

THE JOB SEARCH

This guide was created by Gwynedd-Mercy College Career Services and is designed to help you develop effective job search strategies.

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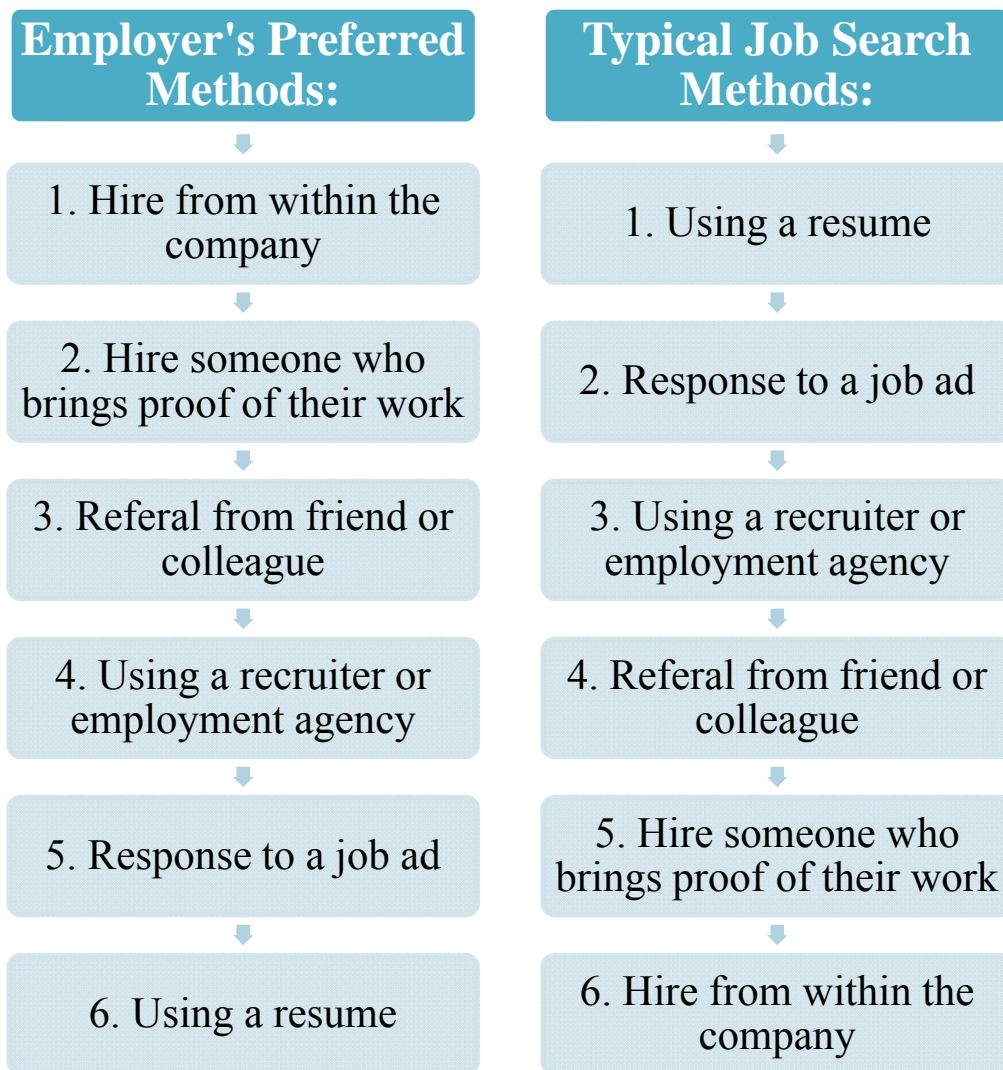
INTRODUCTION

According to the Harvard Business Journal, around **80% of job openings available are never advertised**. This packet will explain techniques to find and get these jobs.

Before we get into discussing these techniques, take a minute to put yourself in the mindset of an employer. If you were looking to hire a new employee would you rather hire someone you already know/comes recommended from a trusted source, or a complete stranger?

Most people begin their job search using the methods that are generally the least successful. These methods include passively checking job ads, searching websites, and posting your resume online. A successful job search is one that combines multiple techniques, with a focus on networking and proactively pursuing companies of interest to you.

Most employers hunt for candidates in the EXACT OPPOSITE way people search for jobs:



Taken from the 2011 Edition of *What Color is Your Parachute?* by Richard Bolles.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

DO WHAT YOU LOVE, LOVE WHAT YOU DO: Finding a job that fits your interests and qualifications is a process that's unfortunately not always quick or linear. Expect your job search to take time, so don't wait until the last minute. Ideally, you should begin your search 3-6 months before you'd realistically like to start working. The intention of this job hunting guide is to make this process a little less overwhelming, and to provide you with useful tips to make your search more efficient.

