



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Student Employment &
Career Centre

Job Search Guide



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The examples utilized within this guide are fictitious. No association with any real person, company, organization, product, e-mail address, place, or event is intended or should be inferred.

Introduction

An effective job search is an important tool in building a successful career. To compete in today's job market job seekers require self-knowledge, persistence, ingenuity and substantial amounts of hard work. Looking for employment is a full-time job! It is not enough to be highly qualified for a position.

Those who are successful in obtaining a job that they enjoy do not necessarily possess high grade point averages and/or substantial work experience. Knowing how to search for a job effectively can be as important as the specific qualifications required for the position. An important key to finding a good job is to spend the necessary time preparing yourself for your job search.

The job search can seem overwhelming, even to the most seasoned veterans of the process. Some job seekers have an unrealistic picture of how much time the job search takes. It is never too late to start making contacts. A good time to start looking for a summer job is in the fall. Monitor the job market year round. This can also be beneficial if you are looking for an internship contract, on-going positions or a co-op opportunity. Your search for employment should be full time if you have graduated or are currently unemployed.

Take a broad approach to your job search. Always strive for and achieve a balance among research, preparation and action. If your job search activities are to check classified advertisements and randomly send out your resume, you will probably yield minimal rewards. You can significantly increase your chances of finding the right job and getting hired by developing your network, researching employers and targeting those employers that are a good match with your skills, interests and experiences. This guide will provide you with some key steps on how to conduct a successful job search. The Student Employment & Career Centre (SECC) has a wealth of services available to assist you with your job search preparation. The SECC offers employability resources, counselling services, handouts and workshops to provide you with the tools necessary for your journey.

Develop a Plan

Your work search will be more effective if you map out your strategy in advance.

- Set daily and weekly objectives so that you have a concrete way to evaluate your progress
- Determine the amount of time you will allocate to your job search
- Identify target organizations
- Research
- Make contact
- Follow up
- Schedule at least one activity away from home each day to get yourself out into the community and energized
- Organize your days of searching for work just as you would a regular work day
- Record all your appointments, activities and results

Step By Step Guide

The following steps will help you tackle the job search:

Step 1: Know Yourself & Your Objectives

A job search is conducted most effectively when you are able to focus your efforts. When trying to target your search, step back and closely assess yourself. One of the most important steps in the job search is identifying what kind of job you want and what you have to offer an employer. Evaluate your strengths, weaknesses, abilities, education and experience. Clarify your values and priorities. Consider your short-term and long-term goals. Identifying your job objective will assist you in the job search process.

Create a personal career profile that includes an inventory of your key skills, qualifications, interests, values, experiences and work preferences (where you would like to work, ideal work setting, with whom you would like to work and how you would like to work—with your hands, people, information). You should attempt to select careers that are of interest to you and that match your personal profile.

Step 2: Know the Employers

Knowing how to research employers is crucial in a successful job search campaign. When you begin making contacts during your job search, you will be more informed, a stronger candidate, and be able to conduct a more effective job search. You need to know as much as possible about the company in order to:

- See if you are interested in working for a particular company
- Find out about different types of jobs or work that you may be hired to do
- Tailor your resume and cover letter to the employer's needs and the position
- Prepare yourself effectively for an interview

You will need to conduct thorough research of careers and industries that match your skills. Researching will help you focus on the “big picture” of your job search. Employers often perceive researching the company as a critical factor in the evaluation process because it reflects the interest and enthusiasm of the applicant.

Generate a list of potential employers you would consider. If you are uncertain where to begin, consider these points: the type of organization for which you would like to work, your geographic preference, your chosen sector, the types of products and services in which you are interested and your values.

You can research geographic areas, career fields and employers in a number of ways including:

- Reviewing a company's website
- Consulting books at the library
- Interviewing contacts within the industry (by telephone or in person)
- Reading news articles about the company

Labour Market Information

Information on the labour market is based upon the demographics and economic conditions of the region. To be able to thrive in the current labour market, it is essential that you are aware of the ever-changing labour market trends in the region where you are seeking employment. You must also be able to anticipate and to prepare for changes in the labour market and your chosen field.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada provides a wealth of local occupational and industrial trends, wage data and training information. Refer to the resource links on the SECC's website www.usask.ca/secc.

