

Searching for a Job

Objectives

1. Explore steps and elements of the job search.
2. Review tips and suggestions for executing a successful job search.
3. Identify resources to assist in planning your job search.

The Job Search Process

Searching for employment involves a process that can be both exciting and challenging. Each search process may be different depending on the person completing the search, the nature of the employment market at the time of search, economic conditions, and several other factors. However, to understand the important elements of executing a job search, it can be helpful to break the process up into five general steps:



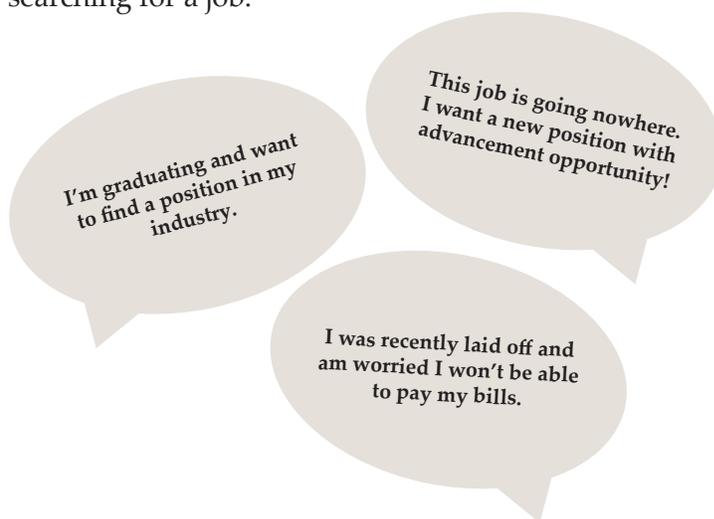
Notice how the diagram above depicts the job search process as a cycle. Movement through these steps does not always follow the same linear order, and it is possible that steps will overlap at times. Use this model as a framework to help you understand the important elements of a job search process, but know that your job searching experience is likely to be as unique as you are. In this guide, we will examine the important considerations, tools, and resources related to each step in order to help you design and execute a satisfying job search.

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When Do I Begin to Search?

Job searching can be like a campaign: it takes time and energy to convince employers you are the right person for the job. With this in mind, it is helpful to try and begin your search with enough time to feel comfortable that you are attending to each part of the process. Below are some thoughts and feelings you may notice that could indicate it is time to begin searching for a job:



There really is no right or wrong time to start searching for positions. However, there are several steps involved in preparing for and executing a job search. It could easily be **two to four months (or more)** from the time you apply to when you are hired and begin your job. Below is a sample hiring timeline from an employer's perspective to highlight how time consuming the hiring process alone can be:

Steps Involved in Hiring	Timeline
Position posted	2-4 weeks (or more)
1st round interviews	2-4 weeks (or more)
2nd round interviews	2-4 weeks (or more)
HIRED!	
Start position	2-4 weeks (or more)
Total Time = 8-16 weeks!	

Developing Job Targets

As you get started, it can be helpful to develop job targets to guide your search. Keep your values, interests, and skills in mind as you create your targets. You might find it useful to write down the factors that are most critical to you in potential jobs. For some, this might be a type of field or industry, a specific occupation, a preferred location, or a combination of things. For example, you may want to stay in Florida and work in the field of finance. In this situation, your target is to find finance organizations in Florida which you are both interested in and which offer a good fit. Consider the sample below. The job target is the intersection of an individual's most important factors:



You can have multiple job targets to expand your job search, but the purpose of a job target is to focus a search for better use of time and energy, so it is best to be intentional and specific. Consider narrowing your job targets enough so you can focus energy on finding the positions in which you are most interested. For additional help developing job targets, visit The Career Center and ask a career advisor for a copy of the “Guide to Good Decision Making Exercise.”

Organizing Your Search

When you have identified your job targets, you may have more focused ideas for the kinds of employment options you would like to pursue. Now it is time to begin thinking about organizing your search.

Job Search Methods

Job seekers need to utilize multiple methods to locate available positions for optimal results. While Internet job searching is a common and helpful way to locate certain available job openings, many open positions are located in what is called the *hidden job market* and will not show up in an Internet search.

The *hidden job market* refers to positions that are rarely advertised online, in newspapers, or anywhere else in print. They may not even be real positions yet,

but rather, an area within an organization with the potential to create a new position if the need arises and the right candidates present themselves. To find these positions, it is essential to create, maintain, and actively utilize a network of personal and professional contacts as part of your job search.

Below is a table highlighting three major job searching methods and sample tools for use in the job search. Use this information to assist you in developing goals and objectives for executing your search. If you require assistance in organizing your search methods, visit The Career Center and speak to a career advisor.

Networking

Job Search Tools	Find Job Opportunity Listings	Identify/Connect with Employers	Find/Use Networking Contacts
FSU SeminoleLink powered by Handshake	✓	✓	✓
Professional Association Websites	✓	✓	✓
Organization Websites	✓	✓	✓
Social Networking Websites	✓	✓	✓
Online Search Engines	✓		
FSU ProfessioNole Mentors		✓	✓
Personal Networks		✓	✓
Information Interviewing		✓	✓
Attending Career-Related Events		✓	✓

The term *network*, when used in a professional context, refers to those individuals with which you have relationships that are personal, professional, or both. *Networking* is a term used to describe the process of creating, building, and maintaining these relationships. Networking can involve interactions with others in-person and/or online through professional social media applications (such as [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com)). When searching for a job in the hidden job market, networking is the primary way opportunities are found and secured. One of the best ways to get started networking is to develop a personal *elevator speech*: a 30-second or less speech you deliver when meeting a contact for the first time. For more information about how to create and use an elevator speech, see the “Preparing for a Career Fair” guide at career.fsu.edu/Resources/Career-Guides. For help developing your networking skills and strategies, visit The Career Center and speak to a career advisor.

