



Tips for a Strategic Job Search

Create Your Job Search Strategy

A successful job search must begin with a strategy. What is your strategy? Do you know what type of job you want and the industry you want to work in?

Your job search strategy should comprise the following three key elements:

1. Assessing, formally, your skills and interests
2. Defining and expanding your network
3. Developing and implementing a plan

Your plan may include the following steps:

- Think about your prior work experiences - what did you like and dislike?
- Think about the industries you are familiar with; where do your friends, family and neighbors work?
- Conduct research online using search engines, company websites and industry association websites
- Develop a network by making a list of everyone you know. Start thinking about who in your network might be helpful in your job search. Facebook® can be a great resource to remind you who you know, and to help you reconnect
- Use LinkedIn® and your alumni network to learn about people you know who are in the workforce
- Schedule Informational Interviews; they are an effective tool in getting you exposure with other professionals

By the end of this strategic planning process, you will know more about industries and career paths that interest you and will have identified specific contacts to approach.

Establish Goals and a Timeline

Anticipate that you may be job searching for 3-6 months before you land the right position. This is common. A good practice is to work backwards from the time when you want to start working, whether it is right after graduation or after taking some time off.

As you go through the job search process, be prepared to evaluate and refine your strategy. Set goals for yourself as to the number of interviews (informational or job-specific) you will schedule each week.

Leverage the Internet to Supplement Your Search

In today's internet-dependent world, many new graduates turn to the internet to conduct their job search. Unfortunately, only 20-30% of all open jobs are posted online*; that means, if you rely on the internet to apply for positions, you are missing out on 70-80% of all open jobs. While the internet is a great tool to learn who is hiring, networking is critically important in finding the job you want.

Good Uses of the Internet:

- Visit job search websites to see what types of jobs are out there and who is hiring; sign-up for company, job title or keyword alerts if offered.
- Use the information you learn from the job search websites to do additional research – visit individual company websites, conduct searches of job titles, and search specific industries.
- Apply online at specific company websites, but do not rely on this exclusively.

It is very difficult to sell yourself based on your resume only; often you are competing with hundreds of other resumes and many entry-level resumes look the same. This is why networking and informational interviewing are

more important than simply sitting at your computer applying for positions. You will shorten your job search significantly and be more successful in securing the right job.

Your Resume:

- Keep it to one page.
- Make yourself interesting. Show that you have been involved – work, internships, extra-curricular activities, leadership and volunteer positions. If your GPA is a 3.0 or better, include it on your resume.
- See Resume Tip Sheet for additional guidance.

Be Mindful of Your Messaging and Professional Image (add an image)

Voicemail Greeting:

At Avenica, we call many recent college graduates and are occasionally dismayed at the voicemail greetings we hear. Make sure you listen to your greeting as you may have recorded it quite a few years ago.

A few tips to ensure you make a good impression are:

- Record a personal greeting that includes your name (so we know we dialed the correct number)
- Record the message in a quiet location, speak slowly and articulately, and do not use slang
- Be conscious of making a good impression

This is not appropriate:

“Hey, what up? I’m not here. Hit me back.”

This is appropriate:

“Hi, this is _____. I am sorry I missed your call. Please leave a message and I will call you back as soon as I can. Thank you.”

Email Address:

Is your email address simple and professional, or is it silly and inappropriate? Consider creating a new account if necessary. An inappropriate email address will convey the wrong message to a prospective employer and may eliminate you from consideration.

Social Media:

Consider your profile on social media websites because some employers will look. Hide or eliminate inappropriate photos or language and review your privacy settings. Read your wall often and eliminate inappropriate posts. Do not share your password with anyone.

Other Important Tips:

- Keep your current job, or get a part-time job, while you job search, even if it seems unrelated. Finding a job may take longer than you expect; having a part-time job looks better on your resume and will help you maintain a positive attitude.
- “Soft skills” are your communication, conflict resolution, organizational, creative problem solving, strategic thinking, team building, time management and selling skills.

Conclusion:

Searching for a job is not unlike having a job – you must be committed and organized, and you must manage your time well. You need a strategy – a plan that you will execute to achieve your goal. Avenica can help you refine your strategy and provide coaching and support along the way.