Job Search

How to make your job search successful

Pick a major that relates to a specific job or occupation.

Get a great GPA.

Participate in leadership activities.

Secure internships, summer jobs, part-time employment.

Learn to communicate clearly and listen to the world around you.

Keep good records of your activities.

Get good references.

Attend resume, job search and interview workshops.

Learn to work with all kinds of people.

If you do all of this, then your career counselor’s job will be easy. As a matter of fact, you probably won’t need one. If you haven’t done all the above, then this is the guide for you. It will help you organize your job search. With good organization, determination and a little bit of luck, you’ll be on your way to getting the job you want.

Getting a job is a full-time job.

There is no doubt getting a good job is a lot of work. Look at it as you would a class. You need to work on it everyday. The more work you do, the better grade (job, salary, etc.) you’re going to get. The more creative you are, the more possibilities open up for you.

You must be proactive.

Up to 80% of jobs go to someone the employer or employees already know. Seek internships, part-time employment and networking opportunities. Internships and part-time employment may work into full time employment down the road. Once you’re in the door, look for areas within the organization utilizing your skills or skills you can learn. A graduate assistant in this office noticed we knew very little about our computers. He made himself invaluable by learning all he could about hardware and software. The director couldn’t let him go at the end of his assistantship. She creatively found funding to retain him as an employee after he graduated. Nice move.

One way of meeting people who are excellent contacts is by conducting informational interviews. Talking with someone in your intended field is the best way to find out what working in that field will be like, and to network among people in that career field. Oftentimes an interviewee will be able to give you invaluable information concerning your resume, job search strategy, and your experience. Who better to help you get a job in that field than someone who has already done it themselves?
Job Search Strategies

Searching for a job as a graduate in the best times can be challenging, but in an uncertain job market it can be difficult. The following provides some tips to conducting an effective job search.

Steps in the Job Search:

1. **Conduct a thorough self-assessment.** Take time to self-reflect. Identify your interests, skills, and work values. Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses and think of some relevant examples. Emphasize those which connect most directly with your career goals. Standardized career-related assessments are available through Career Services. Appointments can be made by calling 243-2022.

2. **Develop your plan.** Decide what you want to do, where you want to do it, what type and size of organization you want to work for, etc. Research your career area thoroughly; know position requirements, advancement potential and demand, salary range, and training programs. Knowing what you are searching for enhances your chances of finding it. The average job search can take 3-6 months.

3. **Target Employers.** Use a variety of methods to identify potential employers. Ask friends, family, former employers, and faculty. Look at online employment and professional association directories, as well as Chamber of Commerce offices and professional organizations.

4. **Attend career fairs.** Career Services holds several career fairs each year: Student Employment Fair; Health Professions Career Fair; Big Sky Employment Fair; and the Educator’s Career Fair. National and regional employers recruit University of Montana graduates and students because of the quality education and experiences they receive. Employers visit campus to talk with students about full-time, part-time, internship, summer, and volunteer opportunities.

5. **Research organizations.** Find out as much as you can about prospective employers through current employees, visits, company brochures, and internet sites.

6. **Develop your resume.** Prepare it based on information about yourself, and the organization you've targeted. Consider developing several versions of your resume, depending upon the position or organization you are pursuing. When you have completed a solid draft, bring it to Career Services for a critique and get valuable information about how to improve it.

7. **Begin contacting employers.** Use all job search methods, concentrating on the most effective ones. Be persistent in your approach. Above all be proactive in your follow-up, don't rely on them to call you!

8. **Interview.** Organizations usually hire based on face-to-face interviews. Find our Career Services interviewing guide on our website and begin to formulate answers to the practice questions in your head. Practice your interviewing skills through mock interviews available through Career Services as well, and set a goal of obtaining at least an informational interview with all organizations on your list, even if there are no current openings. It is your best chance of being remembered once an opening does occur.

9. **Record keeping.** Set up a system to manage your job search. Your system should include prospective contacts, companies contacted, follow-up dates, and status of contact.

10. **Prepare for outcomes.** Experiencing rejection is inevitable. Try not to take the rejection personally; you are evaluating, accepting, and rejecting potential employers, just as they are doing with you. You're both looking for a good fit. Be ready to redefine your plan as required.

11. **Accept/Negotiate offers.** Sometimes it can be feast or famine. First there are no offers, then several come in at the same time. Review your plan and weigh all job offers based upon your needs. You usually can ask for a reasonable amount of time to decide and negotiate the terms of your offer.

12. **Review your decision.** Look back over the process and determine successes and problems. This will prepare you for next time.
Job Search Methods

Finding a job can take months of time and effort. But you can speed the process by using many methods to find job openings. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics suggest that people who use many job search methods find jobs faster than people who use only one or two.

Most people find jobs through direct contact with the company. The Internet is a valuable tool for job openings and employer research. Check our website for links to career related resources:

www.umt.edu/career

Networking.

Many jobs are never advertised. People get them by talking to friends, family, neighbors, acquaintances, teachers, former coworkers, and others who know of an opening. Be sure to tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job because your personal contacts may be some of the most effective resources for your search. To develop new contacts, join student, community, or professional organizations.

Career Services.

We help connect students and alumni with employers. Many employers interview graduating students each semester through on-campus recruiting and career fairs. Use Griz eRecruiting and complete your profile so you are automatically contacted about employers hiring in your field and upcoming career fairs.

Employers.

