

# Your Winning Edge

*Job Search & Networking*

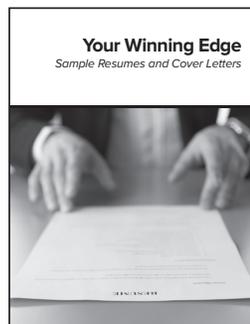


# Your Winning Edge, “The Series”

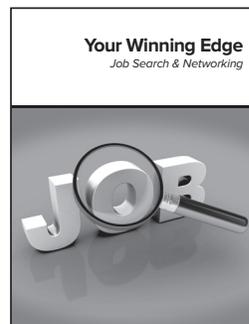
This publication is part of a series of documents designed as a comprehensive tool for jobseekers. Each publication focuses on different important aspects of finding and preparing for a job and giving you your winning edge.



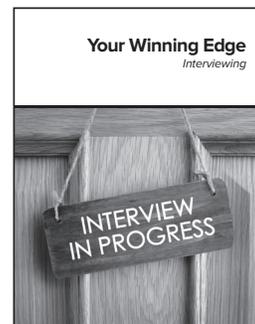
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## STARTING A JOB SEARCH: YOUR NEW FULL-TIME JOB

Searching for a new job may seem overwhelming. A job search is a full-time job in itself that requires a lot of hard work. Before you start your search, be sure to know your values, interests and skills.

**Many people only use one source to search for jobs. However, job openings can be found using many different resources:**

- Job banks such as the New York State Job Bank ([www.newyork.us.jobs/](http://www.newyork.us.jobs/))
- Networking
- Social networking sites
- Professional or Alumni Associations
- Newspapers
- Career centers at colleges and universities
- Government Civil Service Websites (<https://www.cs.ny.gov/>)
- Business websites
- Job clubs
- Your local New York State Career Centers <https://labor.ny.gov/career-center-locator/>

**Other resources that may be useful in your job search:**

- The Yellow Pages (or other phone directories for employers)
- Business directories, the Chamber of Commerce, the New York State Business Directory ([labor.ny.gov/stats/bdirector.shtm](http://labor.ny.gov/stats/bdirector.shtm))
- Public libraries ([novelnewyork.org/](http://novelnewyork.org/))
- Industry blogs or newspapers
- Private employment, placement or staffing agencies
- Labor market information
- Community or volunteer groups

**An example of a job search:**

1. Determine the type of job you want and where you would like to work. For example, do you want a career with a large corporation, local store, manufacturer, real estate office or bank?
2. Make a list of all businesses in the locations where you are willing to commute. Include telephone numbers. Cold call each one and ask to speak with the appropriate person, such as a hiring manager, the head of HR or the contact person listed on the job announcement.
3. Join social networking groups, such as Facebook and LinkedIn. Connect with as many people as possible. When/if appropriate, ask your connections if there are any job openings at their places of employment. Whether there is a job available or not, ask if you can send them your resume. Ask them to keep it on file. You can also network by participating in fitness and religious groups. Mention that you are looking for work and ask if anyone knows of any place that is hiring.

Serving veterans at New York State Career Centers is a priority for the New York State Department of Labor. Find out more about these services on our Veteran Services page: <https://labor.ny.gov/vets/vetintropage.shtm>

## CREATE A JOB SEARCH PLAN

Having a job search plan is not enough. You must have an effective “AIM.” “AIM” stands for “Attitude, Initiative and Motivation.”

**Attitude** – With the right attitude, you will create a confident, exciting and positive first impression when you meet a prospective employer.

**Initiative** – Do something; take action or take a chance. Without initiative, you will have trouble getting started with your job search.

**Motivation** – This comes from within. You, and only you, are in charge of your AIM.

Creating a job search schedule will enable you to set aside time for drafting a resume, creating a cover letter, being prepared, using the Internet to find job openings, networking and completing the interview process.

Schedule time on your calendar for job search activities. Treat that time as you would any work commitment. Be consistent in the amount of time you spend each day, or week, on job search activities. This will help you keep your momentum going. It’s a good idea to have a plan before you start searching for specific jobs. A plan should be a flexible outline of what you want to do and how you expect to do it.

1. Start with at least one career goal that will be the focus of your job hunt.
2. Assess your skills, strengths and interests. List the types of jobs that match them.
3. Have your job application information ready along with an updated resume and cover letter.
4. Research businesses or employers you want to work for and contact them.
5. Network with people in the field, support groups and job clubs for information. Learn tricks, techniques and tips for networking.
6. Rehearse answering questions about leaving your past jobs out loud.
7. Attend job search or other training sessions at your local New York State Career Center.
8. Practice your interviewing skills.
9. Keep records of your job search. Use JobZone. [www.jobzone.ny.gov](http://www.jobzone.ny.gov)
10. A job search takes time, so create a budget to support yourself during your search.

If you feel overwhelmed by your job search, please stop and see a career advisor at a New York State Career Center.

### Tips for job seekers

During your job search, be persistent and try to keep a positive attitude. Remember to eat well and exercise so you stay healthy during this time. Take time to socialize and receive support from friends and family. If you need further help with your job search, please visit a career advisor at a New York State Career Center.

## ONLINE JOB SEARCH

One of the most useful job search strategies is to use the Internet effectively. An online job search should not be limited to using job boards. Millions of other job seekers are competing for jobs that are posted online. You will need to use other Internet resources to gain an advantage. For example, using the Web for networking, researching employers, learning from experts and finding salary information can greatly improve your job search. You can also put your resume online for employers who are actively looking to fill a job opening.

### These are tools you should use to make the most of the Internet:

- **Company websites** can help you learn more about businesses or organizations. A company's website is the first place you should go to research an employer. The quality and amount of information will vary widely. You may find mission statements, a history of the organization, names of key supervisors and business plans or job postings.
- **Job boards or job banks** are the most common tools used to search for jobs on the Internet. Most let you search by keywords to find jobs. Many let you search by location, industry or job title. However, do not use job boards as the only place to look for jobs. Job board posts are viewed by thousands of job hunters like you. Each position is extremely competitive. On many job board sites, you can post your resume online for employers to search. Posting your resume may attract an employer's attention enough so they will contact you. However, waiting for the employer to come to you is not an effective strategy. You must actively apply for jobs.

The New York State Job Bank ([www.newyork.us.jobs/index.asp](http://www.newyork.us.jobs/index.asp)) has a feature that schedules an automatic job search to look for new job postings in your career field. You will not have to manually search the job bank for new postings if you use the "Job Search Agent" feature.

- **Online trade journals** are an easy way to access news in your career field. Trade journals contain articles by industry experts, information on networking events, industry blogs and job banks. To find a trade journal, try typing "trade journal directory" into a search engine. Your public library can also help you access databases of trade journals and professional associations.
- **Association websites** have information on trends, volunteer or professional development opportunities, best practices, industry news and job boards. Almost every industry has an association. You may need to be a member to access its content and most associations charge annual fees. Keep in mind that some may have six-month trial memberships to give you time to see how useful the site is for your job search.
- **Search engines** are the main tools to find information online. They search for the keywords you enter and create a list of websites based on them. You can use these tools to track down jobs and learn more about companies. Google, Bing and Yahoo are examples of popular search engines.
- **Job Search websites** search multiple websites, newspapers, company web sites and associations, as well as compile job search results based on keywords and location:
  - [Indeed.com](http://Indeed.com)
  - [Careerbuilder.com](http://Careerbuilder.com)
  - [Simplyhired.com](http://Simplyhired.com) allows users to send their resumes out for posting on five other sites for free.
  - [Monster.com](http://Monster.com) is arguably the best known global job listings site. This site also offers advice on resumes, interviewing and salary.
  - [Craigslist.com](http://Craigslist.com) has online classifieds. This site gives those who are focused on searching for jobs within their communities an easy way to look.