Step 3: Prepare Your Job Search Tools

Being able to promote your skills and experiences effectively will catch the attention of employers. Your job search tools might take the form of resumes, cover letters, information meetings, networking, telephone calls, a career portfolio and calling cards. They provide employers with the first impression of you as an individual and provide an opportunity for you to promote yourself as a candidate.

Create a job search portfolio that could include:

- Resume
- Cover letter
- Awards
- Calling cards
- Copies of certificates, diplomas, degrees or other training certification
- Performance evaluations
- List of references
- Letters of reference or recommendation
- Career portfolio or work samples
- Proposals

Your job search portfolio should be reviewed and updated frequently. Your job search material should be designed to target specific career options and may require preparation of several versions of your resume and cover letter.

If you think you would like to work for a certain company, consider:

- Structure
- Size
- Products and services
- Performance
- Reputation
- Company Attitude toward employees
- Career opportunities
- Projections for future
- Corporate/company culture

A Place to Start

Personal Contacts

- Professors, friends, relatives, etc.

SECC

- Career Resource Library—'Directories' heading
- Newspapers from across Canada
- Company pamphlets
- Career fairs
- Company information sessions

Industry Contacts

- Telephone book
- People within your field of interest
- An organization itself
- The organization's public relations or human resources departments

University and Saskatoon Public Libraries

- Saskatoon directories—*Saskatoon Directory of Community Information*
- Industry directories
- Trade journals
- Telephone books
- Newspapers/magazines/journals
- Books on business
- Government publications
- Scott's directories—Government Index, Canadian Sourcebook, Associations and Municipalities
- Canadian Trade Index

Internet

- Company websites
- Community information
- Newspapers/journals/trade journals
- Directories

Resume & Cover Letter

A resume is a formal summary of your education, skills and experiences. A personalized cover letter introducing yourself to an employer, identifying the position(s) you are applying for and indicating how you learned of the opening, should accompany every resume. Refer to the *SECC Resume Guide* and *Cover Letter Guide* for more information on writing resumes and cover letters.

List of References

Be selective in who you use as a reference. It may be helpful to have a master list of references from which to choose. Provide the employer with the names of those references that will respond most appropriately towards the skills necessary for the position for which you are applying. The best references will be the ones who can talk about your successes on the job. Talk to each of your references, getting permission to use their names and to make sure they present you in a favourable light. Refer to the *SECC Resume Guide* for more information on selecting and formatting reference lists.

Letters of Reference or Recommendation

If you left your previous employer on good terms, a letter of reference or recommendation may be solicited. You may request the letter either by telephone or in written form. If it is a letter of reference, indicate that you are seeking employment and request a written letter to confirm your previous employment with the organization.

Many employers who provide letters of recommendation do not always know what to say or may innocently say something that is not flattering. In your letter or by telephone, indicate your request and remind them of your previous position and key skills. If you are applying to a specific job, it may also be helpful to provide a copy of the posting. This will help your reference target the letter, focusing on the skills needed to do the job. Some employers may be reluctant to provide a written recommendation in fear of a legal challenge if a reference is not favourable.

Career Portfolio or Work Samples

Carefully analyze what you take to an interview or meeting so that your portfolio will illustrate your skills in the best possible manner. A career portfolio is a valuable tool to keep track of everything you are involved with and to make effective presentations for new contacts. It is a collection of samples of your work (paid and volunteer), your education and training, and your hobbies and interests. Your career portfolio may also encompass performance evaluations, certifications and awards. With a portfolio, not only will you be able to tell prospective employers about yourself, but also about what you have accomplished. Contact the SECC to find out more information on building your own portfolio. Within your job search portfolio it would be advantageous to have documentation of your experiences through your career portfolio.

