



# **JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES**

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# Employer Research

Taking the time to conduct an employer search is critical in a successful job search process. It provides you an opportunity to learn more about potential employers such as their mission, company culture, and future goals. It is also a great way to prepare for networking events or the interview process and learn if the company is aligned with your career aspirations.

## **Make an informed decision**

A key part of the career development process is to gather information and make a decision. Doing research helps you learn about different companies, identify companies of interest, and narrow your target companies.

## **Show company interest**

Incorporating tidbits of information about the company, while engaging recruiters at events like career fairs, will showcase that you are genuinely interested in working for their company.

## **Improve marketability**

As an informed applicant, you can address a company's values or needs in your resume, cover letter, or during the interview. For example, you can highlight experiences that match the company mission statement in your cover letter or during the interview. Knowing about the company also helps you tailor interview responses to questions like "Why should we hire you?" or "Why do you want to work for this company?".

Here are a few of recommendations on how conduct your employer research:

- **Your network**  
Tap into your network of friends and family who have worked or are currently working at your target company.
- **Company website**  
Visiting the company website will help you learn more about the company history, mission, diversity initiatives, products and services, and possible future growth or expansion.
- **[LinkedIn](#)**  
LinkedIn is a great social networking platform to learn about company culture, job opportunities, company personnel like hiring managers or new hires, and may provide updates about current success or future goals.
- **[Glassdoor](#)**  
Glassdoor provides a ton of anonymous reviews about salary ranges, company culture and benefits, interview questions for specific jobs, and etc.
- **[Hoovers](#)**  
Hoover's online provides company profiles such as company ranking, large corporate directory, market quotes, and leading news with hypertext links to over 5000 company websites.

# Networking

More than 85% of all hiring happens through someone you know or who knows you. At its core, networking is about creating community by developing and maintaining meaningful relationships. In our everyday lives, our network includes our family, friends, classmates, colleagues, and acquaintances. You can incorporate networking to help you:

- Develop connections and make contacts
- Gain information about potential employers
- Find unadvertised jobs or internships
- Obtain referrals to other people for job leads

Networking is an ongoing process, here are some starting points:

## Get Personal Referrals

The best and easiest way to expand your current network is through a referral. Being introduced to by a mutual friend or acquaintance will result in a warmer welcome and connection.



**TIP!** Take the time to jot down a list of people you know such as friends, family and acquaintances. You may be surprised at who they know and with whom they can connect you with.

## Attend Career Services Events

Attend the career readiness workshops hosted by Career Services, such as industry panels or information sessions.

## Participate in Professional Organizations

Professional organizations can be regional, national or international and may meet monthly, quarterly, or annually. Membership provides opportunities to meet people while sometimes providing access to member only job postings.

## Leverage Social Media Online

Social media allows us to stay connected to old colleagues or classmates from high school. You can also leverage social media platforms like Instagram or Facebook to meet new people and expand your professional network.



**TIP!** Refrain from social media postings that have political rants, incorrect grammar and punctuation, or references of substance use. If in doubt, make sure to clean up your social media accounts!

## Get Involved in Community Service

Volunteering is a great way to develop new relationships while utilizing your skills for a good cause.

## Do Not Ask For A Job

Keep in mind that networking is not asking for a job but is rooted in establishing a relationship so when a potential opportunity may arise your contact may be willing to refer you.

## Update Your LinkedIn Profile

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional online network and showcases your professional story through your experience, skills, and education. You can use LinkedIn to join groups, write articles, post photos/videos, etc.

# Informational Interviewing

Interviewing professionals already working in your pathway is a non-stressful way to obtain information about your future career. After finding a role or industry you have an interest in, decide on which professionals to interview, who have the same position in that industry. Then schedule an interview through LinkedIn, email, or other social networks and ask for a 30-60 minute virtual or in-person meeting.

## Step 1: Schedule the Informational Interview

- Show your interest in the company/industry and share your source of information
- Outline your strongest qualifications by focusing on the bigger picture of occupational goals
- Think about what direction you're headed in, and how it would help this person to know that
- Suggest an action plan by requesting an interview
- Express your appreciation for their time and assistance

**Sample 1:** "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. My friend \_\_\_\_\_ referred me to you. I am a student at Calbright College and am researching careers in \_\_\_\_\_. I would like to get more information and advice about this field from a professional in this career. I am hoping to schedule a brief 15-20 minute meeting (not an interview) at your office, at your convenience. Would you happen to have any time?"

**Sample 2:** "Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am conducting research in your field. I am very interested in the type of work you do, and would like to meet and talk with you for about 15-20 minutes so that I can find out more about your field of expertise. Would it be possible to schedule a meeting?"

## Step 2: Prepare for the Informational Interview

- Research the job, company/industry, and person
- Know your own interests, skills, values, and how they relate to the career field
- Have plenty of thoughtful and open-ended questions prepared to spark conversation

## Step 3: Choose Questions for the Informational Interview

- How has your career path led you to your current role?
- Would you please describe a typical workday?
- Tell me about a few projects you recently worked on.
- What advice do you have for a person entering in this field?
- Are there professional organizations that you would recommend?
- Can you refer me to another person in this field who shares my interests and goals?

