



A Reference Guide For Job Seekers

How To Get Started
Building A Job Search Strategy



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Table of Contents	Page 2
Introduction	Page 3
Getting Started	Page 3
Resumes	Page 3
Next Steps	Page 5
Research	Page 5
Social Media	Page 6
Professional Networking	Page 7
Job Boards	Page 10
Putting It Together	Page 13

Introduction –

Events during the past 18 months have led many people to seek new employment. The job market has changed, which means the way people find jobs has also changed. Job seekers want to know the best ways to develop an effective job search strategy in today's market. The goal of this Reference Guide is to stress the importance of networking and provide job seekers a starting point for building a job search strategy.

Getting Started - The art of the job search requires a strategy or game plan that must be executed daily and adjusted as needed. First, decide what types of roles interest you. Have a clear goal - this will keep you focused and help you target the right opportunities.

Resumes - Once you've decided on a short list of positions, make sure that you have a resume that clearly outlines your specific skills and accomplishments. When looking for a new job, the saying, "You only have one chance to make a first impression" is especially true, and begins with the resume. Here are some tips on ways to make a good first impression:

- Be sure that you list your name and contact information on each page of the resume. Keep the information current – having a potential employer attempt to contact you only to find that your contact information is outdated is likely to eliminate you from consideration. Include your email address – you may want to use one of the services like Yahoo, Google or Hotmail to set up an account just for your job search. It's free and you'll be able to access your email even if you're traveling. It also keeps personal and job-related email separate.
- Include a Professional Summary section below your contact information on the first page of your resume. The Professional Summary should be very concise and reveal your core areas of expertise. Use a few well-chosen sentences that will sell you as the best fit for the job. The Professional Summary demonstrates how your experience includes the must-haves listed in the job description. Avoid phrases like "great interpersonal skills" and other space-fillers.

- Job history – if you list jobs in chronological order, the information should be bulleted and specific. Include technical skills, daily responsibilities, and metrics that reveal successes or improvements. Highlight skills without adding fluff.
- While you may have had a long and successful career, your resume should highlight only the last 15 years of your work history. If you have more than 15 years of experience, note that experience in the Professional Summary. Example: John has 15+ years of extensive electrical engineering experience.
- Don't apply for every job that you see – it's like crying wolf. Seeing your name attached to every job within a company will reduce your credibility with the recruiters or managers in charge of the hiring process. Only apply to those jobs where your skills are a fit for the position or project.
- Build a core resume. Many people don't know that the resume should be tailored to the job to which they are applying. This means being able to quickly create a unique resume in response to a specific job. The core resume is your foundation to which you'll add specific experience and skills that relate to each job. Be sure to use the same key words and job responsibilities in your resume that are listed in the job description.
- Limit the resume to no more than two pages. Provide detail on your two most recent positions, even if you have transitioned into different roles within the same company.
- Respond quickly – job seekers MUST check email and voice mail at least once daily. If you're not used to doing this get into the habit. When a manager or recruiter does not hear back after a day, it is assumed you are not interested and the person will move on to other candidates. Many recruiters and hiring managers support multiple geographic regions and travel throughout the week, limiting their availability for interviews. A quick response could mean the difference between being interviewed tomorrow and being interviewed three weeks from tomorrow.
- First impressions count. How you communicate says a lot about you, from how quickly you follow up with a recruiter or hiring manager, to what you say and how you say it. Make sure that there are no spelling errors in your resume or in any email or written correspondence. Keep your voice mail message professional. Ex: "This is John. Please leave me a message including your number and the best time to call you and I will return your call." When you answer your phone, give the caller your name. Ex: "Hello, this is John."

- Follow-up is important. If you have not received a response to your initial email within a week, send a quick follow-up email to be sure the person received your original. Remember: some managers receive 200+ emails daily and it takes time to work through the list. Others travel and address only critical issues while on the road. Once your email has been acknowledged, you may want to follow up to check status. A word of caution: limit follow-ups to once weekly.

On average a recruiter makes the decision to pass or hold a resume within 15 seconds.

Only apply to jobs where your skills and experience specifically meet the requirements referenced in the job posting. Be sure that your resume showcases your skills and experience in a clear, concise format. Important: the format for a printed resume is not the same as the format for an electronic resume. To learn about resume formats and how to improve your resume's online visibility, consult resources like the Riley Guide:

<http://www.rileyguide.com/eresume.html>.

It is always a great idea to invite a friend, mentor or trusted colleague to review your resume. It's also helpful to have a third party – someone from the industry who isn't a personal friend – take a look at your resume to provide objective feedback. When your resume is ready to send to prospective employers, think about where you'd like to work. What types of companies need people with your skills? What companies have a work environment that you like? Do you want a large, medium or small company environment? Do you like the structure of an office environment, or are you more comfortable working from a home office? This will give you a solid list of companies you'll target as potential new employers.