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Fitness & Lifestyle Professional Stream

- Career expertise includes coaching, athletic therapy, and fitness/exercise management
- Skilled in conducting fitness tests and assessments
- Specialized in developing, planning, coordinating and delivering sports, fitness and recreational programming in an inclusive environment
- Certified in Standard First Aid and CPR C
- Skilled in planning and arranging health care treatment

Job Seeker's Calling Card

The calling or networking card is an excellent tool for networking. A calling or networking card is similar to a business card but provides contacts with your name, telephone number and your area of interest. You may include your graduation date and name of the university if you are graduating within the year. If you are a recent graduate, indicate your degree and major. It may also present your skills, preferred working conditions and qualities as a worker. The information you write on the card may help you with your telephone contacts and interview skills.

Your calling card can introduce you and will provide your contact with a permanent record of your visit. Your card can vary in layout, fonts, colour and simple graphics—depending on the field or industry. Calling cards can be attached to resumes and taken to professional or community events such as career fairs and company information sessions.

How to use your calling card:

- Leave it with a potential employer. Offer your card at the beginning or the end of a conversation. A calling card can show initiative, interest and motivation.
- Attach the card to an application form or cover letter and resume in an upper corner—this may set you apart from other candidates.
- Provide each of your contacts with your calling card to remind them that you are interested—it is also a reminder to them to keep watch for job openings in your field.

Proposals

Work does not always come packaged as a ready-made job. The growth of contract work has created an increased need for written proposals. In your networking and discussions with employers, you may be asked to consider taking on a project on a contract basis. This usually means submitting a project proposal that presents your project along with any fees to be charged for your services.

Step 4: Locate Opportunities

Where do I start? The job market can be very complex. It might be helpful to think of the job market as being divided into two areas—the visible job market and the hidden job market. In conducting a successful job search and developing quality job leads, it is important to explore both areas. Begin with the visible job market because it provides a good starting point. However, keep in mind that 80–90% of jobs are not advertised (the hidden job market).

Visible Job Market

The visible job market consists of jobs that are advertised publicly in some way. The visible job market can mean a lot of competition, especially for entry-level positions. Successful applicants in the visible job market are often those who meet or exceed the requirements suggested by the employer.

Some sectors of the labour market rely heavily on the visible job market. For example, the federal, provincial and local levels of government routinely announce positions via online job postings, employment agencies and classified ads. In the private sector, the visible job market is often linked to high demand and the low supply or high turnover of workers. Employers in this sector often participate in career fairs and advertise positions in the newspaper or on the Internet.

Hidden Job Market

One of the most effective ways for you to find work is to tap into jobs that have not yet been (and may never be) advertised. These jobs are referred to as the hidden job market. The hidden job market includes opportunities that:

- Have not yet been identified
- Have been identified but have not yet been formally advertised—these positions are often filled by or created for candidates who come to an employer’s attention through employee recommendations, referrals from trusted associates, recruiters or direct contact with the candidate.

Visible Job Market

The visible job market can be accessed in a variety of ways:

At the Student Employment & Career Centre

- Online job posting sites and e-mail job subscription service
- Canadian newspaper library
- Career fairs
- Specialized job opportunity publications (e.g. *Job Postings* magazine)

On the Internet

- Job posting sites
- Company webpages

In the community

- Human Resource Skills Development Canada Job Banks
- Advertisements in publications, journals, or bulletins published by associations, organizations, or other colleges and universities
- Employment agencies
- Unions
- Bulletin boards
- Television
- “Help Wanted” signs

Hidden Job Market

Access the hidden job market through:

- Networking
- Specialized trade or professional publications
- Membership listings and associations
- Internet (find information about various companies)
- Newspaper articles and advertisements (related to your field and industry)
- Telephone books
- Prospective employers' lists
- Directories (lists of organizations)

Uncovering hidden opportunities is a little more work than researching the visible market. To conduct an active job search and effectively access the hidden job market, you have to contact people directly and become known to them; you must become more than just a piece of paper that crosses their desk. The key to the hidden job market is networking (using your contacts to connect with employers and their contacts). Employers are constantly on the lookout for suitable candidates to replace departing, retiring, or ineffective workers; to work on new projects; or to add expertise in a particular area.