## Step 4: Conduct the Informational Interview

Use your listening skills and stay alert. Taking notes is a great way to remember everything, or jot down your notes immediately after the interview so you don't forget anything. Again, remember to watch the time. Ask for names of other contacts in the field to build your network. Finally, never ask for a job.

**Step 5: Follow Up After the Informational Interview**

- Be sure to send a thank-you note and stay connected to your new contact.
- Reflect on skills and experiences you need to build and brainstorm ways to build upon your strengths.
- Write down key takeaways, companies to explore, future contacts, potential internship sites, and advice.

**Important Notes**

- Be on time to the interviews and dress appropriately.
- Turn your cell phone off.
- If you cannot make the interview appointment, call to cancel. Do NOT be a no-show.

# Job Search Methods

Conducting an effective job search requires that you utilize multiple search methods simultaneously to give yourself the best chance of landing a job. Listed below are some of the most popular job search methods.

## Online Search

Online search is the most common job search method where you search for jobs using a job listing database. Typically, it is free to low-cost to access and you can upload your resume, create job alert emails, or apply to job openings directly.



**TIP!** Use [Boolean logic to search job listing databases](#) with commands like: AND, OR and NOT. For example, you can search “Salesforce AND Entry Level” to find job postings that only contain both terms.

## Career Fairs

Career fairs (also known as job fair or career expo) is an event where you meet employers who are recruiting for specific positions in their company. Career fairs are in-person or online and may be general in scope with a wide-range of employers or targeted towards a specific industry. Attending a career fair is a great way for you to meet and learn about multiple companies at one time and location.

## Employment Agencies

Employment agencies (also known as recruiting, staffing, or temp agencies) serve as an intermediary between you and a company, where they match your qualifications with a company's job openings. Using employment agencies can help you save time while providing access to unadvertised job openings.



**TIP!** Find a reputable employment agency using the [American Staffing Association](#) online directory. Do not hesitate to ask questions to find out what services you can expect and what will be expected of you in return.

## Targeted Mailing

Targeted mailing is when you send your resume and cover letter to a person of influence at a company. This job search method requires that you research and develop a list of targeted companies, identify a contact person within that company (typically someone with the ability to make hiring decisions), and message them a targeted email or letter.



**TIP!** Use LinkedIn to research companies and identify individuals in a position to make hiring decisions. For example, if you are targeting an IT Support position at the American Red Cross, try searching “Director Information Technology + American Red Cross” and you will find the names of several people with this title.

## In-Person Visit

Applying for a job opening in-person requires that you visit a company and meet with a hiring manager to submit your resume and cover letter. It shows initiative and makes a good first impression but is also better suited for small companies versus large companies where hiring managers can be located in multiple locations.

### **Networking**

Networking as a job search method requires that you tell everyone and anyone about your job search goal. It is where you meet, rekindle, or establish a relationship to exchange information such as career advice or prospective job opportunities. Since the majority of job openings are not advertised, networking is crucial to the job search process.

# Job Search Safety

There is a growing trend of online job scams with fraudulent job postings. Fortunately, there are several clues to look for and help protect yourself.

## Clues to Identifying a Job Scam

- You carefully review the job posting and it is generic in nature with no clear description and requirements. There might also be more emphasis on the amount of money you can earn versus the role and responsibilities.
- Before or during the interview process you are asked for personal or financial information like your social security number, full home address, copy of your driver's license, credit card or bank information.
- Well before you can be considered for a job you are asked to complete a background check.
- A company sends you an unsolicited email about a job posting you did not apply for. Be on full alert if the email originated from a free email domain service like Gmail or Yahoo.
- Written communication from company representatives is unprofessional and includes typos or grammar errors.
- Job posting appears to be from a legitimate company, but the contact email address doesn't match the company's protocol (i.e., ksmith@gmail.com rather than ksmith@companyname.com).
- The prospective employer asks that you pay for a course, training material, or career coaching in order to apply.
- Unexpectedly you receive a large check and are asked to transfer it back using wiring service like Zelle, Ebay, Western Union, Money Gram, Paypal or Venmo.
- You are being pressured to act immediately and feel coerced or rushed into making a decision.
- A Google search of the company name or hiring manager returns scam reports from reputable sources such as the Better Business Bureau or RipOff Report.



**TIP!** Trust your instinct and, if something doesn't feel right, walk away.

## Additional Resources for Job Scams

- [Federal Trade Commission](#) - Learn about employment scams or file a complaint.
- [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#) - File a complaint or review Internet crime prevention tips.

- [Better Business Bureau](#) - Research employers by reviewing reports, complaints, and accreditation status.
- [RipOff Report](#) - Discover complaints about companies.
- [Flex Jobs](#) - Learn about different types of job scams.

SOURCE: [University of Maryland, Baltimore County Career Center](#)