The Next Step - Once you have identified a list of target companies, develop a strategy that will put you in front of hiring managers at these companies. Whether you are looking for a new position in your current field or making a transition to a new career, it's important to identify the people within each of your target companies who hire individuals with your expertise and skills. These are the people you want to influence.

Research:

In addition to reviewing each target company's website, tools like **Hoovers** (www.hoovers.com) and **Zoom Info** (www.zoominfo.com) can help provide more

in-depth information about a company and its industry. Set Google alerts to notify you every time one of your target companies makes the news. In addition to reading management bios on the company website, search for information about members of the management team using search engines like Yahoo, Google and Alta Vista. Use professional and social networking sites to identify potential contacts (see Professional Networking section below for more information).

Social Media:

Blogs and newsletters are helpful in providing the latest information and discussions on what is happening in the job market and within your specific industry. Many companies have blogs which offer news about the company and share insight into the company's culture. Take a look at some of the recruiting blogs and websites to better understand the recruiting and hiring process. In addition to providing information about the latest tools in the recruitment space, companies will frequently post ads for recruiters on these blogs and online forums. If a company is hiring recruiters, it's hiring other professionals. Recruiting-focused websites and blogs also provide useful information for job seekers. For example, in addition to discussing the latest topics in the recruiting world, a section of social media developer and strategist Jim Stroud's website "The Recruiter's Lounge" provides helpful tips and insight for job seekers (<http://jobs.therecruiterslounge.com>). Job seekers can also learn from leading industry recruiters and trainers like Michael Marlatt, whose website "Cloud Recruiting" is redefining "how employers and employees connect, communicate, and 'click' on work, jobs and values" (www.cloudrecruiting.net).

Career sites such as Monster, CareerBuilder and The Ladders also offer job tips on their websites, including links to general and industry-specific resources. Sites like Jobing.com, The Ladders and Sales Gravy offer weekly newsletters with tips on everything from resume writing and networking to interviewing and salary negotiation. You'll find that hiring managers and company executives frequently contribute to these blogs, and that some companies and industry leaders may even have their own blogs. Business publications like The Wall Street Journal frequently publish job search advice. Examples like the following article provide helpful hints for job seekers: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123240264772595351.html?mod=dist_smartbrief

Professional Networking:

Networking plays an important part in finding a new job. **According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 70% of jobs are found through some type of networking activity.** Once you've identified a list of target companies, you'll want to talk to people who work there. Current employees can help you learn more about the company and its culture, and are valuable sources of information as you prepare for your interview. Building a network of professional contacts is easier than you think. Some ways to get started:

On The Web –

- **LinkedIn** (www.linkedin.com) - an online network of more than 30 million experienced professionals from around the world, representing 150 industries. In addition to helping you develop and expand your professional contacts, creating an online profile lets people find you. Professional networking sites are used by corporate recruiters and search firms to identify potential candidates. To network successfully, you must have a strategy. What are your goals for building a network? Networking is a two-way street: what can you offer others that makes you a valuable addition their professional network? To develop a network takes commitment – set aside several hours each week to build your professional network. Use the Groups feature to find others within your areas of interest. Be sure to include your email address somewhere on your profile to make it easier for recruiters to contact you. Once you start building a network, don't forget to look for jobs posted by LinkedIn members. Some hiring managers post exclusively to the LinkedIn network. For tips on how to use LinkedIn to expand your professional network try:

- <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/networking/a/linkedin.htm>
- <http://www.ere.net/2007/06/19/expanding-your-linkedin-network/>

For help building a profile that gets noticed, consider these links:

- <http://www.itbusiness.ca/it/client/en/Home/News.asp?id=51515>
- <http://www.chrisbrogan.com/write-your-linkedin-profile-for-your-future/>

- **Yahoo Groups** (<http://groups.yahoo.com/>) – Look for groups that are specific to your skills or interests. For example, if you're a .Net developer, consider

joining groups specifically focused on people with .Net experience. Remember that in addition to networking with others in your field or with your specific interests, recruiters are searching these special interest groups for potential candidates.

- **Facebook** (www.facebook.com) – Although it began as a site for college students, the appeal of Facebook has expanded into corporate America. Since it is easy to use and can be accessed by large numbers of people, companies are using Facebook to build and develop alumni networks. Don't discount social networking sites as a way to connect with other professionals in your field. Finding others who share interests outside of work can quickly become the foundation for building professional relationships. As with any online networking group, the key is to build a profile that tells people about you, including both professional and personal interests. Having a complete profile will make it easy for people to find you. Note: since many recruiters and hiring managers search networking sites for additional information before contacting a candidate, make sure all content – including pictures – is professional. Your friends may enjoy pictures from your last party, but potential employers might not be amused.