Making the Most of Your SECC

The SECC has many services available to assist with your job search preparation. These include career counselling services; resume and cover letter writing, interview, job search and career portfolio workshops; job postings; specialized recruitment drives; career fairs; and company information sessions. The SECC provides many valuable services designed to assist with your career development.

The SECC receives daily requests to advertise summer, part-time, full-time, term/contract, internship, international and volunteer opportunities. The SECC acts as a liaison between students/alumni and employers to advertise opportunities through the online job posting system.

View Online Job Postings

As a part of your job search, you are strongly encouraged to actively monitor the postings that are being placed on the SECC online system. To view the online job posting site, visit students.usask.ca/secc/postings/.

To access job postings from off-campus, you will be required to enter your NSID (Network Services Identification) username and password. Details about how to obtain and update your NSID are available from the Information Technology Services Division, located in Room 70 of the Arts Building.

Note: Alumni who graduated prior to 2001 should contact the University Advancement Customer Service Centre at 1-800-699-1907 (Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m., and 12:30–4:30 p.m. CST) to obtain your alumni card necessary to obtain your NSID.

Subscribe to Online Job Postings

An e-mail subscription service is also available, which allows postings from selected areas to be e-mailed to your active e-mail account on the evening of the date they are posted. To subscribe, select the area(s) or discipline(s) that best describe the opportunities of interest to you, by visiting the website at www.usask.ca/secc/

What is On-Campus Recruitment?

“On-Campus Recruitment” is a term used to describe the process through which employers recruit students from the University of Saskatchewan, utilizing the services offered by the SECC. In addition to advertising job opportunities, some employers request that the SECC pre-arrange interview space at the SECC and make arrangements with the students selected for interviews on the company’s behalf. On-campus recruitment can occur during specific recruitment drives or independent of these preset time frames. It is important to be aware that not all companies that post their opportunities on the SECC website or for whom the SECC collects applications, will hold interviews on campus. For more information regarding on-campus recruitment see the *SECC On-Campus Recruitment Guide*.

Career Fairs

Career fairs offered by the University of Saskatchewan are an excellent opportunity to enhance your networking skills, meet with professionals in a wide array of fields and obtain valuable information in your job search. These events will help you to hone your job search skills and to learn more about the work world and potential areas of employment. As with any activity, the key to success is using your time efficiently. For advice on how to succeed at a career fair visit student.usask.ca/secc/ or see the *SECC On-Campus Recruitment Guide*.

U of S Career Fairs include:

- Campus Career Expo (multi-discipline)
- Agriculture Career Fair
- Education Career Fair
- Pharmacy Career Fair

Step 5: Network! Network! Network!

Networking is critical for a successful job search. Networking is the process of establishing contacts for the purpose of gathering information, seeking advice and opening doors to new opportunities. Networking has a ripple effect—you contact your friends and associates, they contact their friends and associates, and so it continues. As your circle of contacts expands, so does your chance of finding a job.

To begin networking, identify your core network of people and work outwards. Ask yourself “Who do I know?” Essentially, your network is everyone you know (family, friends, professors, etc.). Everyone is in a position to help you. You never know who and what other people know—this is the key to networking! If you talk to enough people you will begin to see how inter-related society really is. The beauty of networking is that it can be used both to search for employment as well as to uncover information about different occupations, industries and applications for your skills and interests.

Once you have identified your core network, start talking to people. Be prepared for rejection, as you are likely to encounter disappointments frequently. Move beyond the core group of people and arrange informational meetings, using referrals they have given you to further build your network. For more information on the networking process and informational meetings see the *SECC Networking Guide* available on the SECC website at www.usask.ca/secc or in print at the SECC (available Fall 2005).

