Job search strategies Checklist – are you maximizing your resources?

Use this checklist to add to your current job-searching strategies.

1. *Mega-sites like Monster.com; Indeed; CareerBuilder.com, etc.*
   
The situation: Mega-sites like these are useful when you have a specific geographic region you’re applying to. However, Human Resources directors are often inundated with resumes they receive from these sites, and some recruiters have said that as many as 99% don’t match what they want. Also, it costs lots of money for companies to advertise on these sites, and many will choose to advertise elsewhere.

   The strategy: Instead of clicking “Send” to transmit your resume through the mega-site, just note the company name and find their website. Then apply directly to their site. HR representatives are much more likely to pay attention. Also cross reference other resources to get a contact name, the Alumni Database and CareerShift are good tools to use. We do recommend posting your resume on mega-sites – it certainly won’t hurt – just don’t use this is your primary job search method.

2. *Websites which are specific to your field and/or geographic region.*
   
The situation: Most companies who don’t want to pay the huge dollars to advertise on Monster-type sites will pay smaller amounts to post jobs to their own industry websites, or to their local sites. For example, if you want to work in visual arts you might be better off using <coroflot.com, creativehotlist.com, artdeadlines.com>. If you want to work in Pittsburgh, try www.pgtech.org, DC, Try http://www.washingtonpost.com/wl/jobs. Craigslist is useful as well.

   The strategy: do a Google search on “design jobs in DC” (for example), and see what comes up. Always check the online classifieds of the city’s newspaper. Many have a resume database you can post to, as well as a “push” feature to email you jobs that match your criteria.

3. *Third party recruiters/Employment Agencies*
   
The situation: depending on your industry of choice, many companies are turning to these search firms to find employees. In a tight job market it makes sense to register with the LOCAL employment agencies in your area. Often temporary positions turn permanent. Most firms now are safe to use as they offer employer paid opportunities. Make sure to only work with firms that have employer paid fees. You should not have to pay a fee to interview or get a position. Note: there may be stipulations on how long you have to work through the agency before the company can hire you straight out. Read the fine print!

   The strategy: Find out which search firms are local to your cities of choice by using the phone book, Internet yellow pages, or some other search method – or ask at the Career Center for assistance. Contact the search firms, describe your degree and experience, and ask if they are able to place people with your skills and qualifications. If they can, stop in and register.

4. *Department of Labor*
   
The situation: Many businesses and organizations do not want to post job openings to national websites – they may want to recruit local candidates. Instead, they choose their local DOLs.

   The strategy: If you’re in town, visit the DOL and register with them. If you’re conducting an out-of-town job search, go to America’s Job Bank, which is the web equivalent at www.ajb.org. Use the zip code search for the cities you’re interested in. You’ll find postings you won’t see elsewhere.

5. *Research industries, companies, and job functions*
   
   - **Glassdoor** is the largest career community on the web where you can research what it’s really like to work at more than 300,000 companies - with millions of company reviews and ratings, salary reports, interview questions and more - shared by employees themselves. Plus, you can apply directly to more than 15 million jobs. The link from this page provides free full access to Glassdoor without having to create an account or input salary information.
   - **Going Global** is a web resource to help with your search for a job or internship abroad. There are country guides that give advice on how to look for positions for each country. There are also employer guides by country, and job/internship postings by country. You may access Going Global via TartanTRAK http://www.cmu.edu/career/tartantrak/index.html.
   - **Vault Guides** will make your efforts at researching employers, industries, and career subjects infinitely easier and more efficient. Access Vault Guides http://www.cmu.edu/career/vault/index.html for industry overviews.
• **Hoovers** is a database of millions of potential employers nationwide (not job openings); great for a specific geographic or industry search. Access Hoovers via the CMU Library Web page [http://search.library.cmu.edu/link/http://www.mergentonline.com/Hoovers](http://search.library.cmu.edu/link/http://www.mergentonline.com/Hoovers), by clicking on "Research Databases" then then selecting "H" or type “Hoover” in the search.

• **CMU Library Career Resources** [http://guides.library.cmu.edu/jobs](http://guides.library.cmu.edu/jobs)

• **Post-graduation statistics** [http://www.cmu.edu/career/salaries-and-destinations/index.html](http://www.cmu.edu/career/salaries-and-destinations/index.html) include information on employers who hired last year's students

6. **Carnegie Mellon University Alumni**

   The situation: Making connections with alumni is a huge part of networking. In a tight job market, having the Carnegie Mellon connection can open doors that would otherwise remain closed.

