: Training, Experience, or a Demonstration of your Skills right before the employers eyes. If there is any way that you can show an employer what you are capable of doing, through pictures, samples of things you have made or produced, provide it during the interview.
  - 18 If you and the employer really hit it off, but they cannot at that time afford to hire you, you might consider offering to do volunteer work there for a week or two, so they see firsthand how good you are at what you do. Or if you feel you're worth, say, \$35,000 a year, but they can only pay \$25,000 you might consider offering them three days a week of your time, and you can go look for other work to fill the remaining two days.
  - 19 Don't be wearied by rejection. We saw Tom Jackson's model (from Guerrilla Tactics in the Job Market) of the typical job hunt as NO NO NO NO NO NO NO etc. But remember, you only need two Yes's. Two so that you'll have at least two things to choose between. And the more No's you get out of the way, the closer you are to those Yes's.
  - 20 Treat every employer with courtesy, even if it seems certain they can't offer you a job now; they may be able to offer you one later, or refer you to someone else, if you made a good impression.
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- 21 You must be ready to go job-hunting anytime, for no matter how good a job you have been doing at your present workplace, that job may vanish tomorrow without any warning due to circumstances beyond your control.
  - 22 If you have been unjustly let go, your first need is to let go of your anger at how different the world of work is from what you thought it would be; otherwise, that anger will cripple your job-hunting efforts.
  - 23 Do not expect that you will necessarily be able to find exactly the same kind of work you used to do. Be prepared to define some other lines of work that you can do, and would enjoy doing, using your same skills and experiences. Always have a Plan B.
  - 24 Send short thank-you letters within 24 hours, to everyone you talked to that day in your job hunting activities - secretaries, receptionists, etc. - thanking them for seeing or helping you.
  - 25 Be gently persistent, and be willing to go back to places that interest you, to see if their “no vacancy” situation has changed.
  - 26 Once you know what kind of work you are looking for, tell everyone what it is; have as many other eyes and ears out there looking on your behalf, as possible.
  - 27 When calling an employer, ask for twenty minutes only, and don’t stay one minute longer unless the employer asks you to. Tell them you like to honor commitments. This will almost always make an impression.
  - 28 Whenever you are speaking to an employer, don’t “hold forth” all by yourself for longer than two minutes, at any one time. During the entire interview, talk one-half the time, listen one-half the time.

**Adapted From:**

*What Color Is Your Parachute?* by Richard Bolles

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## What employers are seeking!

The following list of skills and personal qualities were identified by employers as things they look for in potential employees. Be sure to express your strengths in these areas on your application materials and in your interviews.

- Communication skills; oral & written
- Interpersonal skills
- Analytical skills
- Interest/enthusiasm
- Self confidence
- Computer skills
- Initiative
- Leadership skills
- Creativity/innovation
- Flexibility; adaptability to change
- Goal oriented
- Self knowledge; directed/focused
- Intelligence
- Teamwork skills
- Work experience
- Vocationally appropriate skills
- Ambition/motivation
- Knowledge of organization/company
- Desire/ability to accept responsibility

## Most common job search mistakes

### **Not taking the time to look within before looking outside.**

Self-assessment is the key to a successful job search. Before you begin, take the time to look inside and ask, "What do I have to offer?"

### **Not approaching the job search as a multifaceted process.**

A good campaign mixes at least three of the following methods: personal networking, using employment search firms, working online, doing research, conducting a direct-mail campaign and targeting (the thorough analysis of one or two organizations). Do some of each, but be sure that you spend at least half of your time on "personal networking." Studies show that about 70% of all jobs are filled through personal contacts. Most people know 200-500 people, though they may seldom realize it. Some can be valuable to you.

### **Failing to plan and organize a job hunting campaign.**

Map out each week ahead of time. Decide on a daily schedule and stick to it.

### **Neglecting to keep careful records of everyone you meet and everything you do.**

A month from now you may be talking to someone whom you've spoken to before, and you might not remember what was said in the initial meeting. Information is the job seeker's most powerful tool.

### **Failing to maintain the ideal job seekers attitude: non-judgmental.**

Treat everyone with warmth and courtesy. Realize that in a job search you get back what you put in. If you're putting out positive energy, you will connect with people much more easily.

### **Not spending enough time on the telephone and visiting people.**

Productivity in any campaign is directly related to the number of calls and visits you make. It is easy to fall into a campaign of sending emails, resumes and writing letters. Spend time on the telephone. That's the way everything happens. It's more personal. It also forces you to call people whom you know - essentially doing the networking that you might otherwise neglect. If you have a goal of meeting 10 people a week, the only way you can do it is by using the telephone and by visiting and interviewing people doing work that interests you.