## Beware of employment scams over the Internet

As you search for your next job, you should be aware that there are employment scams on the Internet. Staying informed can help protect yourself from email scams and traps that involve criminals trying to obtain your personal information. Be wary of any unwanted email messages you may receive claiming that a company is interested in your resume.

If you receive an email message that fits any of the criteria below, it is likely a scam:

- Does not greet you by name.
- Does not include information about a specific job opening.
- Contains non-specific claims. For example, “We have thousands of jobs,” or “We work with major companies.”
- Mentions seeing your resume on a site where you did not post it.
- Links to a website that looks professional but lacks information about the company, such as its location and ownership.
- Offers to sell you a “starter kit” or something similar.
- Promises you can earn a large amount of money “in your spare time” or “working from home.”
- Mentions paying you via bank account transfers.

If you get involved in any of these schemes, your bank account may be compromised or your identity stolen.

Victims of Internet fraud may file a complaint with the **Internet Crime Complaint Center** ([www.ic3.gov/default.aspx](http://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx)) (IC3), a partnership of the FBI, National White Collar Crime Center and the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

## NEWSPAPERS AND TRADE JOURNALS

Some of us may begin our job search by picking up a newspaper and turning to the “Help Wanted” section. We continue the process by circling a few ads that appear to be what we are looking for and our response usually takes the form of a call, a visit, or a cover letter and a resume. For some, that one section of the newspaper defines their job search. However, the local newspaper is only one small source of finding employment openings. Do not rely on the newspaper alone for job leads. Technology has changed how people search for jobs. Resources like online newspapers ([nyjobsources.com/papers.html](http://nyjobsources.com/papers.html)) and job banks are available. Online newspapers get their job listings from job banks such as Career Builder, Indeed or others.

Advertised job openings also include openings posted on the websites of individual employers, ads in professional journals, like the Monthly Labor Review ([www.bls.gov/mlr](http://www.bls.gov/mlr)), a sign in a restaurant window and other public announcements. Traditional newspaper ads and online listings often overlap. Many newspapers make employment ads available by electronic means, in addition to printing them on paper.

### Use the newspaper wisely:

- **Review the type of trade or business that interests you.** Classified and online ads should be used daily in your job search. However, they are not your only means of locating job openings so do not spend all of your time reviewing them. Be aware that most professions publish trade journals or newsletters about their activities. Most publications carry classified ads and are an excellent resource in looking for the job you want.
- **One newspaper is not enough.** Many people read only one newspaper, but there are many available. Surrounding communities also have newspapers with classified ads. Arrange to read three to five different papers. Your local library should have copies of regional newspapers if you do not wish to purchase them.
- **Do what the ad asks.** If the ad provides a phone number to call, you should use it. If the ad states, “No phone calls please,” do not call. If you do, you may lose an opportunity to apply for the job. If an address is provided, send a cover letter and a resume.

- **Do not be put off by blind ads.** You may see ads with box numbers, such as, “Box G-80” or “Box HE21,” rather than an actual employer’s name and address. These ads are known as “blind” ads. Respond to the ad if you are interested. Blind cover letters are used when you are sure of the career you want but you are not sure who it is hiring for that position. If you do not receive a response within a week or two, assume that other candidates have been chosen to schedule interviews.

## RESEARCH BUSINESSES

Most businesses have a website with a section for career opportunities. It is essential that you research the organization before you write a cover letter and resume or attend an interview.

You can find potential employers in the New York State Business Directory. Use the Business Directory to obtain the name, address and contact information for businesses most likely to employ people in your desired occupation or industry. Employment levels at more than 663,000 firms in New York State were compared with statewide employment patterns for hundreds of occupations in order to identify potential employers in your field. Use the Business Finder ([www.careerinfonet.org/employerlocator](http://www.careerinfonet.org/employerlocator)) to find contact information for nationwide businesses.

### Researching the business can help:

- Identify companies that may be hiring in your field.
- Focus your job search on employers whose values reflect yours.
- Learn about the potential growth of businesses and industries.
- Target your cover letter and resume.
- Understand how you can apply your skills in a new field.
- Find hidden job markets.
- Prepare for a job interview.

### Tips on what to research:

- The primary mission of the company
- Company goals and priorities
- Services or products that are provided
- Latest annual sales or other revenue information
- Major competitors
- Work environment or structure
- Important issues about the industry
- Job opportunities

### Where to research:

- Company website
- Business Review magazine
- Employee Biographies
- Internet search engines (e.g., Google)
- LinkedIn
- Informational Interviews
- Local library
- The New York State Department of Labor website
- Twitter or Facebook
- Annual reports
- Press releases

## **TRANSFER SKILLS FOR A FUTURE JOB**

A skill is something you can do well. An employer expects that you have skills that benefit the job. Knowing what skills you possess is at the core of a successful job search. Skills mapping helps you to consider a job or experience in terms of what you gained and learned instead of focusing only on what you did. It helps you prioritize the most meaningful skills for the job you are considering. You will discover that by identifying your skills, you will be able to market yourself more effectively.

### **Market your skills**

Having a degree doesn't guarantee that you will have a job. Remember to always find the best way to present what you have to offer. Your ultimate goal is to successfully combine your skills, experiences, education, training and personality traits into a package that employers are seeking. Your skills will get you the job if you market them successfully! Here are some of the tools that will help:

### **Resume**

Your resume showcases your transferable skills. You can emphasize your many skills and elaborate on how you used them. You can give examples from past paid jobs, internships, volunteer work or other experiences to showcase these skills. If you are doing a chronological resume, you can use transferable skills to highlight what you gained from individual experiences.

### **Cover letter**

Transferable skills can be highlighted in a cover letter to market the skills you have to offer to an employer. A cover letter provides an opportunity to focus a potential employer on the skills and details that might not have been included on a resume. A cover letter also gives you an opportunity to compare the skills required for the position to the skills you possess. Remember to research the company you're applying to before crafting your cover letter. This will help you select the skills to highlight in your cover letter.

### **Interview**

An interview is the best time for you to showcase your skills. Be prepared to describe your responsibilities, how you contributed and what you gained from your relevant experiences. Remember, communication skills can be demonstrated during the interview as you express your thoughts and connect with the interviewer. Researching the company and the position will also help guide your interviewing responses to reflect the keywords and industry language an employer is looking to hear.

## **EXAMPLES OF MARKETING TRANSFERABLE SKILLS**

### **Retail associate applying for teacher's aid position**

As a sales associate in a retail store, I successfully handled customers' needs every day. To succeed, I had to be a patient and diplomatic problem solver. Because the same kind of patience and creative problem solving are required from teachers, I am confident I will be an effective third grade teacher's aid at your school.