   The strategy: See our “Networking and Information Interviewing” career tip sheets for ideas of how to contact them. You also have access to the online database of the thousands of CMU alumni through the Alumni Database. ALSO – when you graduate and land job, be sure to register with the alumni office. [http://www.cmu.edu/alumni/](http://www.cmu.edu/alumni/) Directions- Click on "online Community, then, Online Directory". Not registered? Click “Register” and follow instructions for creating username and password. Login to the Alumni database and use the custom search to limit by city and major etc. to find Alums who are working in your field. You can also search by firm name to see if there are any alums to that may be good points of contact.

   * note this is for information purposes, this listing are not job posting. Use it a way to network! A great tool for conducting Informational Interviews.

7. **Use professional organizations**

   The situation: Much of the hidden job market comes as a result of knowing people in the field. Many industries list postings with their professional organizations only, and don’t bother with general newspapers or websites.

   The strategy: First, find out from faculty or the CPDC which professional organizations match your target industry, or try using WEDDLE’s Association Directory at [http://www.weddles.com/associations/index.cfm](http://www.weddles.com/associations/index.cfm). Many societies/organizations have student membership fees that are quite reasonable, and it may be well worth your while to join. Professional organizations offer services like mentoring, career networking, career fairs, professional development seminars, job banks limited to members, local city chapters, and much more. AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts), for example, offers a designer directory, membership list, monthly publication, advice to students on resume writing – AND it’s completely free to students. Once you’re a member, volunteer for committee work – it’s the best way to get your name and skills out there to potential employers.

8. **Consider applying your skills to a nonprofit organization**

   The situation: Nonprofit community organizations, human services agencies, volunteer centers and museums - though not in the for-profit business - still need people with a huge variety of skills. They are often community oriented and locally based and advertise available positions accordingly.

   The strategy: Our #1 recommendation is to check [www.idealist.com](http://www.idealist.com) a website of Action Without Borders. At any time you’ll find thousands of jobs and internships working for companies that are trying to do good. You can also search for a list of organizations in the cities you’re interested in, and apply directly to them.

9. **Use the resources of other universities**

   The situation: Many universities offer “reciprocal services” to graduates of other colleges. You will often be able to search their job listings or use their career libraries, but you will need permission to do so.

   The strategy: Contact the Career Consultant and request a letter of reciprocity to the colleges and universities in your geographic area. The Career Center will contact the Career Services of those universities and ask them to allow you permission to use their services. In most cases, the universities will respond directly to you with the services that they will extend to you. * Note because companies have stronger ties in their geographic region you will probably find more posting for that area. *You can also go to schools websites that have programs similar to yours to see if they have postings that are viewable. Even a list of who has recently recruited or come to a job fair is valuable information!

10. **Chambers of Commerce**
The situation: Most communities have a Chamber that includes all businesses from the tiny nonprofits to the largest businesses in the city. They may have web and print directories that will help you locate organizations to which you may want to apply.

The strategy: Start with <https://www.uschamber.com/chamber/accreditation/directory> for a city search. Each Chamber's website will look different, some much more high-tech than others. In any case, you can usually use it to find links to businesses' addresses and contact people. You can also sign up to receive visitor information that could be a gold mine for you.

11. **Business Journals and Book of Lists**

The situation: Most cities publish weekly or monthly business newspapers and journals, and a yearly “Book of Lists” (many popular cities books of list are available in Career Center Library) that includes the top businesses and organizations in just about every category – advertising agencies, nonprofits, etc. You can purchase your own copies by going to the online portal [http://www.bizjournals.com/bookoflists/](http://www.bizjournals.com/bookoflists/)

The strategy: Start by going to [www.abyznewslinks.com](http://www.abyznewslinks.com) for a list of all the local and state news journals of the cities you’re interested in. Look for the business journals and click them. You can use this to research companies that are expanding into new markets or adding employees, or just to find out more about a company that you’re interested in. The Career Center Library carries the “Book of Lists” for several major cities. If you want to copies of your own go to [http://www.bizjournals.com/bookoflists/](http://www.bizjournals.com/bookoflists/)

12. **Networking**

The situation: In the annual outcome survey, Carnegie Mellon University graduates indicated that the most effective way of finding a job was to network and develop personal contacts. Utilize the Alumni Database, and TartanTrak to find contacts. Attending Career Fairs is also a great way to connect with employers and alumni.