### **Neglecting to maintain your vitality during a campaign.**

Work to keep mentally and physically fit. A good campaign is a combination of work, rest, exercise and good diet. Some people think that if six hours a day of job searching is good, 10 hours will get the job that much faster. Such people usually burn themselves out.

### **Not preparing ahead of time for interviews.**

Research the organization. Get an annual report and find out the size of the organization, its products or services, and any problems in the company or in its industry. You'll be ahead of 90% of the other applicants if you know something about the company before the interview.

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**Failure to maintain good grooming and personal appearance.**

Take care of your appearance, even when dressed informally for networking. First impressions are hard to change.

**Not sending thank-you notes.**

Send notes to people in your network who have helped you, to people who have interviewed you, and to people whom you have interviewed for information.

**Forgetting to follow up.**

Be sure to follow up. Getting a job is a social process. The interaction among people is what makes jobs happen. Also, by following up you show that you are reliable and conscientious, two qualities employers like.

**Adapted from:**

*Career Waves*, Vol. 7 No. 1

## **Myths, Abuses, Misuses of Networking**

**Myth #1**

The best way to find a job is to respond to online ads, use employment agencies, submit applications, and mail resumes and cover letters to personnel offices.

**Reality**

Online ads, agencies, and personnel offices tend to list low paying yet highly competitive jobs. Most of the best jobs - high level, excellent pay, least competitive- are neither listed nor advertised; they are uncovered through word-of-mouth and learned about during the process of networking. When seeking employment, your most fruitful strategy will be to identify the "hidden job market"- a network of employers and job seekers who exchange job vacancy and hiring information.

**Myth #2**

One should not network in a case where there is an advertised vacancy and an employer requests a resume or application.

**Reality**

Networking should especially be used in the case of advertised job vacancies. If you only complete an application form or submit a resume, chances are nothing will happen. You must take additional action - a telephone call or, when possible, a personal visit. Such forms of networking can help your application and resume stand out from the rest.

**Myth #3**

The purpose of networking is to get a job interview and job offer.

**Reality**

While networking may ultimately lead to interviews and job offers, the purpose of networking is to get information, advice, and referrals. In every step of your job search you need more and better information to help you make decisions. You get this by talking to people who have information.

**Myth #4**

Networking is the key to getting a job.

**Reality**

Networking is most appropriate for individuals interested in finding high quality jobs that fit directly with their own abilities and skills. These jobs are more likely to be found in the hidden job market rather than in the advertised job market.

**Myth #5**

Your networking activities should be aimed at those who have the power to hire.

**Reality**

By focusing on individuals who have the power to hire, job searchers give networking a bad name by bothering busy people who do not have the time to or interest in giving these "networkers" a job. There are those who abuse networking by contacting individuals for the purpose of gathering information, but in reality they attempt to use the individual for getting a job. Remember, networking is a communication process - exchanging information and receiving advice and referrals about jobs and careers. While it involves prospecting and

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informational interviewing, and it may lead to job interviews and offers, don't approach networking as strictly a job finding technique.

**Myth #6**

One should network rather than use resumes & letters for finding a job.

**Reality**

Networking is no substitute for the more traditional means of communicating your qualifications to employers - resumes and letters. Confusion often arises over the purpose and role of both resumes and networking in the job search. The resume should be presented at the end of a networking meeting for the purpose of receiving advice on how to improve its content as well as for summarizing your goals, experience, and qualifications. Always keep copies of your resume close to you. You never know when you will use it as part of your networking activities.

**Myth #7**

I should send a resume with my approach letter when initiating a networking contact.

**Reality**

Never include a resume with any correspondence to a contact unless the individual requests it. The resume should only be revealed at the end of the meeting - for a critique or upon request from the contact.

**Myth #8**

It is always best to use referrals in the networking process.

**Reality**

Referrals are important in making contacts, but they are not necessarily the best way to proceed. Referrals help ease the process of introducing oneself to strangers, and they build on relationships of others. However, too much emphasis is often placed on referrals to the detriment of taking individual initiative in establishing cold contacts.

**Myth #9**

Most people are reluctant to share information about their job or career.

**Reality**

Most people, regardless of their position or status, love to talk about their work and give advice to both friends and strangers. You can learn the most about job opportunities and alternative careers by talking to such people through your networking activities.

**Adapted from:**

*Network Your Way to Job & Career Success*

by Krannich & Krannich

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