First, let's establish some common ground from which to work:

- 1) **YES**, there are jobs out there. However, you must be willing to take chances and look at all opportunities.
- 2) **YES**, it is a competitive job market. There are many college graduates looking for positions just as you are. What's going to set you apart?
- 3) **YES**, it is true that employers are looking for the "best" candidates. While grades are important, so too, are your work history, extracurricular activities, and the functional skills you've developed through these activities.
- 4) No, there is **NO ONE WAY** to approach the job search. The best job search tactics are the ones that work for you. Using a combination of tactics usually produces results.
- 5) Know that **REJECTION** may be a part of this process, but don't take the rejection personally. Remember, employers are not rejecting you as a person; they don't know you. They make business decisions based on many different factors.
- 6) Keep a **POSITIVE OUTLOOK**. Don't become discouraged by rejections, but remember, each rejection you receive brings you closer to getting the job offer you want. Be positive, be persistent, and be confident.
- 7) While you cannot control others, you do have control over yourself. This means that you must discipline yourself to maintain and sustain an active job search...it will bring **RESULTS**.

SIX STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL JOB SEARCH

STEP 1: KNOW YOURSELF

Get to know what you are all about. Identify your values, skills/abilities, and interests. Identify your accomplishments or achievements. Detail any special skills you have (i.e., technology skills, language skills, research skills, soft skills). If you'd like to get help determining these factors and characteristics make an appointment with a Career Counselor to take a self-assessment inventory.

STEP 2: VIP DOCUMENTS

➤ **RESUME:**

See the Career Service's Resume and Cover Letter Writing Packet for information on how to perfect these documents (also available on our website, www.gmc.edu/careerservices). Meet with a Career Counselor if you have any questions or would like it reviewed.

Your resume should reflect your significant skills, experiences, and educational background. Employers will pay close attention to see if you have highlighted key transferable skills for the position you're applying.

➤ **COVER LETTER:**

"Do I need to send a cover letter?" Unless the employer specifically states that they do not require a cover letter, the answer to this question is...yes! A cover letter provides you the opportunity to let the employer know what you are seeking, what you have to offer, and why you would like a position with their company. More information, along with samples, on writing a resume or cover letter can be found in our Resume and Cover Letter Writing Packet, also found on our website.

➤ **REFERENCES:**

Choose individuals who know you and your work ethic well. References might include professors, advisors, work or internship supervisors, or others in professional positions who can speak to your strengths. It's important to ask them if they feel comfortable serving as a reference for you. As a courtesy, provide them with your resume and job description for the position for which you are applying. Don't forget to write them a thank you note.

STEP 3: IDENTIFYING EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Once you nail down your values, strengths, and interests, it's time to do some research and narrow down your options. What career fields fit best for you? Not sure? Here are some helpful resources to get you started:

➤ **Career Resources Library:** Review and research books and magazines on the industries of your choice.

➤ **A Few Websites to Get You Started:**

- **Occupational Outlook Handbook:** www.bls.gov/oco
- **O*Net:** <http://online.onetcenter.org>
- **What Can You Do With This Major?**— These sheets can be found in our Career Library in the Career Services Office or on our website, www.gmc.edu/students/careerservices/whatcanido.php

➤ **INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS:** Learn more about fields of interest through informational interviews with professionals who have taken similar paths. A more detailed explanation of this process and appropriate questions can be found in the Career Services Office. For additional information go to www.gmc.edu/careerservices and click on "Informational Interviewing." This is one of the best ways to start both networking and job searching.

STEP 4: EMPLOYER OUTREACH

Most people conduct their job search using just one method: responding to online job postings. This is a passive approach that may work in some cases, but often leaves the job hunter frustrated. A more successful job search is one that uses a mixed-method approach of both passive and proactive techniques:

PROACTIVE METHODS

- **NETWORKING**— Since most employers would rather hire someone they know, connecting with professionals is essential to a job search in any industry. As you may have heard, networking is the #1 access point to career opportunities. Think about those who are in your network—family, friends, church members, professors, GMC alumni, internship supervisors, your roommate’s parents, etc. Ask people in your network for referrals so you can begin to “grow” your network. Review the Networking Guide and Informational Interview Packet on the Career Services website and check out the Alumni Mentoring Program on College Central.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA**— Using LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter is an effective method for job searching. Read the Social Media documents under the Job Searching section on the Career Services website. Make sure your profiles on all social media websites are professional.
- **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**— Most career fields have a professional association that offers professional development resources, networking opportunities and sometimes job postings. You will likely have to pay for membership, but most offer discounted rates for students or first time members. If you are unsure if there is an association in your field of interest, ask someone in your academic department, conduct a Google search and check with Career Services.
- **LOCAL NEW PROFESSIONALS NETWORKS**— The Young Professionals Network (YPN) of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber offers members the chance to network, participate in professional development, and give back to the community. Check out www.ypnphilly.com for more information.
- **CAREER FAIRS**— Don’t miss the face-to-face time with employers. GMC Career Services sponsors/co-sponsors some of the career fairs and also finds other job fairs of interest for students. Refer to the Job Fair Tip Sheet for assistance on succeeding at a career fair. Check the Career Services website, www.gmc.edu/careerservices or the College Central bulletin board for a complete listing of career fairs.
- **LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**— You can use the Greater Philadelphia Chamber to locate business/companies of interest to you. Use your network (family, friends, neighbors, professors, etc.) to see if someone has a contact at the company of interest. Setting up an informational interview is a great way to introduce yourself to the company.
- **TARGET JOB SEARCH**— Targeted applying involves sending your resume and cover letter to a group of employers in the area who match your career interest. This could be by email, phone or mail. When you cold call an employer, or send an unsolicited resume, you are also being proactive. You will stick out in the employer’s mind much more than the average person who is applying for a job through a general website. The employer is also likely to believe that you are interested in them specifically. Develop a target list. Define the criteria (location, large/small, nonprofit, government, etc...) for your target list. Then research and find the names and locations of your target companies. Use Internet resources, job postings, and ask your network. Your local Chamber of Commerce and Yellow Pages are an ideal resource for finding local companies.

PASSIVE METHODS

- **COLLEGE CENTRAL**— Gwynedd-Mercy College’s premier job search database: www.collegecentral.com/gmc. GMC students and alumni can create a free account and search for full/part time jobs, internships, and volunteer opportunities.
- **INTERNET SEARCH**— Websites focused on specific job areas (e.g. “Art jobs Philadelphia”) are typically more productive than those that attempt to cater to every type of field. Check our website for a listing of general job search sites.
- **EMPLOYER WEBSITES**— Identify companies that hire for the positions you are seeking, and regularly check their job postings.
- **EMPLOYER OUTREACH**— If the company you desire to work for does not have openings posted on their website, send a resume and cover letter which clearly states your interest in their organization, what type of position you are seeking, and your qualifications. This does not guarantee they will respond to you, but they may see something in your materials that piques their interest.

STEP 5: THE INTERVIEW

Pick up a copy of our Interviewing Packet in the Career Center or on the website, and take advantage of our Practice Interview Service. The Career Library also offers additional books and information on interviewing.

STEP 6: HELPFUL HINTS

Consider the following suggestions when you are conducting your job search:

- **Voicemail:** Make sure it’s professional—nothing funny. If you are expecting calls from potential employers, be sure to alert your roommates as well. Always answer the phone in a professional tone.
- **Social Media:** If you have a Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or any other social media account or website, make sure your account is private and professional. Don’t post anything that you don’t want an employer to read.
- **Googling:** Employers do Google candidates to see what is said about the person on the Internet.
- **Professional communication:** No slang, use appropriate grammar. Always remember to have your materials edited by a peer, professor, and/or Career Counselor before you send them out to potential employers. Any mistakes can count as a strike against you. All communication with the company counts.
- **Attitude:** Make a conscious effort to maintain a positive attitude. Remember that many good, qualified people never get a call back or experience rejections, so get back on your feet and forge ahead.
- **Support network:** Surround yourself with people who will support you through the job searching process.
- **Thank you notes:** If you meet a new contact who provides you with information related to your job search, send them a thank you note. The same goes for individuals who participate in an informational or job interview.
- **Procrastination doesn’t pay:** Don’t wait until the week of graduation if you expect to land a position for the following week. Start early, and set achievable goals to keep yourself motivated.
- **Keep records:** Keep track of your networks and places you’re applying, and remember to follow up. Refer to the Keeping Track of your Job Search part in this packet.
- **Never too late:** It is never too late to build your experience. Consider an internship, part-time job, volunteer experience or activity to become involved in. These are great resume builders.

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Email can be a powerful tool in the hands of a knowledgeable job-seeker and it’s often the preferred method of communication between candidate and employer.

When you are communicating with prospective employers there is no such thing as an inconsequential

communication. If you are sloppy and careless, it will stick out like a sore thumb. Follow these general guidelines when emailing cover letters, resumes, thank you notes and replies to various requests for information:

- Use a meaningful **subject header**, one that is appropriate to the topic and includes your name.
- Be **brief** in your communications. Don't overload the employer with a lot of questions.
- You can either attach or paste your **resume and cover letter** into the email document. Sometimes an employer's company may have "no-opening-attachments" policy. Ask the employer which they prefer.
- Do not use **strange fonts**, wallpapers, or multicolored backgrounds.
- Stick to a **standard font** like Times New Roman or Arial, 12 point.
- **Sign your email** with your full name and contact information.
- Avoid using **slang or symbols**, such as smiley faces and exclamation points.
- Be sure to **proofread**, spell and grammar-check your email before sending.
- A professional tone should **always** be maintained.
- Make sure you have a **professional sounding email**, preferably one with your name.