### **Telemarketer seeking position in hospitality**

My work as a telemarketer required me to communicate with an array of people, some of whom posed difficult challenges. I honed my communication skills to the point where I was almost always able to solve problems and promote customer satisfaction. These are exactly the skills that are vital for employment in the hospitality industry.

### **Systems analyst applying to be a project manager**

My extensive experience analyzing user requirements and developing procedures for all departments resulted in improved computer systems throughout my organization. Maintaining detailed reports, collaborating with the management team and determining support necessary for successful project completion are all tasks I am familiar with that would help me directly contribute to your organization.

### **Server applying for an entry level marketing position**

I have used marketing and customer service skills in the restaurant field. In my most recent position, I marketed appetizers, desserts and other add-ons to customers. This added value to their dining experience while increasing profits for my employer. I would like to apply the same sales and interpersonal skills in the marketing position that you have posted.

### **Stay-at-home parent seeking position as management trainee**

As a parent of three active children, I know the importance of good time management and organization. These skills, along with exemplary leadership and communication abilities, will help me contribute to our mutual success when I join your management training program.

## MARKET YOUR RESUME

Make sure you have developed an effective resume before you start marketing it. The goal is to get your resume into the hands of the right people—people who can make or influence the decision to hire you. Depending on where you are in your job search you may be contacting employers directly, making connections through networking or searching the Internet for opportunities.

### Here are tips for marketing your resume at different stages of your search:

**Write effective cover letters.** Learn why thoughtful, well-written cover letters are essential and expected. Look at samples of these documents.

**Network and share your resume.** Follow the guidelines for distributing your resume effectively and appropriately in a variety of networking situations.

**Distribute your resume at job fairs.** Job fairs are special events with their own rules for networking and distributing resumes. Learn what to expect.

**Post your resume wisely.** It's tempting to focus on popular job boards like Monster.com. Also consider posting your resume on specialized websites that fit your skills.

**Submit your resume appropriately.** Follow the rules for resume submission and the expectations the employer mentioned on the company's website or in the job posting.

### Network your resume

Research shows that about 80% of jobs are eventually filled through networking. This is a great way to circulate your resume. Remember: networking is about establishing relationships and sharing information—not asking for a job. Here are some guidelines:

- Before you offer your resume to a new contact, wait until you've established a relationship. Offering it right away may be viewed as asking for a job.
- Focus on getting information and referrals from your contacts. Then, use that information to do additional research and target your resume to a specific opportunity.
- Since there's always a chance someone will ask for your resume, always have copies available when networking. Make sure your resume is on high quality paper.
- If a contact does ask for your resume and offers to circulate it for you, follow up promptly with a thank you note or email message. Keep them informed on any resulting activity.

The same resume etiquette applies when you're using social networking tools such as LinkedIn.

### Post your resume wisely

Many job seekers focus on big job boards like Monster.com. But according to experts, unless you're in a high-demand field, this is one of the least effective job search methods.

### Submitting your resume

Most companies want an electronic version of your resume because it is easier to read and scan for keywords. You will want to keep an electronic resume because this format is easier for you to edit, forward and upload to job search databases and social networking sites like LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. You will still need a paper resume for interviews.

**Email message subject line:** Include your last name and the position you are applying for in the subject line so employers can easily pick out your email message. Do not use all caps or words like "amazing" or "read now," because these words could trigger spam filters. Avoid excess formatting on electronic versions. Be sure to keep your email address professional.

**Personal information:** Do not share your personal information when you post your resume on the internet. Make sure you do not include your home address or phone number. List your email as your point of contact.

## JOB FAIRS

Job fairs are held by many different organizations. Going to job fairs may lead to an opportunity for job seekers to speak directly to employers that might have job openings. It's important to have the right expectations for what you can and cannot do at a job fair.

**Expect to leave with increased opportunities to discuss your brand or how you want to be seen by others in the marketplace and ultimately, how others see you.**

- Build your professional network.
- Introduce yourself to potential employers and answer employers' questions.
- Get information and leads that are not available on the employers' websites.

**Do not expect to get a job offer or interview immediately.**

- Getting an on-the-spot interview is rare, but be prepared just in case!
- Do not be disappointed if you are not offered the job.

**Before the job fair:**

- **Register.** Although not always required, having your name on the list of pre-registered attendees shows professional courtesy to both fair organizers and exhibiting employers.
- **Research participating employers.** Find out ahead of time which employers hire people with your skills. Even if the company is not on your list of targeted employers, treat them as if they were.
- **Know your career objective.**
- **Make a list of questions for employers.** Ask about how they recruit and hire people with your skill set. Your target employers will likely have similar hiring practices.
- **Perfect your resume.**
- **Practice your elevator speech** or 60-second promotion that highlights your background and skills. It's a good idea to practice this with someone.
- **Practice interview responses.**

**During the job fair:**

- Dress professionally.
- Bring several copies of your resume and a pen and paper for notes.
- Talk with recruiters while being aware of the social cues. If a recruiter wants to continue to talk to you, do so. If s/he seems to be busy with other priorities, do not talk for too long.
- Begin with a firm handshake and maintain good eye contact when you give your 60-second elevator speech. Use a clear voice and provide the employer with brief and relevant information.
- Get business cards, names and contact information from everyone you interact with.
- After meeting someone, make a few notes about what you discussed with them.
- Talk with other job seekers at the job fair.
- Be professional, polite and positive.

## Distribute your resume at job fairs:

Job fairs can be a great way to meet people and practice your interviewing skills. They are good to attend because they can result in getting useful contact information. Keep the following guidelines and tips in mind:

- **Most job fairs have websites.** Visit these sites first and note any participating companies you're interested in. You can then focus on those companies at the fair
- **The people you meet at job fairs are generally recruiters,** not people with hiring authority. So understand that the job fair is usually just a first step to getting hired.
- **Some companies do not accept hard copy resumes** at job fairs because of processing issues, so you may need to post your resume on a website or complete an application online. Be prepared with an electronic resume.
- **Some recruiters will review your resume shortly after you greet them,** so make sure you know it well and be ready to discuss your qualifications.
- **Have plenty of resumes available.** This way, you demonstrate having organizational skills and confidence. This is important for making a good first impression.
- **Some experts suggest having a "mini resume" on a business card.** This card has contact information on one side and a list of your skills on the reverse.

## After the job fair:

Send a thank you email message or letter to remind your contacts of who you are and any specific details you discussed. Thank your contacts for their time and ask about next steps. Make sure to organize your job fair notes and contact information.

## USE THE PHONE EFFECTIVELY

Proper use of the telephone during a job search greatly increases your opportunities for employment. An employer needs to know that he or she will be able to reach you if necessary and that you will be able to have professional conversations with customers over the phone.

**Use your home or cell phone number with voicemail.** Provide a phone number where you will be available if an employer calls. Most recruiters or potential employers are overloaded with resumes. An employer may not keep calling in order to reach you if your phone is not answered, so it is wise to have a voicemail system in place so that they can call and leave a message.

**Consider your phone message system as a "first impression" tool.** Remember, your voicemail message is part of the first impression a prospective employer gets, so make sure it is professional. Think of your voicemail message as an audition tape for potential employers. Keep your message simple and eliminate background noise, music and slang. An appropriate home message is, "You have reached 555-555-5588, the June Smith residence (or June Smith's cell phone). Please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible. Thank you."