Using the Telephone in Your Job Search

The telephone is one of the best tools you have for your job search. People are generally willing to help and share information if you are courteous, respectful of their time, and grateful for the help you receive. Many people resist using the telephone when looking for work because they are uncomfortable calling strangers and fear being rejected or making a mistake.

The key to success in using the telephone in your job search is to plan what you want to say, and then practise handling these situations before they occur. Using the telephone will prepare you to:

- Gather information about jobs and companies
- Develop a network of contacts
- Tie up loose ends in your job search

As you practise using the telephone, you will improve your communication skills and increase your confidence. Learning to use the telephone effectively will greatly improve your chance of finding a job. When initiating a telephone call always introduce yourself, state the reason for your telephone call, and ask if the person has a moment to speak with you.

Telephone Script—Networking Example

“Hello, my name is Anita Career. May I please speak to Mr. Job?”

“Hi Mr. Job, my name is Anita Career. I am a new commerce graduate from the University of Saskatchewan. May I take a few moments of your time to ask a few questions?”

If yes: “Your name and number were suggested to me by Mr. Network. I understand he is a colleague of yours through the New Futures Community Organization. He mentioned that you are looking to fill a marketing position within your company.”

If no: “Would there be a more convenient time when I can call you back?”

Networking List

Some of the people you might include on your network list are:

- Relatives & family friends
- Acquaintances & friends
- Co-workers & former co-workers
- Neighbours (current & past)
- Teachers & professors
- Previous employers or those to whom you are applying
- Teammates from your athletic/sport teams
- Classmates or other students
- People from your church or community groups
- People with whom you volunteer
- Business people (bank manager, insurance agent, etc.)
- Professionals within your desired field
- Members of professional organization(s)
- Politicians
- Chamber of Commerce staff

Be Professional

Be sure to professionalize your message on your answering machine during active job searches.

Advantages of using the Telephone

Some of the advantages of using the telephone include:

- Immediate feedback – you can contact many people in a short period of time
- Verifying contacts – you know immediately if the proper person has received your application
- Interactive contact – you can tailor your presentation to the contact’s interests
- Demands attention – a ringing telephone is usually answered immediately

Types of Telephone Calls

Informational Calls	Networking Calls
To seek information in regard to your job search <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Might lead to a networking call• Might lead to an information meeting• Three-quarters of the conversation will be your questions	To access the hidden job market <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk with people or organizations that may have openings in your area of expertise• If asked, or if you feel it is appropriate, talk about yourself— a 30 second summary as described in the SECC <i>On-Campus Recruitment Guide</i>

Step 6: Identify & Implement Job Search Strategies

There are many ways to look for employment. It is important to choose the methods that work best for you and your situation. The following sections are about some of the most popular ways of seeking opportunities. By using a variety of job search methods you will maximize the effectiveness of your job search. Targeting your job applications after conducting company research to which you are applying often proves more successful than simply sending in your resume.

Visible Job Market

Advertisements in Newspapers, National Publications, Magazines

Many job seekers consult the newspaper when seeking employment. Check the jobs advertised in the career section of the newspaper in addition to those in the classified section. Many newspapers provide an electronic version of their classified section. Also review the local, regional and business sections to learn what companies and organizations are doing, and who might be a potential contact in your job search. For example, an article in the local news section may discuss the opening of a new company or that a local business has launched a new service. When you read the articles, ask yourself what opportunities may develop from these situations.

Competition is usually greater because a large number of people see the same advertisement. Remember that employers are advertising for the ideal candidate. Analyze the job description carefully and do not disregard an opportunity because of the job title written in the advertisement. If you feel that you could do the job, even if you do not think you meet all the qualifications, feel free to apply. However, if you do not meet all the “critical” requirements, do not apply until you meet the requirements (e.g. A mechanical engineer applying for a pharmacist position without a B.S.P.).