Some resources to help get started with Facebook:

- **Facebook: The Missing Manual by E.A. Vander Veer (Pogue Press)**
- www.expertvillage.com/video/19091_facebook-use-create-profile.htm
- www.allfacebook.com/facebook-tutorials/facebook-profile-tutorial/

Locally / Within Your Community –

Online tools are great, but don't overlook the resources you have available to you at home. These include:

- Your primary network – friends, family, current colleagues
- Your secondary network – people you know from your church, your gym, volunteer work, former colleagues, your children's sporting events, etc.

- Local networking groups – the current economy has given rise to a number of local groups designed to help job seekers find new employment and build their professional networks. Similar to Yahoo’s online groups, there are local groups for professionals from all business areas and all industries. Remember the facts and figures on networking – companies will frequently notify these networking groups about open job opportunities before enlisting outside recruitment firms or posting the job on a job board.
- Corporate Alumni Groups – a slower economy may force companies to reduce their workforce, but as business rebounds they’ll need people to handle the demand. Often companies will look to former employees first. Contact Human Resources to sign up for corporate newsletters and learn more about programs for company alumni. You’ll also find many corporate alumni networking groups on websites like LinkedIn, Facebook and Ning.
- College/University Alumni Groups – now is a great time to reconnect with your alma mater. Many colleges and universities allow alumni to access their directories online. Some even have special programs in their career development offices that connect alumni who are hiring with alumni who are seeking employment. Call your college/university alumni office to find out when the next local alumni chapter meeting is being held in your area. Don’t have a local alumni group? Why not start one?
- Fraternities/Sororities – just because you’re no longer in school doesn’t mean that you can’t reconnect with your fraternity or sorority. Many fraternities and sororities have active alumni chapters and provide an easy way to build local and regional networks.
- Check local business publications or newspapers for the groups in your area, meeting locations and times, etc. Publications from companies like bizjournals (www.bizjournals.com) have great resources in both print and online editions. Local free papers can be additional resources for networking meetings.

- If networking is something new, or you don't know how to begin, don't despair – it takes time, practice, and the ability to step outside of your comfort zone. A great introduction to networking – especially for people who may be hesitant to start – can be found on the following link: [http://www.cio.com/article/164300/How to Network Tips for Shhy People](http://www.cio.com/article/164300/How_to_Network_Tips_for_Shhy_People)
- Company websites: not all companies post jobs to job boards. Some companies will only post jobs to their company websites. Remember that jobs posted on a corporate website don't always represent all of the available positions within a company.

Job Boards – While job boards are still used by corporations and recruitment firms to advertise jobs, **most people land new jobs by networking and not by posting a resume on a job board or by answering an online ad.** In the current market, a single job posting is likely to generate 250+ responses. Recruiters work on multiple searches at any given time, and unless your resume stands out it's easy to get lost in the crowd. **The most effective way to make sure your resume is seen by a hiring manager or recruiter is to find someone who can refer you directly to that individual.**

Don't rely on job boards to find a job. Instead, use them as research tools. Companies that post jobs on job boards are either hiring or building pipelines of potential candidates for future hiring needs. An advertised job opening may also be a hint that other jobs will open in the future. Jobs open because someone vacates an existing position or because the company is adding key personnel to support growth. Do your research on the company to learn more about it – did it recently win new contracts, receive venture funding, or develop a new product? If the company is adding positions it's preparing for growth or is in growth mode. Today's open position in operations could signal future openings in departments like sales and marketing. Use your network to learn more about the company and find out where potential opportunities may exist. **Use job boards to help expand your networking activities. Be proactive – don't limit your job search to answering posted ads or hoping that someone finds your resume.**

Job boards also offer insight into industries that may be looking for people with specific skills. Job boards can help you expand your list of target companies. It's not uncommon to discover companies you've never heard of advertising for people with your skills or background on a job board. Using search engines like Google, Yahoo and AltaVista can

provide more information on your target companies including a list of their competitors, another source of companies that may be target employers. **Job boards are good resources to identify recruiters and recruiting firms that work within your specific industry or for your group of target companies.**

If you do respond to a posted job, make sure that you read the entire job description thoroughly. **If the job requirements do not match your skills and experience, do not apply – you will waste the hiring manager’s time and your time.** If the job is a match, make sure your resume clearly outlines your qualifications specifically as they relate the position being advertised – see pages 3-5. Check your network – if you’re not connected to anyone who can introduce you to a contact within the company, research to identify managers at the company who are in your field of work. Send your resume to the hiring manager including a brief (one paragraph) introduction with two or three bullets demonstrating how your experience matches the key job requirements.