**Use a traditional ringtone during your job search.**

**Be prepared when you answer a call from an employer.** If you include your cell phone number on a resume, make sure that you are prepared when you answer a call from a potential employer who may be interested in interviewing you. For example, do not answer the call if you are driving your car and/or do not have access to a pen and paper. If you are not prepared, then do not answer the call. Allow the employer to leave a message. Be prepared to answer calls by having an "elevator speech" prepared, no longer than 60 seconds, that highlights your skills and work experience and questions you may want to ask about next steps or the interview.

**Follow phone etiquette.** During your job search, make sure you identify yourself every time you answer the phone. When making phone calls, make sure there are no excessive background noises (for example: television, radio or children). Do not eat, drink or smoke while on the phone. Remember to smile while talking to a prospective employer. It may seem silly, but smiling helps you maintain an upbeat tone of voice.

**Inform others who may be answering your phone.** Let everyone in the household know that a prospective employer may call. Ask household members to answer the phone politely. Emphasize to anyone answering the phone the importance of taking accurate messages and giving them to you in a timely manner.

## **NETWORKING: THE MOST EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH STRATEGY**

Networking is about getting to know people and building relationships that can reveal hidden job opportunities. Networking is one of the most effective ways to find a job. Networking can be as simple as asking an acquaintance about their field of work.

Three reasons why networking is so critical when job hunting:

1. **It is the most effective job search strategy.** Referrals are generally the number one way of hiring people. Building long-term, mutually beneficial connections will bring benefits now and throughout your career. Networking can help get you and your resume moved to the top of the pile for an interview.
2. **Being able to network with others is an important business skill.** It's the ability to meet new people and build mutually beneficial partnerships or exchange information with others.
3. **Building a network of professional and personal contacts can directly impact your career achievements and income.** Networking is a key reason for higher salaries and career advancement. Anyone can benefit significantly by improving their networking skills, habits and mindset. You can also stay current with the changes in your field by networking.

Keep in mind that it may be natural to want to withdraw when the job search isn't going well. That's really when you should force yourself to go out and meet new people, expand your network, and try new job search methods.

It is estimated that only 20% of all jobs are advertised. This means that 80% of jobs are filled by companies who never advertised the position. This 80% makes up the hidden job market which includes the positions that are filled by referral. This is the "who you know" method of recruitment.

Research shows that 25% of job seekers make over 1,000 network contacts before finding a good job.

Most career specialists feel that a network of between 40-75 people is required for the network process to work. Overall, the more quality network contacts you have, the more likely you are to find a good job. You probably "network" more than you realize already.

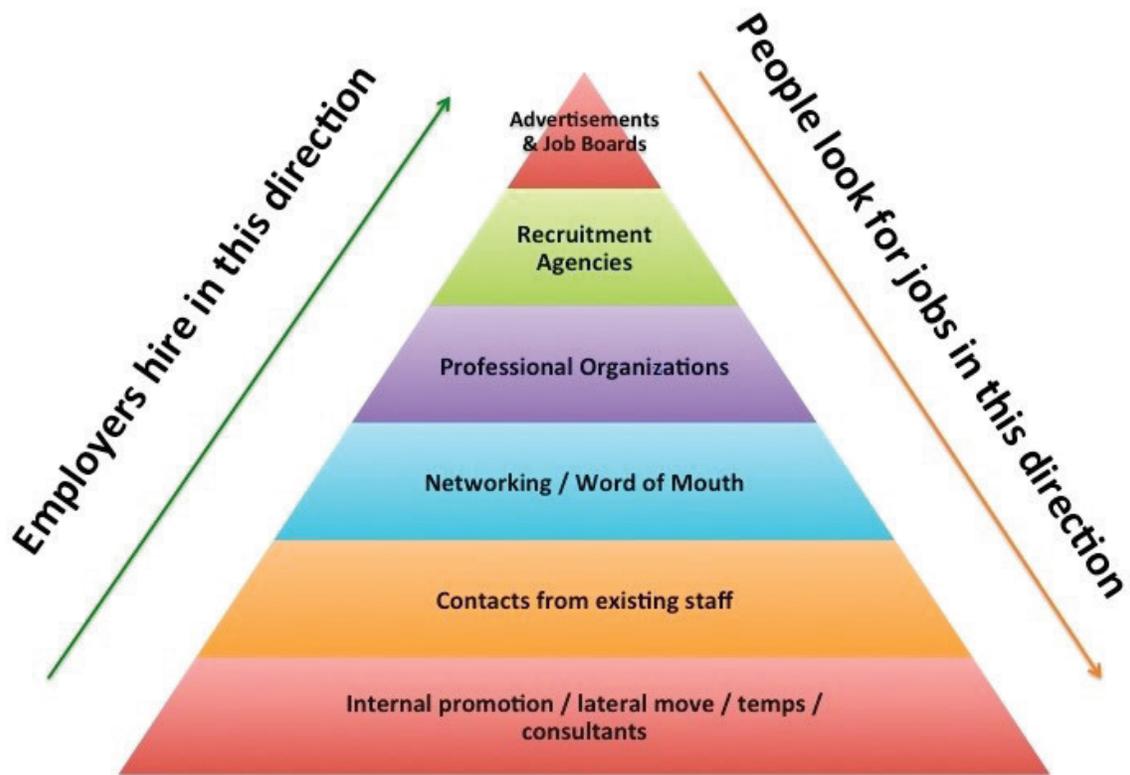
If you are unemployed or searching for another job, it can be challenging to wait patiently until you find your next position. Networking may help make your job search process shorter.

### **How job seekers find hidden (unadvertised) jobs**

People often make the mistake of looking for work by searching job postings and going to employment agencies that are paid by employers to find workers. While looking through job ads posted on the Internet and other places should be a part of your job search, you should not spend the majority of your time this way. A large number of people are looking at, and competing for, the same posted positions. Even if there is a lot of competition for a position, this should not discourage you from sending your resume in response to job ads. However, connecting with social networks or people you know can be a more effective job search strategy.

Job seekers find approximately 80% of jobs through the "hidden job market" or the group of unadvertised jobs that exist. There is often a lag between when businesses decide to fill a position and when the job is posted. Take a look at common stages of how jobs become available.

## The Bottom-Up approach to job searching



### Measure your ability to network

The first step in networking is to understand what networking is. It involves creating job leads. What are you willing to do to create effective job leads?

- Yes  No  1. When going to a party or social gathering, do you bring a copy of your resume or business cards with you to give to people you meet?
- Yes  No  2. If you overheard someone that you didn't know talking about a possible job opportunity in your field, would you try to join the conversation?
- Yes  No  3. Have you developed a prospective list of at least 30 different businesses for which you'd like to work and made a preliminary contact with someone associated with the business?
- Yes  No  4. Have you developed a network list of at least 30 different people who can help you develop job leads and find information about employment opportunities?
- Yes  No  5. Have you joined any job clubs or networking groups?
- Yes  No  6. In the past week, have you contacted at least six people to ask them if they'd be part of your employment network?
- Yes  No  7. In the past six months, have you acquired a list of professional conferences or acquired any association mailing lists for use in your networking?