Prioritizing Options

Once you have organized your job search, you may want to prioritize your options. A good place to start this process is to consider your values and how each opportunity aligns with these.

To help you do this, first make a list of all the organizations/positions to which you are applying. Then, rank them from the option you would prefer *most* to the option you would prefer *least*. Focus on your top five options; these should get most of your time and energy as you search. For the remainder of the list, spend less time focusing on applications and do more basic research to refine your understanding of the option and find possible networking or position openings. To find people working for a specific organization of interest, explore *ProfessioNole Mentors*, *SeminoleLink powered by Handshake*, and *CareerShift* via The Career Center website (career.fsu.edu).

Prioritize Your Options	
1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
4.	_____
5.	_____

Applying and Interviewing

Now that you understand aspects of the job search, it is important to explore tips and tools for presenting yourself effectively during the application and interviewing process. Create a list of the potential employers, position titles, and industries you have targeted. Reflect on the job search methods discussed earlier to ensure you are tapping into all of your resources for finding open opportunities. For information about finding and making initial contact with employers, review the “Researching Employers” guide at career.fsu.edu/Resources/Career-Guides.

Get Organized

As you continue to research and begin applying to positions, you may want to create a system for keeping track of your research findings, application materials, and correspondence with employers/networking contacts. One example might be to keep file folders labeled with organization names.

You could then place sub-folders into the organization files for each position you apply to at that organization. There is no one system that is better than another; just choose a method that will work best for you.

Application Materials

The job search involves many moving pieces, but some view application materials as one of the most critical components of a successful job search. For most job opportunities, employers will request a variety of application materials, depending on your industry and job target. You will want to prepare a strong résumé and cover letter that can be tailored based on the positions you are applying for, and speak with professionals in your field to inquire about other materials you might need to develop (i.e., portfolio, writing sample, teaching philosophy).

Most importantly, have your materials critiqued! Stop by The Career Center to have a career advisor provide you with feedback on your application materials. For more information, review the “Writing a Résumé,” “Writing Effective Cover Letters,” or other related guides at career.fsu.edu/Resources/Career-Guides.

Interviewing

Once you have developed your application materials and applied to opportunities, you might receive an invitation (or several!) to interview. Preparation for the interview is essential. There are a variety of interview formats (i.e., Skype, panel, group, etc.) and questioning styles used by employers that are helpful to review prior to your interview. Practice your interview skills through The Career Center’s Mock Interview Program, or review the guides on interview preparation at career.fsu.edu/Resources/Career-Guides.

Follow Up!

Many employers are extremely busy and see many résumés, so they may not always respond to every applicant. Remain courteous, but do not be afraid to follow up with employers regarding the status of your application or interview. Speak with a career advisor to discuss strategies on following up effectively.

Be Persistent!

Remaining persistent in the face of rejection is an important component in the process. It is possible that you will not be offered the first position to which you apply, but keep going! Rejection is a learning opportunity that makes you stronger and better for your next experience!

Don't let a couple of NO's keep you from your YES!

NO	NO	NO	NO
NO	NO	NO	NO
NO	NO	NO	YES!

Reflecting On and Evaluating the Process

Spend some time reflecting on your job search by asking yourself the following questions:

- How much time each week am I actually spending on job search activities?
- Am I applying to positions within my desired job targets?
- Am I developing a network of contacts?
- When I send résumés and cover letters, are they tailored to the position/employer?
- Have I looked for and exhausted all possible job leads?
- Am I using multiple creative methods to job search?

After evaluating your current job search strategies, you might find you will need to jump backwards or forwards in the process. For instance, if you have not been tailoring your cover letters to specific positions, it would be helpful to incorporate this change and have your cover letters critiqued again. Taking the time to reflect and learn from your experiences strengthens your current and future job search.

Summary

The job search is a process that takes planning, time, and energy. If the search you are conducting is for your first professional position, you might want to start think about setting some goals for your new job. You might make a plan for how to successfully navigate the first 90 days and consider what the transition from backpack to briefcase might look like for you. Regardless of where you are in your career development process, The Career Center is ready to assist you. Visit career.fsu.edu to learn more about services and programs available at The Career Center to help you with your job search and beyond.

Job Search Checklist

- Identify your values, interests, and skills.
- Brainstorm possible job targets.
- Research career fields/industries.
- Identify potential employers that hire for the type of work you are seeking.
- Have your résumé and cover letter reviewed by a professional in your field or The Career Center.
- Upload your résumé to SeminoleLink powered by Handshake
- Identify and contact at least 3 individuals to serve as references.
- Develop an elevator speech.
- Practice interviewing skills.
- Prepare a portfolio and/or work samples if needed.
- Check The Career Center website for events related to your field(s) of interest.
- Develop and maintain a system for keeping track of job search activities/materials.
- Follow up with employers to make sure applications are complete.
- Send thank you letters/emails to all contacts as appropriate.
- Evaluate your job search performance and make changes as needed.

Additional Resources

Select Career Center Library Resources

- 100 Conversations for Career Success*.....VD L3
- Job Hunter's Sourcebook*.....VIA L3 v.1
- Knock 'Em Dead: The Ultimate Job Search Guide*...VD Y24
- The Online Job Search Survival Guide*.....VD B6

Select Online Resources

- career.fsu.edu/library — Section VI: Opportunities: Drop-down menu houses job search resources across industries, occupations, and populations.

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