Directly contacting employers is one of the most successful means of job hunting. Through research, develop a list of potential employers in your desired career field. Then call these employers or check their Web sites for job openings. Web sites and business directories can tell you how to apply for a position or whom to contact. Even if no open positions are posted, do not hesitate to contact the employer: You never know when a job might become available. Consider asking for an informational interview with people working in the career you want to explore. Ask them how they got started, what they like and dislike about the work, what type of qualifications are necessary for the job, and what type of personality succeeds in that position. In addition to giving you career information, they may be able to put you in contact with other people who might hire you, and they can keep you in mind if a position opens up.

Note: Networking/ informational interviewing/ directly contacting employers. These are among the most commonly used and most successful methods of job search. Networking involves generating leads by talking to friends, family and associates about organizations and jobs. Informational interviewing involves actually meeting with people in your field and prospective employers to interview them about what they do and their recommendations. The final key, and most effective method, is following up with direct contacts to the person in the organization who has the power to hire you. This is often not the Personnel Manager, but the manager of the department in which you would work. Contact organizations by cover letter and resume, followed by a telephone request for an interview. Even if there are no opportunities now, ask for other leads and follow-up. Regard everyone you meet as a potential contact and lead.

Classified ads.

The "Help Wanted" ads in newspapers and the Internet list numerous jobs, and many people find work by responding to these ads. But when using classified ads, keep the following in mind:

• Follow all leads to find a job; do not rely solely on the classifieds.
• Answer ads promptly, because openings may be filled quickly, even before the ad stops appearing in the paper.
• Read the ads every day, particularly the Sunday edition, which usually includes the most listings.
• Keep a record of all ads to which you have responded, including the specific skills, educational background, and personal qualifications required for the position.
Internet resources.

The Internet includes many job posting websites with job listings. Some job boards provide national listings of all kinds; others are local. Some relate to a specific type of work; others are general. To find good prospects, begin with an Internet search using keywords related to the job you want. Also look for the sites of related professional associations.

In online job databases, remember that job listings may be posted by field or discipline, so begin your search using keywords. Many websites allow job seekers to post their resumes online for free.

Note: Want ads/ internet job listings. It is generally estimated that only 15-20% of all jobs are listed in the want ads. A typical job posting can generate 100-200 resumes. This means it is extremely competitive, and over 80% of jobs are filled in other ways. When using this method, make sure your cover letter and resume cover all points in the job description. A good rule of thumb would be to spend no more than 15-20% of your time reacting to job advertisements and spend 80-85% or your time being proactive (networking, contacting employers, informational interviewing).

Professional associations.

Many professions have associations that offer employment information, including career planning, educational programs, job listings, and job placement. Associations sometimes require that you be a member to use their services; information can usually be obtained from an association through the Internet, by telephone, or by mail.

Labor unions.

Labor unions provide various employment services to members and potential members, including apprenticeship programs that teach a specific trade or skill. Contact the appropriate labor union or state apprenticeship council for more information.

State employment service offices.

The state employment service, sometimes called the Job Service, operates in coordination with the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration. Local offices, found nationwide, help job seekers find jobs and help employers find qualified workers at no cost to either. To find the office nearest you, look in the State government telephone listings under "Job Service" or "Employment."

Federal Government.

Information on obtaining a position with the Federal Government is available from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) through USAJOBS, the Federal Government’s official employment information system. This resource for locating and applying for job opportunities can be accessed through the Internet at http://www.usajobs.opm.gov

Community agencies.

Many nonprofit organizations, including religious institutions and vocational rehabilitation agencies, offer counseling, career development, and job placement services, generally targeted to a particular group, such as veterans, women, minorities, ex-offenders, or older workers.

Third-party recruiters, private employment agencies and career consultants.

Private agencies can save you time and will contact employers who otherwise might be difficult to locate, but these agencies usually charge for their services. Most operate on a commission basis, charging a percentage of the first-year salary paid to a successful applicant. You or the hiring company will pay the fee. Find out the exact cost and who is responsible for paying associated fees before using the service. When determining if the service is worth the cost, consider any guarantees that the agency offers.

Internships.

Many people are hired by businesses and organizations with whom they have interned or volunteered. Look for internships and volunteer opportunities on job boards, career centers, and company and association Web sites, but also check community service organizations and volunteer opportunity databases. Some internships and long-term volunteer positions come with stipends and all provide experience and the chance to meet employers and other good networking contacts.
Other Considerations:

Economic Outlook.

Labor market considerations can definitely impact your job search. Read beyond the gloomy headlines and get the facts on what the current conditions are and consider them in choosing geographic location, employment sector, and the size and type of organization. Good sources include business news sections of newspapers and magazines, government reports, and books focusing on job trends.

Long Distance Job Search.

Conducting an out-of-town job search requires different strategies. First, thoroughly research the target area. Next, generate leads through networking. Consider subscribing to local newspapers and business publications. Contact the local Chamber of Commerce to develop good leads. Try to schedule trips to the location to permit informational and employment interviewing. Be careful about relocating to the new area without solid job leads or a "short term" back-up plan.

Other Strategies.

If all else fails and no job is in hand by your deadline, consider these possibilities:

- Talk to temporary personnel agencies about employment options.
- 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.
- Seek advice from a career counselor.
- Consider continuing your education or obtaining specialized training.
- Talk to former employers about opportunities.
- Join networking organizations or job search support groups.
- Think about self-employment—like writing, consulting, or a small business.

A successful job search = time, commitment, organization & strategy

Use multiple strategies and sources for jobs