The strategy: First, tell everyone you know that you’re looking for a job, and what kind. The “friend of a friend” strategy pays off much more often than the mass-mailing strategy. For example, if you want to be a glass artist in Rochester, the best way to begin is by sitting down with current artists and asking for their advice. We can assist you in finding contacts, structuring your letter, phone call or email, or developing a list of information interview questions. Yes, this method is time intensive – but it works.

[www.LinkedIn.com](http://www.LinkedIn.com) is a great tool!

13. **CareerShift Job Search Aggregator and Company/Contact Database**

The situation: The job/internship search just became a little easier. CareerShift crawls through the Internet aggregating anything that looks like a job or internship posting. Both have access to millions of jobs. CareerShift has the added advantage of providing an extensive database of employer contact and company information.

The strategy: To access, log in to your TartanTRAK account and click on the link on the left side of you homepage. It is always best to use the advanced search features and to set up search agents that filter out unwanted searches. It is also recommended to play around with the key words to ensure that you find the optimal number of job postings.

14. **Join LinkedIn: [http://www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)**

The situation: Social networking is growing exponentially and if you are not on board, you will miss the boat. LinkedIn has over 40 million users, over a half million groups and thousands of jobs. Recruiters and employers frequently use LinkedIn to identify potential employees and business partners.

The strategy: There is no charge for a basic account. Begin building your professional network and get recommendations. Complete your profile as much as possible. Join the Alfred University Career Development Center group and connect with over 700 alumni and HR professionals. You can search for jobs and join other LinkedIn professional groups and organizations to participate in the discussions and view the jobs posted specifically for those groups.

15. **Twitter: [http://twitter.com](http://twitter.com)**

The situation: Recruiters and employers actively use Twitter looking for young, tech savvy employees. Finding and following these individuals or companies can give access to real time employment opportunities. The strategy: Search Twitter using terms such as “marketing employment” or “green jobs” to identify potential employers/recruiters. You will find a mix of individuals and recruiters posting tweets. In addition to following specific recruiters (e.g. SimplyHire), you will also want to
take a look at the individuals that resulted from your search to see what recruiters they are following. If it appears that the Tweeter is passing along valuable information, follow that profile and set up a RSS feed of tweets directly to your email account. It is to your advantage to participate in the discussions allowing you to highlight your skills, knowledge and interest.

16. **Attend conferences, trade shows and expositions**

The situation: as it says in Cool Careers for Dummies, “trade shows and expos are the equivalent of career shopping malls.” Hundreds of booths offer opportunities for you to network and get ideas you never would have thought of.

The strategy: Identify a couple of interest areas of yours...industrial design, comics, animation, independent films, or whatever. Research and find trade shows and expos related to that interest area in or near your geographic area, or plan a trip around one of them (we can help with this if you aren't sure where to begin.) Get your resumes ready. Once you’re there, walk around and check out the booths. You can collect business cards, ask about employment, ask the booth owners how they got their start and what they’d recommend to a person wanting to get into that career, and even hand out resumes. There are also many social events planned during conventions, check the website. If you cannot afford the fee for the conference you may be able to attend some of the surrounding network events.

17. **Consider federal employment**

The situation: Within the next few years, over one-third of the federal workforce will be eligible for retirement. Federal jobs provide a decent salary, excellent benefits, job security...and they’re hiring.

The strategy: Visit <https://www.usajobs.gov/> and see what’s available. The website is a bit cumbersome, but well worth your time and patience. As you register, you’ll need to know that most students are eligible for “competitive” positions (so you’ll answer “no” to the first few series of questions). Also, most students are eligible for jobs at the GS-5 or GS-7 levels (higher for masters or doctorate degrees.) There is quite a bit of lag time between the time that you apply and the time that you receive responses, but they’re working on that.

18. **Utilize all your resources**

Do you know exactly how the Career Center can help you? Talk with your Career Consultant to find out about little known resources to help you in your job search. We will assist you in coming up with a strategy for success, from researching and targeting firms and companies to networking, to resume cover letter and interview skills. You can even conduct taped practice interviews to get ready for the real thing. The Career Center also sponsors events to help connect you with employers.

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http://www.alfred.edu/cdc/services/docs/Job_Searching.pdf