- Yes  No  8. Are you willing to make “cold contacts” or do “informational interviews” to seek help and advice with people who might be able to hire you or are in your line of work?
- Yes  No  9. Have you attended any type of class, taken a course or sought help in building job lead prospects in the past six months?
- Yes  No  10. Can you list at least ten ways to expand your network and develop more job leads?

<b>How do you measure up?</b>		
<b>7 or more “yes” responses:</b>	<b>4-6 “yes” responses</b>	<b>1–3 “yes” responses:</b>
You probably have a number of job prospects and interviews already set up. Begin working on possible responses to interview questions.	You’re a bit better off than some of your competition. You can still use a little networking advice.	You’ve not gathered enough names, skills or information to make your network pay off and reduce the length of time you will be looking for work

## **Top 10 networking tips, tricks and techniques**

### **Information and advice from America’s best career professionals**

10. Generally, avoid asking for more than twenty minutes of someone’s time in-person, or more than five minutes of their time on the phone.
9. Return all phone calls within 24 hours.
8. Present yourself and your needs concisely. Do not talk too much about personal or unrelated matters.
7. Look for “leads,” not for “jobs.” “Leads” will lead you to “jobs.” If someone suggests getting in touch with someone else, ask permission to use his/her name and then follow up as soon as possible.
6. Focus your networking with people who have direct links to the people with the power to hire.
5. Always be prepared to present your strengths, goals and how you’ll benefit your next employer.
4. Never speak poorly of someone in your network, your school or your former employer.
3. Practice, practice and practice your verbal and phone presentations.
2. Learn more about the field you’re currently pursuing.
1. Be ready to handle rejections.

## 10 Common networking mistakes

### ▶ **Believing that networking, by itself, will solve all of your job search problems.**

Although networking is one of the top approaches to developing job leads, you'll limit your search success if you rely on only one method, approach or technique.

### ▶ **Not having a set of well-defined objectives when you talk to a person in your network.**

Always remember that the time a network contact spends helping you is time he/she could have spent elsewhere. Be brief and specific about what you want. Be prepared to answer at least four questions.

- What are you trying to get from your contact (names, advice, company information, etc.)?
- What are your immediate short-term and long-term career goals?
- In what types of companies, organizations or departments would you prefer to work?
- Are there any special concerns to be addressed in your job search, such as a barrier to employment?

### ▶ **Not maintaining regular follow-up contacts with the people in your network.**

Most people, by their own nature, like to help people. What they don't like is being used and forgotten. Don't just contact someone to ask for help. Follow up with the people in your network on a regular basis. Let them know how you're doing, what you found out and how your contact with them helped you.

### ▶ **Not showing up for meetings set up by a person in your referral network.**

If you miss an appointment that someone helped set up for you, you have lost that network contact forever.

### ▶ **Using avoidance behaviors and excuses to not network.**

Many people feel uncomfortable when making network contacts. This results in excuses for not networking such as, "I'm not social by nature," "I don't have time to network," and "I don't know anyone in the field." Networking shyness can be overcome with a little practice and a willingness to learn from your mistakes.

### ▶ **Not making networking a daily activity.**

Networking should become a part of life, not something done only when you need a job. At every social activity, try to meet a couple of new people and do the following:

- Find out what they do and for whom they work.
- Let them know something about your skills, talents, knowledge, abilities and career goals.
- Ask them for the contact information of two other people who might be willing to talk to you.
- Ask them if it's okay to use their names when making a contact.

### ▶ **Having poor network management.**

Documentation, organization and follow through are essential for networking. When you are able, set up a spreadsheet or database to track your network efforts.

### ▶ **Not being prepared to accept network contact rejection.**

Rejection is a normal function of networking. Not everyone you want to talk with will have the time to talk or may not even want to talk with you. Be understanding and prepared to accept rejection of a network contact politely.

### ▶ **Not casting a wide enough net.**

Don't limit your network by thinking someone won't be of any help. Everybody knows someone, who knows someone, who knows someone.

### ▶ **Not saying, "Thank you."**

Say thank you verbally and in writing. Thank your network contacts for their time and any assistance that they have given you. You will be remembered by them and they will be more willing to assist you in the future.

## Make networking a habit

Networking can take place all the time. You should make time to consciously meet, greet, listen and engage in conversations. Talk to people you do not know everywhere you go, including: parties, weddings, airports, supermarkets, sporting events, festivals and bookstores.

- Learn to ask, “What do you do?” with comfort, sincerity and interest.
- Become a better listener. Ask a question and then be quiet until you hear the answer.
- Keep a business card or other form of information about yourself on you at all times.
- Join as many networking clubs and associations in your field as you can. Make yourself visible to influential people in the group. Consider starting a blog that offers commentary on your industry.
- Keep in touch with people (for example: friends from college, your former coworkers or people in your field) using tools like LinkedIn and Facebook.

## Overcome networking fears

You are not alone if you are uncomfortable networking. Try networking where you are comfortable and where other people in your profession might be found. The following tips are ways to defeat the most common networking fears:

Common networking fears	Tips to overcome networking fears
Meeting strangers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See the people who you are meeting for the first time as friends.</li><li>• Build confidence by practicing your networking skills in an environment in which you feel safe.</li></ul>
Making a fool out of yourself or saying something wrong.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You probably will not look foolish. It is likely only your perception. Conversations about work and careers are commonplace.</li><li>• If you make a mistake, don't worry. Your contact may not even notice a mistake from you or it may be an opportunity to learn.</li></ul>
Concerned about what to say to a stranger.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare yourself before the actual conversation. To start a conversation, simply say, “Hello,” and introduce yourself.</li><li>• Do you want to have something that is detailed to say? Create a unique and genuine story, or a 60 second elevator speech as a way of introducing yourself.</li></ul>
Coming across as uninteresting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You do not need to do anything special; just be a good listener. You'll be able to ask good questions if you have been listening.</li></ul>
Not knowing how to finish a conversation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice ways to end a conversation in advance. A simple sentence at the right moment (a natural break in the conversation) is usually enough.</li></ul>

## Distribution tips for business or networking cards

Whenever you meet someone new, exchange business or networking cards. Sharing a card shows people that you are prepared and open to help them when needed.

Most importantly, the card may remind them about you, your conversation and/or requests. Below are tips that can help you effectively use your business or networking cards to help you get your next job.

### Do's

- **DO. . .** Keep it simple. Use conservative and traditional fonts and colors.
- **DO. . .** Include a description of the type of work you are seeking.
- **DO. . .** Include your phone number and email address.
- **DO. . .** Ask for others' cards. On the back of their cards, write brief notes about your conversation to refresh your memory when you write follow-up notes or thank you notes.
- **DO. . .** Be ready to talk about yourself and look for opportunities to do so.
- **DO. . .** Use professional language.

### Distribution Tips

- **Join an organization** that interests you and has a variety of different kinds of members.
- **Attend classes, seminars or workshops** at the library, adult education center or local college.
- **Find a job club or support group.**
- **Go where the workers go** to socialize for an early-morning or late-afternoon cup of coffee.
- **Talk to the people who work for you** such as health care workers, police officers, hair stylists and others who come into contact with large numbers of people.
- **Keep cards with you at all times.** Have them with you when you go to the grocery store, go to pick up your children or any other place you routinely visit.
- **Give cards to family members and friends to share with their contacts.** Everyone is a potential contact for a future job or career.