Internet Sites Listing Job Advertisements

The Internet can provide you with a great deal of information, including job listings, salary statistics, employer information and more. When using the Internet consider preparing scannable and e-mail versions of your resume, posting your resume for employers to look at, researching employers, accessing job announcements and becoming part of a newsgroup for networking.

Many companies maintain an employment or career opportunities section on their website. If you are interested in working for a specific company monitor the website and possibly subscribe to job postings offered on their site if available. Some companies update their job postings on a specified day of the week.

The Internet also provides a variety of databases where you can submit your resume. There is often a fee attached to you or to the employer. These databases maintain your resume on file. When a posting is received, the computer sorts through the database of resumes using key words to search for candidates. Your resume will need to be in a scannable format (described in the *SECC Resume Guide*) so that it is easily identifiable for databases. If key words are matched, your resume will be forwarded to the employer.

When taking into account which organization to list your resume with, consider these criteria:

- Are they advertising positions in which you would be interested?
- Are modifications and updates permitted? If so, how often?
- How large is the applicant pool versus positions advertised?
- Are fees assessed?
- Are you contacted if your information is viewed or extracted by an employer?
- Do memberships expire?
- Are your qualifications a match with the types of opportunities posted?
- How is your information protected?
- What information is given to the employer?

Temporary Employment/Employment Agencies

There are agencies (many of which can be found in the Yellow Pages under the headings Employment Agencies and Employment Temporary) that may aid your job search. Working on a temporary basis or through an employment agency, can broaden your networking circle. Before making any commitments, be sure to research the reputation of the agencies to ensure that you feel comfortable with the services they offer.

There are two specific categories:

1. Temporary Employment*

These agencies often specialize in labour or administrative work. Temporary positions can supplement your income while you continue your job search.

2. Employment Agencies/Services

a) For-profit agencies (search firms, headhunters)*

Companies have the option of hiring a for-profit agency to recruit on their behalf.

b) Community-based Organizations (CBO's, not-for-profit)

These agencies often recruit diversity groups and market the job seeker's skills and abilities to companies.

* Be aware! Some agencies charge a fee to utilize their services. Discuss both your expectations and the agencies' procedures and policies. Read contracts carefully to ensure you understand the requirements and impact of accepting jobs, in addition to any overlap that could occur if both you and an employment agency or service are sending out your resume.

Job Banks

Check the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and the Canada Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services (commonly referred to as CanSask) centres. You can view a variety of job postings on their national employment listings website. The SaskNetWork is also a valuable job search tool, containing information on job search and job postings. During the summer, the Human Resource Centre of Canada for Students (open May to August) also has positions listed. Links to these and other websites can be found on the SECC website at www.usask.ca/secc.

Hidden Job Market

Directories

There is a wealth of resources available for gathering information on employers. Directories such as “*The Career Directory*” and “*Who’s Hiring*” are available at the SECC and most public libraries. Numerous professional memberships and Chamber of Commerce directories also provide valuable information, including key contacts and addresses.

Most communities have a Chamber of Commerce—a community-based business alliance. Their directories are available at minimal or no charge. Some chambers publish a business magazine and/or maintain an Internet website. These publications have information on new businesses, regional growth industries and hiring opportunities. You can gain numerous contacts by reading these publications, attending chamber events or visiting the websites regularly. Some Chambers of Commerce also provide useful information on housing and living costs, educational institutions, cultural and recreational opportunities—all of which are factors to be considered when deciding where you might want to work.

Professional Associations

If you have chosen a general career field, it is helpful to know the professional association(s) related to the field. You can use the association as a resource or become a member. When you belong to an organization you will be informed of major conferences and other networking opportunities.

Libraries

Consider visiting the public and University of Saskatchewan libraries to help your job search. Libraries contain a multitude of resources on career research, companies, industries and associations. The people who work at the library have been trained to help you locate information—they are great allies to have. The best information will likely be in the Reference Section and may not necessarily be available to borrow, but perhaps it may be photocopied. It is unlikely that one library will have everything you need, therefore it is advisable to visit a variety of libraries in your community.