FOLLOWING UP WITH A POTENTIAL EMPLOYER

How do I follow up with a company after submitting a resume?

You have sent a resume to a company you'd like to interview with and you haven't heard back right away. What do you do next? You can either wait patiently, presuming the employer will contact you if they are interested, or you can choose to follow-up with the employer.

If you don't hear back from within 10 days to two weeks, it may be beneficial to follow-up. Employers and recruiters may prefer follow-up by email. If no email address is listed, try sending a note or calling. If neither email, address or a phone number are listed, or the posting says not to contact the employer, following the instructions and don't follow up.

What to Ask

- What are the next steps in the recruiting process? Will all candidates be contacted?
- Do you need any additional information about my candidacy? (Or briefly share new info that adds to your candidacy.)
- If you plan to visit the company's location, mention the timeframe and your eagerness to meet – ask if it's possible to arrange an interview during your visit.

How do I follow up after a job interview?

Before your interview ended, your interviewer should have informed you of the organization's follow-up procedures — from whom, by what means, and when you would hear again from the organization. If the interviewer did not tell you, and you did not ask, use your follow-up / thank-you letter to ask.

If more than a week has passed beyond the date when you were told you would hear something from the employer, call or e-mail to politely inquire about the status of the organization's decision-making process. Someone (or something) or an unexpected circumstance may be holding up the process. A polite inquiry shows that you are still interested in the organization and may prompt the employer to get on schedule with a response. In your inquiry, mention the following: name of the person who interviewed you, time and place of the interview, position for which you are applying (if known), and ask the status of your application

JOB OFFERS

Before you accept or decline an offer, there are several factors to assess. While some may weigh more heavily than others, it is important to think about an offer before making a decision. If offered a job, it is standard to ask the employer for a day or two to think it over.

JOB-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS

- Job responsibilities
- Promotion and advancement potential
- Degree of autonomy and teamwork
- Support of continuing education
- Stability of the organization/industry
- Transferability of skills/experience from job
- On-the-job training
- Supervisor and co-workers
- Professional development
- Philosophy and reputation of the organization
- Evaluation of your work

GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Location/community type and size
- Cultural/recreational opportunities
- Availability/cost of housing
- Proximity to family/friends

MONETARY CONSIDERATIONS

- Starting salary
- Benefits package
- Bonuses/commissions
- Potential salary
- Cost-of-living

LIFE-STYLE CONSIDERATIONS

- Working conditions
- Commuting to work
- Dress code
- Work schedule and travel requirements
- Social life for singles/couples

OTHER TIPS

- If an offer is extended verbally, ask for it and the details in writing, including job title, starting date, salary, location, and any other important information. If anything appears vague, ask for clarification before accepting the offer.
- If it sounds too good to be true, investigate.
- Make your acceptance in writing, restating the important details.
- If you are going to reject the offer, do so in writing as soon as possible. Thank them for their confidence in you...don't burn any bridges.
- Accepting or not, always follow up with appropriate thank you notes.
- It is unethical to accept a job offer and continue actively seeking until a better offer comes along.
- It is generally acceptable to ask an employer for a few days to think over the job offer.

ORGANIZING YOUR JOB SEARCH

To have an effective job search it is crucial to stay organized. You should know when you sent materials such as a resume or cover letter to an employer and if you followed up with a thank you note. Here are some steps to follow including a graph.

1. Have 3 folders;

- a. To Apply: this is a folder to put jobs that you found and want to apply to.
- b. Applied: this is a folder to put the jobs that you applied for already in.
- c. Heard Back: this is a folder to put the jobs that you applied for and received a response from the company.

2. Make notations on top of the job advertisement:

- a. Write on the top right of the printed job advertisement what you sent to the employer and when. For example, if you emailed your cover letter and resume you would put (Emailed cover letter and resume to ??? on Jan. 15, 2010.)
- b. Continue to make notations on the document as you hear back from the employer.
- c. It is important to apply both ways if possible: Mail and email. Email or online gets to the employer right away. Mailing it gets there in a few days. They get to see your name multiple times.

Name of Employer: Contact of Employer:				
Where job advertisement was found				
Resume and cover letter sent?				
Followed-up?				
Interview scheduled?				
Thank you letter sent.				
Job Offer Received				
Rejection Letter Received				

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to this workbook, Career Services has an abundance of other resources to help you. These materials can be found on our website, www.gmc.edu/careerservices and in our Career Library.

Schedule an appointment with Career Services to learn more about effective job search strategies.
We can be reached at ext: 230 or careerservices@gmc.edu.