## **JOB CLUBS FOR NETWORKING, CAREER ADVANCEMENT AND SUPPORT**

Finding a job can be a very difficult process, especially in a competitive economy where there are many job seekers competing for each position. One way to get help with your job search is to join a job club. A job club is for a group of people who are each looking for a new job and meet regularly to help each other in doing so. Job clubs offer tools for a successful job search, including networking, social media training and direct access to employers seeking qualified employees. In addition, many faith-based and secular job clubs offer much more: fellowship, spiritual or emotional support and encouragement.

Having support from your peers can help keep you motivated and reinforces the feeling that you are not alone in your search. With a job club, you are joining a support system of job seekers who can push each other toward successful employment. Members leave the club when they have successfully completed the hiring process and are then encouraged to share their successes with the group.

### **Purpose of a job club:**

- Peer support
- Coping with job loss
- Removing employment barriers
- Networking
- Job searching
- Building skills

### **Other names for a job club:**

- Professional Opportunity Development Workgroup
- Jobseeker Networking Support
- Job Search Networking Group
- Career Networking or Networking Club
- Employment Network or Job Searching Club
- Job Finding Club

## **INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS: A POWERFUL WAY TO NETWORK**

An informational interview is one in which you can explore a specific job, company or career field with a professional to get feedback. You can get feedback about your resume and career direction or get suggestions how to further explore your desired career field. It's also a form of networking. You will be in a much better position if you take the initiative and ask questions about the position. Compare your background and strengths and how they match the job requirements. You may not be meeting with a person who can hire you, but take the meeting seriously. Focus your efforts on information gathering and exploration. Keep in mind that the company might be your future employer.

### **Making a contact by phone, email message or letter**

A networking email message, phone call or letter has one purpose: to introduce (or reintroduce) you to a contact who you hope may have some useful information or advice to help you get the job you want. Many networking contacts ask for an informational interview. The following is a list of sample situations when you would use a letter as part of your networking:

1. You have met someone either at a networking event or in an informal setting and you would like to meet with them again to talk to them in more detail.
2. You have been referred to, or given the name of, a contact by a friend or colleague who knows you are interested in a particular career field. You may write to someone you have not met before, but has been referred to you by a mutual acquaintance.
3. You have discovered the name of a potentially valuable contact through your own research.

## Tips on making contacts

Research the person on LinkedIn or other Internet site to help make your networking letter more personal. Talk to your coworkers or friends who might have worked with the person.

1. **Mention the reference at the beginning.** Ensure that the opening sentence mentions the name of the person who referred you to the reader, such as, "John Smith suggested I contact you." This establishes a connection with the reader before moving on to your request.
2. **Explain who you are and why you are contacting them.** Make it clear that you are seeking information so you can further your knowledge of a certain career area or to determine your next step. You may share that you are actually looking for a job, but never ask for a job. It is generally more effective to ask a contact you are unfamiliar with for assistance with names of people to contact, than it is to ask for a job. Often, if your letter is polite and persuasive, people will be interested in talking with you. Let the person know how they can best help you. They cannot read your mind, so depending on what you want, ask if they have time to meet with you. They can offer insights about the current job market in that field, how to approach your job search or suggest other people you should talk to about your job search strategy.
3. **Confirm a convenient time to talk.** If you call, ask when would be a convenient time to talk. Give your contact a chance to speak with you now or to make arrangements for a better time.
4. **Tell them why they are a special contact for you.** If you have a mutual friend or acquaintance, mention his or her name. Tell them you appreciate their input and that you recognize that their time is valuable.
5. **Briefly describe your skills.** Use your 60 second elevator pitch. Let the person know what you have to offer and how they can best help you.
6. **Ask for another contact.** If you are contacting someone you have not met before, you may choose to ask them to suggest another person to contact. If they can't help you, ask if they know anyone in the industry who might be willing to talk to you - not necessarily about a job, but about your job search strategy. If they suggest getting in touch with someone else, ask their permission to reference their name and then follow up on their suggested contact as soon as possible.
7. **Write the next step you will take to make contact.** When sending a letter or email message, let the contact know you will follow up in the next few days to discuss a possible meeting.
8. **Don't be afraid to show your personality in the letters,** but keep the letter professional. Just remember to keep letters short and relevant to the networking request.

## Networking is a two-way street

- Staying open to future communication is crucial to networking. Your networking contacts are interested in what you're doing as much as you are interested in them.
- If you have a resource that you think one of your contacts would appreciate, pass it along to him or her. If someone referred you to another contact that was particularly helpful, write to the person who referred you to thank them and let them know.
- If you have an informational interview, do not forget to acknowledge the support staff you talk to in the process. They are sometimes your most direct link to the person who has the power to hire you. Their impressions of you can make a difference.

## Write effective Thank You notes

Each person you meet is part of your network or group who may be able to help you find job leads. Let people know how much you appreciate their help by sending a thank you note. Not only does it show appreciation, but it gives you the opportunity to highlight your skills or points that you forgot to speak about during your meeting. Other things you may do to show appreciation include:

- Thanking them for their time and insight. Explain why the conversation was meaningful or valuable.
- Sharing the results of the connections they offered.
- Sharing a resource or contact that might be useful to them (if appropriate).
- Writing a thank you note even if you think you will not be able to do business with that person at that time. You never know when a contact may become important.

Thank you notes can be handwritten, emailed or mailed. If you send a handwritten note, be sure that the writing is clear and neat. Remember to follow up on any commitments you make in the thank you note. See below for an example of a basic thank you note.

### John A. Smith

123 Central Avenue, Pleasant, NY 12206  
(518) 222-2222 / [jasmith@mailbox.com](mailto:jasmith@mailbox.com)

---

January 5, 2015

Henry Helpful  
Stocking Manager  
Any Company  
66 Any Street  
Possibilities, NY 12345

Dear Mr. Helpful:

It was good to meet you the other day. Thank you for the information you shared with me regarding the expansion at the cement plant. As you suggested, I forwarded my resume to the hiring manager. I expect to meet with him next week and I will let you know the outcome. Please keep me in mind if you hear of any other opportunities.

Sincerely,

*John Smith*

John A. Smith

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## **SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE JOB SEARCH**

### **What is social media?**

Social media websites are web-based communication tools that allow large amounts of users to interact with one another by sharing ideas, giving feedback, leaving comments and receiving information.

- The “social” part of the term refers to how these websites allow you to interact with many people.
- The “media” part of the term refers to the Internet.
- Social media is a very broad term and websites that fall under this category can be used both personally and professionally.

Not everything you do online can be considered social media, however. For example, email is not considered social media. Email cannot be considered social media because large amounts of users cannot interact simultaneously. In addition, email does not have many of the common features that can be found on many social media websites, such as profile pages, news feeds and “like” buttons.

### **What is an online presence?**

Also referred to as a “digital footprint,” your online presence is the broad spectrum of the identity that you have created for yourself online, both personal and professional. Your online presence changes each time you publish new content or interact with someone on any public domain. Essentially, your online presence is the information that can be found about you when an online search of your name is conducted.