Yellow Pages

The Internet and most public libraries have telephone books for major cities and communities. Use the Yellow Pages and business sections to identify companies and organizations that might be seeking individuals with your skills. The Yellow Pages may help you identify smaller companies or businesses that may not be listed in employer directories. Consult the Yellow Pages index for industry groupings.

Volunteering

Volunteering provides an excellent opportunity to explore a variety of career options. In addition, volunteering provides you with the opportunity to:

- Share your skills and experience
- Develop new skills (you can build your resume through volunteering)
- Receive new training in new areas
- Meet people in your field and expand your network

Where to Look for Volunteer Opportunities

On Campus:

- SECC Online Job Postings (in the “Volunteer” section)
- USSU Volunteer Centre
- Campus Events (SECC Career Fairs, Experience US!, Surviving US!, Orientation)
- International Student Office (Oral English Program)

In the Community:

- Volunteer Saskatoon
- Sports Organizations/ Events
- Community-based Organizations
- Opportunities are endless!

The contacts you make can be helpful in finding employment and, once made, can last a lifetime. Some employers will hire their volunteers and use volunteering as a method of screening applicants before committing to hiring them.

Employers place substantial weight on the skills gained from volunteering. Analyze the activities involved in the positions. Assess which aspects you enjoyed most and least, taking into consideration the reasons why. Determine the skills that you gained from the position and how they are applicable to the career you are entering. Use this information to reflect your numerous skills and abilities during the job search.

Create Your Own Job

There may be times when you have identified a problem within an organization that you are qualified to solve. You may have picked up on a need that you can fill. If so, you may wish to prepare a proposal outline and send it to the employer. The employer, if interested, may request the full proposal and arrange a time for you to meet. The employer may be impressed with your qualifications and with what you could offer. Keep your proposal short, clear and concise. You can think of yourself as an entrepreneur or an independent consultant or contractor. Written proposals can be an additional tool for people to use to market themselves. For more information on creating your own job or starting your own business, visit the SECC career resource centre.

In Summary,

Cover all the bases by using the following job search methods:

- Sending letters of inquiry
- Responding to advertised positions
- Executing direct walk-ins—dress for success and visit the office
- Initiating telephone calls— inquire about openings, contacts
- Registering with both temporary employment and employment agencies
- Attending career fairs and trade shows
- Networking

Step 7: Apply & Follow Up

Any time you meet or speak to someone in your job search be prepared to follow up and keep in touch with your contacts. Let your contacts know how you are progressing. If you add something to your job search portfolio (for example, completion of a certificate course, updated resume), use this as an opportunity to re-connect with a previous contact person. Be sure to thank everyone who helped you. Be brief and sincere when speaking to your contacts. If you were successful in finding a job, contact those in your network who assisted or referred you. They need to know that they can stop searching on your behalf.

Follow-up telephone calls can be used to bring closure to elements of your job search. The telephone can be used to:

- Check the status of your application
- Ask about the hiring process – including shortlisting, interview timelines and the ideal start date for the position

If you were successful in obtaining an interview but not selected for the position you may use the telephone to:

- Obtain feedback from the interview
- Inquire about other positions that may be available within the company
- Discover whether there are any upcoming projects that may create opportunities

The telephone can also be used to expand your network and to obtain contact information for other jobs and employers.

Keep Records

For networking and potential employment, keep a record of all the volunteer work you do, including information such as:

- Position title and role
- Organization's name, address and telephone number
- Supervisor's name
- Dates worked
- Approximate hours per week
- Networking opportunities
- Copies of letters of recommendation

Step 8: Prepare & Practise Presentation/ Interview Skills

In order for you to be successful in your job search, you must be able to present yourself appropriately. To assist you in preparing for your interview, the SECC offers a variety of resources and information including books. The SECC website (www.usask.ca/secc) has great information and links. This includes:

- Dress for Success
- Be Punctual
- Be friendly and courteous
- Poise/Confidence
- Effective Communication

Step 9: Keep Track

It is important that once you start sending out cover letters and resumes that you devise some way to keep track of when and what you have sent. If, for example, you send out a letter to an employer requesting an interview and offer to call them during the week of March 3, you need to have that date recorded somewhere so that you can be sure to meet that commitment. It can be critical to know what you have said in a particular letter to be able to follow up accurately.