When you find a company you’d like to work for, don’t wait for a job to be posted before you contact the company. Just because there are no jobs posted by a company doesn’t mean the company isn’t hiring. Not all companies post their jobs, and not all company websites reflect all available jobs within the organization. If the company interests you, use your network and research tools to identify the managers who hire people in your area of expertise. Contact those individuals directly. Know what the company is doing and its plans for growth. Regardless of size, companies want to operate more efficiently and increase profits. If you can help a potential employer increase profitability and efficiency, the company may find a place for you even if it isn’t officially hiring. You may not be in sales, but during the job search everyone must become a salesperson. To land a new job you must be able to sell yourself as someone whose expertise can positively impact an organization and increase its profitability.

Sample Job Boards –

General Job Boards:

- www.monster.com
- www.careerbuilder.com
- www.jobcentral.com
- www.hotjobs.yahoo.com

- www.careerbank.com
- www.workopolis.com – Canada’s largest job site

Special Interest Job Boards:

- www.retirementjobs.com - jobs targeting retirees who still want to work
- www.seniors4hire.org – career center targeting candidates who are 50+
- www.jobcircle.com - jobs in the Mid-Atlantic Region
- www.theladders.com - focus on jobs from \$100K+
- www.computerjobs.com - Internet/computers/technology
- www.dice.com - Internet/computers/technology
- www.jobing.com - Local Jobs
- www.sologig.com - Consulting, Contract, Temporary and Freelance positions
- www.snagajob.com - leading website for hourly employment
- www.execunet.com - executive-level networking and job posting
- www.medzilla.com - Biotechnology, Pharmaceutical, Healthcare and Science
- www.jobsinlogistics.com - North America’s largest logistics career board
- www.salesjobs.com - largest sales employment site
- www.6figurejobs.com - focuses on executive-level positions
- www.clearedconnections.com - positions requiring a level of security clearance
- www.jobsinthemoney.com – leading career site for finance and accounting jobs
- www.federaljobsearch.com – federal, state and local government jobs

Vertical Job Search Engines (also known as Job Aggregators or Metasearch Sites):
these tools pull jobs from multiple job sites and/or corporate websites

- www.indeed.com
- www.simplyhired.com
- www.topusajobs.com
- www.gojobs.com
- www.careerjet.com

Putting It Together –

The challenge of finding a new job opportunity can be offset by knowing how to approach the market, and by not being afraid to try something new. While it's true that some people still find jobs using resume job boards, job fairs and old-fashioned newspaper ads, **the majority of job seekers find jobs by networking.** There are many search tools available to you – take advantage of as many of them as you can.

Targeting a specific job makes it easier for other people to help you. When you're networking, if you tell people that you're willing to take any job, it will make it harder for them to connect you with the right person since they won't know the direction you want to pursue. It will also make you seem desperate. Keep your focus and be specific about your career objectives – knowing what you want makes it easier for others to help you.

Volunteer. While you're looking for a new job you may want to spend a few hours a week volunteering at a local non-profit organization. Non-profit groups are always looking for volunteers, especially mid-day during the week. Don't be afraid to show your work ethic, propose new ideas, and attend fundraisers and board meetings. Non-profit organizations frequently have high-profile local executives on the Boards of Directors, as well as ties to community leaders. Volunteering is another chance to practice your networking skills and helps you maintain confidence and build support while you're searching for employment.

Propose A Win-Win Situation. An option that has proven effective for some people is to approach a prospective employer with a lower risk to hiring you outright. You might suggest starting your initial employment as a contractor with the opportunity to join the company as a full-time employee once business improves. While contract work was at one time focused on IT positions, more companies are adding contractors in other business areas like sales, marketing, and HR. Smaller companies may be looking for interim executives like CFOs, COOs and even CEOs.

Apply For The Job Of Your Dreams. Perhaps you've considered switching your current career and pursuing your passion, but couldn't find the right time. In a slower economy, taking a new job may mean a lower paycheck regardless of whether you stay in the same field or switch careers. This may be the time to take that new career path and follow your dream. The current economic situation will rebound, and you'll be in a new industry and poised to take advantage of new growth opportunities.

Exercise. It does make a difference. Whether it's taking a walk with your dog, running on a treadmill, playing basketball, lifting weights, or taking an aerobics class – exercise helps you stay in shape physically and mentally. Set aside 30 minutes several times a week, and be consistent. Exercise has a way of clearing your mind and making you feel good. If you're feeling good, people will notice. When you feel good you're more confident and you'll demonstrate that confidence when you communicate with others, whether it's by email, phone, or in person. Exercise is also a great way to expand your network and stay in touch with others during the job search.

Pay It Forward. Don't hesitate to pass along advice to other job seekers. Share a tip about a new website. Provide a resume critique for someone in your line of work. Forward a job that may not be a fit for you to others in your network. When you find your next job, please continue to support others who may still be looking. And don't stop networking – continue to build and maintain your list of professional contacts. The benefits of a strong network will continue to help you throughout your career.