- There are two parts to building your online presence:
  1. Establishing yourself on key websites
  2. Creating online activity and content

### **Why is having a strong online presence important?**

Experts are suggesting that your online presence will end up replacing the traditional resume at some point in the future. Whether you agree with this suggestion or not, it is still important to note the significance of a professional online presence to attract potential employers can assist you in landing your dream job.

According to Jobvite, an online software and recruiting corporation, 93% of recruiters have indicated that they were likely to look at a candidates’ social media profile(s). Therefore, it is important to maintain a professional presence on your social media profiles because, a potential employer may be looking at them. In addition, 42% of recruiters have reconsidered a candidate based on what they found about a candidate online, both positive and negative.

Your online presence can show who you are, help build trust and credibility between you and potential businesses, show that you are passionate about your career field and help distinguish you among job seekers.

## General tips

<b>Be consistent when you are online.</b>	Make sure that the information on all of your social media profiles is the same. Being consistent is important because it makes it easier for employers to identify you. It is also important to keep your profiles up-to-date as information changes.
<b>Highlight your skills on social media.</b>	Share examples of your work on your social media accounts. Employers are interested in seeing what skills you have to offer, so make sure you showcase them online.
<b>The more willing you are to help people online, the more willing people will be to help you in return.</b>	You can network with your connections by writing them a recommendation on LinkedIn, introducing them to another one of your connections or sharing an interesting news article with them. The more you keep up this practice of helping contacts and constantly communicating with them, the more beneficial your social media experience will be.
<b>Remember to reach out to contacts that have helped you and express your appreciation.</b>	Whether this person simply left a nice comment on your blog post or helped you form a connection with a client, it is always important to say thank you. Showing your appreciation is not only professional and polite, but it will help them to think of you again when an opportunity emerges.
<b>Quality is more important than quantity when it comes to online followers.</b>	Instead of focusing on being the account with the most followers, focus on creating meaningful relationships with those who you know will be a good contact. Before you form a connection with someone, ask yourself how this person might be beneficial to you or how you might be beneficial to them.

## Research businesses or employers

Researching businesses or employers on social media before you get started is a smart idea because it can give you a direction for your job search.

Researching businesses before you get started can help you:

- Identify companies that may be hiring in your field.
- Focus your job search on employers whose values reflect yours.
- Identify what key words you should include in your social media profiles.
- Target your cover letter and resume based on the information you find.
- Learn who the most important people are that are currently working for the company so that you can follow them.

### Tips on what to research

- Primary mission of the company
- Services or products that they provide
- Work environment
- Hard and/or soft skills that employees should have
- Job descriptions of your preferred position

### Where to research

- Company website
- NYS Department of Labor
- Internet search engines
- LinkedIn
- Twitter and/or Facebook

## Key social media websites to use during your job search

### LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a social network for anyone looking to find new opportunities, grow their careers and connect with other professionals. In a recent survey done by Jobvite, 92% of recruiters that are actively searching for candidates online have hired a new employee through LinkedIn. Businesses claim that they are using LinkedIn as either their primary or exclusive job-posting website.

- Your profile must reflect how exactly you are relevant for the job position you are seeking. Do you have the hard and soft skills required to hold this position? Do you have the talent and experience? How are you showcasing this on your profile?
- Make your LinkedIn profile stronger by studying each job description you're interested in and including the same key words in your LinkedIn profile. This will make it easier for businesses to find your profile when they search using those key words.
- Use LinkedIn to build relationships with individuals in your profession. Network by joining groups and following people who are connected to your career interests. Participate in discussions on relevant topics which will show your expertise and get the attention of businesses.

Join your college's alumni page. This is a great way to keep up with connections, as you never know when you might need the help or advice of a former classmate or colleague.

When putting together your LinkedIn profile, make sure that you have a professional-looking profile picture. Try to use the same picture on all of your other social media sites as well to maintain consistency.

Ask past or present employers to write a recommendation for you to include on your page. Recommendations are a great way to make your profile stand out from the crowd and give you an edge over individuals who are lacking any recommendations.

Make sure your profile's headline reflects the job you are seeking. Make yourself stand out from the crowd by including a branding statement about yourself that indicates why you are special and what you will bring to the table. Keep your headline and branding statement brief; it should entice people to view your profile.

### **Branding statement examples:**

"Sales professional positioned to draw on a record of achievement and success to deliver exceptional sales results."

"Passionate marketing manager who strives to provide clients with the optimum service they deserve."

## **Facebook**

Facebook is the largest and most used social network in the world. As of January 2017, there were 1.8 billion Facebook users.

**Make sure that your profile is complete.** One of the most important things you can do is add your past work history and professional skills to the "About" section of your profile. Add your education and experience to your profile to connect with alumni that may be helpful in your job search.

**Clean up your facebook page go** through your previous posts and/or shares and change the settings to private if the posts are not something you would like a business to see. Or, if the post is particularly compromising to you, you may want to consider deleting the post entirely.

**Use Facebook lists.** Facebook lists allows you to select who you want to see a status and puts them in a list. You can make lists for your job search friends, as well as your personal friends.

**Use Facebook's search tool** to search for people who have included their place of work in their profile and to connect with people working at your target companies. The search tool is also great for discovering job leads by searching by city and the keyword "jobs." The results will show groups that have shared current job openings in your area.

Keep in mind that plenty of businesses check your Facebook profile specifically to find reasons not to hire you. Taking this information into consideration, make sure to delete all posts that might make them cross you off their list. Some examples of compromising posts are:

- Negative posts about employers
- Confidential or proprietary information
- Lying about your qualifications
- Posts about alcohol, drugs or illegal activity
- Discriminatory remarks
- Poor communication or writing

## **Twitter**

Although Twitter may offer less structure as a job search tool, it offers more opportunities to connect with people than some other social media websites. Hiring managers, in a field where social media might be considered a qualification, frequently check Twitter for potential employees. If using Twitter won't be beneficial to your job search, consider signing up for a different social media site. Think about your Twitter profile as your own personal brand:

- The first thing you do when setting up a Twitter profile is create a username. When picking your username use your personal name, your profession or a combination of both. Your username is the first thing people will notice about your account and is how businesses search for your profile, so be sure the username you chose is professional and unique.
- Your profile photo should be professional and identifiable.
- Your Twitter bio should be employer-focused. Just like your LinkedIn headline, your Twitter bio is your first chance to make a good impression on employers before they decide to click on you.

- Follow companies you might like to work for. Companies may post job openings on Twitter and give you insight into what the employees are currently working on. Consider not only following the Twitter account of a business, but also the employees that work at these companies.
- You will stand out from the crowd of potential candidates if you go out of your way to retweet, favorite or reply to businesses' tweets in meaningful ways. This is a great way to network with people who are already employees at businesses you may want to work at.

Sort through your Twitter feed by creating a list for potential companies and other accounts connected to these companies. Twitter lists give you the ability to sort through the list of people you follow and isolate the accounts related to your job search into one list. This is a great way to separate your personal contacts from your professional contacts and organize your feed.