Below are some suggested formats for organizing your job search (resumes, cover letters, application forms, etc.). These can be done using a paper form or by using computer software.

Charts

In a hard copy or electronic format, create a chart. Give each column a heading such as Prospective Employer and Contact Information, Person Contacted, Date Sent, Commitments Made in Letters, Follow-up Information, Person Who Replied, Date of Reply and Action Taken. Keep this chart updated and hold on to any response letters you receive.

Electronic Copies

When saving job search materials in an electronic format, name the files with appropriate titles to identify what they are—for example, Company_name_datesent.doc.

Hard Copies

Make paper copies of all the letters and related material you send out and keep them in a file folder or binder. You can create additional folders for letters requiring further action. This method is especially helpful because you can refer to all your letters and related materials when composing other applications. You can also reflect over what you have sent and determine what was most effective in generating interviews.

Step 10: Evaluate Offers

Acting with professionalism throughout the job search is also a key component that can affect you now and for future consideration. If a job opportunity does present itself, but it is not quite what you were looking for, do you decide to accept the position or do you decline it? What if you accept an offer and a better offer comes along? What if two employers presented you with two distinct offers at the same time and only gave you 10 minutes to accept one, how would you decide? These, and many other questions, can be very stressful and may have long term effects on your marketability and future development.

The best advice the SECC can provide is to weigh your options carefully. For example, accepting an offer might be based upon a number of criteria including the work entailed, the job location, the salary, the opportunity for advancement, the benefits, the corporate/company culture, or maybe even the company's reputation. There can be a number of determining factors that will weigh into your decision. The key is to understand what those determining factors are before making a hasty decision. You want to make the best possible decision, based upon all the known factors. Then, and only then, can you feel comfortable with the decision that you have made.

If you do accept an offer, then advise any other organization from which you are considering offers, that you are no longer looking. Not only is your reputation on the line, the University of Saskatchewan's is too.

Step 11: Keep At It

Rejection and disappointment are often a large part of the job search process. Many job seekers describe the process as an emotional roller coaster. Expect to feel a whole range of emotions, from excitement to anger and disappointment to relief. It may be helpful to develop an effective stress management plan.

Stress Management Tips During Your Job Search

- Talk about what is happening with someone you trust
- Keep a journal of your feelings and thoughts
- Maintain extracurricular activities
- Take care of yourself physically and mentally—pay attention to your health and fitness
- Be patient
- Seek professional assistance
- Maintain a positive attitude—keep rejections in proper perspective
- Reward yourself when goals are met

In Conclusion...

The process of job searching can be a lifelong journey—from looking for your first job to changing careers mid-stream. It is estimated that the average individual may change careers an average of seven times within a lifetime. Experts suggest that individuals today can expect to hold up to 25 different jobs throughout their careers. With the proper dedication and strategy, your job search will become increasingly more efficient and effective.

Failure can be expected along the way—use these opportunities as learning experiences to further develop career and life management skills. Remember to utilize the services and resources available to you, through the Student Employment & Career Centre, external agencies and community resources. Best of luck along the way!

Job Offer

- Discuss offers with employers to verify terms and reach mutually acceptable responses
- Notify employers of acceptance or rejection of an offer as soon as a decision is made
- Respond to every offer whether it is to be accepted or rejected
- Notify the career centre immediately upon confirmation of a job acceptance to withdrawal from the work search process
- Honour the acceptance of the offer as it is a contractual agreement with the employer

Source: Canadian Association of Career Educators & Employers. Guidelines for Ethical Recruitment at Post-secondary Educational Institutions.

SECC Office Hours (Monday – Friday)

8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.



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