Use Twitter's search tool to search using key words to find job openings in your desired area. Also, get in the practice of including hashtags in your tweets as often as possible. Hashtags can help employers find you when they refine their search. They can also help you find employers and tweets about certain topics related to your job search. Make sure that you are tweeting about topics that are related to your desired profession.

- Use Twitter as a tool to ask questions. This site is a great place to receive feedback and get opinions from people with similar interests. Ask other users about your career field or ask them for their opinion on your new cover letter before you upload it to your website.
- Make sure to tweet often, especially when you first get started on the site. However, do not tweet too often, as you do not want to give off the appearance that you spend all your free time on the internet. Try spending about 15-20 minutes on Twitter each day.
- While in job search mode, make 75% of your tweets professional and 25% personal.
- Let your followers know that you are looking for work by tweeting this information out biweekly; that way, as you gain new followers they will know you are amid a job search.

Research managers on Twitter ahead of time for topics they are interested in or tweets about the company culture. This will give you something to discuss during the interview.

## **Instagram**

Instagram can be a great way to establish your own personal brand, demonstrate a marketable skill and enhance your overall digital savvy. Everyone interested in working in a creative field should have an Instagram account. Instagram shows off the kind of employee you would be in a manner that is more creative and visual than your Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn accounts.

## **Tumblr**

Most Tumblr users in the United States are under the age of 34. Thus, if you are a young adult looking for a job, or if your job duties will have you interacting with a younger demographic, it may be beneficial that you get involved on this platform. Posts with images typically receive the most interactions on Tumblr. Tumblr allows you to make your account look exactly as you wish. For example, if you are looking to work in a creative field, you could take a more creative approach toward the design of your Tumblr page and make the theme reflect the creative field you are hoping to jump into.

## Other social media websites

Those are popular social media platforms that will aid you in your job search, however, the list does not stop there. The Internet is full of social sites and any one of them may be beneficial to you and your job search, depending on your interests and career field. Here are a few more websites you may consider joining in order to strengthen your online presence.

<b>Jobster</b>	<b>Behance</b>
Jobster is a great resource for networking with businesses that are hiring. This site allows you to upload a resume to your profile, embed a video resume, include links to your other social media sites and tag your skills. You can also search for open positions on the site based on keywords.	Behance is a social media platform geared toward creative individuals looking to share their work online. This site lets you post your work to gain the attention of clients or receive feedback from other creative individuals. You can follow artists or designers as well as find potential clients by searching the site's job listings.
<b>Google+</b>	<b>Pinterest</b>
Google+ allows you to fill out your educational background, work experience, accomplishments and interests. One of the features of the site is "Circles," which allows you to separate your contacts into different groups so that you can place your social contacts in one group and professional contacts in another. Another feature, "Streams," allows you to make a post public or limit its visibility to certain circles.	Pinterest can be used to search for potential companies you may like to work for and to get a sense of the company's culture by looking at their pin boards. You can post your resume as a visual portfolio, giving you an eye-catching resume that you can share online. Lastly, you can use this site to make connections by following other businesses' pin boards and leaving comments regarding relevant topics.

## PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT OR PLACEMENT AGENCIES

Recruiting and staffing services can be excellent resources in your job search. Also consider using placement agencies. These agencies work with job seekers to develop their job seeking skills. Placement agencies provide temporary – a day, a few weeks or longer – job search services.

Recruiters focus on matching your skills with the job openings of companies. The business generally pays the fees for these services so there is no cost to you. Because of this, the recruiters' interests match the client or company. Ask questions of recruiters to ensure that they are forwarding your resume to multiple businesses to see who would be interested in hiring you. Recruiters search for qualified candidates for permanent, full-time positions. These firms are also called headhunters or executive search firms. The benefits of using a recruiting service include:

- You often get access to unadvertised openings.
- A third party (the recruiting firm) is working to match your skills and long-term goals to a job.

Placement agencies have staff who match workers with short-term or temporary-to-permanent positions. They're sometimes known as contract firms or employment agencies. When you finish a short-term work assignment, the agency looks for another assignment for you since you are still an employee of the staffing agency. However, the agencies do not provide direct supervision of their employees at the work sites of the businesses.

The benefits of using a staffing service and doing temporary work include the following:

- You can gain work experience, develop skills, obtain training and increase networking contacts.
- You can earn money while you look for permanent work.
- It's easier to get a job when you have a job.
- You may be able to get more flexible hours or working conditions to accommodate your personal situation.
- Sometimes employers offer permanent positions to temporary or "temp" workers who perform well.
- You can check out an employer or an occupation before making a commitment to working for a particular organization.

Temporary employees generally do not receive paid days off. Also keep in mind that most placement agencies do not offer health insurance, but some may make it available after you have worked for a set period of time.

### **Tips for working with employment agencies**

Before you work with any employment agency, find out what services you can expect and what will be expected of you. Make sure you ask whether it will cost you anything. For short-term contract work, ask about the pay rate, benefits and length of assignments. Also, let them know the hours and days you're able to work, if you are available for overtime, and your transportation and salary needs. Here are some additional tips:

- Be professional. Treat the staff at these agencies as you would a potential employer. In the case of temp agencies, the staff there will employ you.
- Be available. Most agencies expect you to be available when they offer you work. Know that if you turn down more than a few offers, they may not consider you for work in the future.
- Expand your job search. Avoid using agencies as your only job search tool.
- Check your benefits. Short-term wages may reduce benefits such as unemployment insurance. But it may also extend the length of time that you can receive benefits. Before accepting or rejecting work, check with the agency from whom you receive your benefits.

### **TIME TO CONSIDER A SURVIVAL OR “BRIDGE” JOB?**

In considering job offers, you should also be thinking about how long you have been unemployed. The longer you are unemployed, the more difficult it becomes to return to work. In fact, those who accept a lower paying job earlier in their period of unemployment often work their way back up to a wage level similar to their previous salary before those who choose to remain unemployed longer, waiting for a higher salaried job offer.

If you have been looking for a job for an extended period of time, becoming employed may seem impossible. You may need to take a lower paying job to bridge the gap in employment until you find a better job. Taking a “bridge” job may not only be a necessity, but can also help you land your next job. It is easier to find employment when you are employed than when you are not.

Also, your personal needs may require you to accept employment that does not pay as much, but offers a paycheck and health benefits until a better job is available. Strive for your ideal job, but in the meantime have a plan that allows for a job to bridge the gap. This interim step in your career may allow you to learn new skills, meet new people and get back into a daily work routine.

You must also be willing to travel a reasonable distance to obtain employment. Generally, travel of one hour by private transportation or 1.5 hours by public transportation is considered reasonable.

While you are waiting, an easy way to create income is to look for work in places you may not have thought of. These types of jobs are called “survival jobs.” If you accept a survival job, you may have an opportunity to learn new skills, get experience and earn money while seeking a more secure position.

Here are a few examples of part-time jobs that might support your income:

- Teaching what you know: how to play a musical instrument, garden or speak a foreign language
- Hotel jobs: desk clerk, concierge
- Pet care (for example: dog walker or dog sitter)
- Substitute teacher

Job searching may seem overwhelming or daunting. It is hard work. However, you must be persistent during your job search process. Try to keep a positive attitude. Remember to take care of yourself while searching for a job and do what you can to have a balanced lifestyle. This will increase your likelihood of staying healthy during this time.





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