Developing a Job Search Plan

USC CAREER CENTER

The typical job search takes 6-9 months…Start yours today!

Live it.

Experience it.

Decide it.

Know yourself and what you have to offer
You are more than your major

Determine your job targets
A focused job search yields the best results

Identify a list of potential employers and learn about them.
It's up to you to find employers "right" for you

Create your resume and cover letter, and prepare for interviews
Preparation and practice makes for a better performance

Initiate your search
Success is something you create

Follow-up appropriately
First impressions count, and so does follow-up

Stay focused and monitor your progress
Having a plan will keep you on track to success

Evaluate and negotiate offers
Make sure the job is a good fit

For best use of this document go to:
www.sc.edu/career/Pdf/jobsearchplan.pdf

UNIVERSITY OF
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Know Yourself and What you Have to Offer

_____ **1.** Consult a staff member to decide if you should begin with career assessments.

_____ **2.** Identify and list all academic and non-academic experiences:

    a. List all college education, related coursework, certifications, and specialized training.

    b. List all your work, student organization, and community service experiences.

_____ **3.** Complete the Career Center's _Identify Transferable Skills_ tip sheet to identify the skills you have demonstrated in the past.

_____ **4.** Complete the _Identify Personal Qualities_ tip sheet to identify words that describe you.

_____ **5.** Complete the _Identify Work Values_ tip sheet to prioritize your top ten working conditions.

_____ **6.** Meet with a staff member to review all of your assessment results.

KNOW YOURSELF - RESOURCES

Define Desired Job Tasks and Employer Targets

_____ **1.** Define your geographic targets.

_____ **2.** Complete the _Identify Desired Work Tasks_ tip sheet.

_____ **3.** Complete the _Identify Sectors & Areas of Interest_ tip sheet.

_____ **4.** Explore jobs you can pursue with your major.

_____ **5.** Research market trends to identify which jobs are in great demand.

_____ **6.** Meet with a staff member if you need assistance.

JOB AND EMPLOYER TARGETS - RESOURCES

Learn More About Potential Employers

_____ **1.** Develop an initial list of employers that interest you:

    a. Use the Career Center Resource Room and web resources to identify employers in your area of interest, including _Handshake_, our electronic job posting board.

    b. Consult with Career Center staff about Job Shadowing, information interviewing, and other forms of networking to learn more.

_____ **2.** Prioritize your list of potential employers:

    a. Use the _Employer Information_ tip sheet to research employer targets.

    b. Thoroughly research each employer's website to learn about its culture, values, and hiring process.

LIST OF POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS - RESOURCES

Create Your Resume and Cover Letter and Prepare for Interviews

_____ **1.** Prepare your resume and cover letter:

     a. Use the Career Center's *Resume Writing* tip sheet (includes information about cover letters) and **OptimalResume** program to develop a draft of your resume.

     b. Using what you've learned about yourself and your potential employers, tailor your resume and cover letter to each job to which you apply.

     c. Meet with Career Center staff to review your resume and cover letter.

     d. Obtain resume approval for use in *Handshake*, our electronic job posting board.

     e. Create a separate document using your resume header for your reference list.

_____ **2.** Learn how to present yourself professionally to employers:

     a. Update email addresses and voicemail messages to portray a professional image.

     b. Acquire appropriate attire (business suit) for recruitment events and interviews.

     c. Learn about general professional etiquette to make a positive first impression.

_____ **3.** Prepare for the interviewing process:

     a. Review the Career Center's tip sheets on interviewing.

     b. Improve answers to potential interview questions by using the Career Center's practice interviewing software.

     c. Practice your interviewing skills using InterviewStream.

[RESUME, COVER LETTER, AND INTERVIEWING - RESOURCES](#)

Initiate your search

_____ **1.** Consult with Career Center staff to identify the most appropriate strategies for finding job openings. Examples include:

     a. *Handshake*, our electronic job posting board.

     b. Career Center Resource Room and web resources.

     c. Classified ads, professional organizations' websites and publications.

     d. Employer information sessions (please see *Handshake* for upcoming sessions).

     e. Job fairs.

_____ **2.** Consult the Career Center Resource Room publications for additional job searching strategies.

_____ **3.** Develop a network:

     a. Brainstorm a list of people who work or know someone in the industry you are targeting: i.e., parents, relatives, neighbors, friends, faculty, former and current employers, social group members and alumni.

     b. Create your sales pitch: a 20-30 second message to let the employer know your related interests and what makes you a highly desirable candidate.

     c. Schedule informational interviews with people who may be able to assist you.

     d. Persevere – it may take 10-12 contacts before you find someone who can help.

_____ **4.** Establish direct contact with employers through emails, telephone calls, or letters:

     a. Evaluate employer interactions and identify ways to improve your techniques.

[INITIATE SEARCH - RESOURCES](#)

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE ...

Follow Up After Interviews, Correspondences and Contacts

_____ **1.** Send thank you letters or emails within 24 hours: review samples in Career Center Resource Room.

_____ **2.** Provide requested information (transcripts, references, etc.) in a reasonable time frame.

_____ **3.** Devise a process to keep track of your commitments and follow up with your contacts.

_____ **4.** Note any hiring timelines and employment cycles for your preferred employers.

FOLLOW-UP - RESOURCES

Stay Focused and Monitor Your Progress

_____ **1.** Demonstrate flexibility in your job search and adapt your plan to new job leads.

_____ **2.** Develop realistic goals that need to be completed each week.

_____ **3.** Document all job search activities and organize information such as contact names, phone numbers, email addresses and important dates.

_____ **4.** Accept "dead ends," learn from your mistakes, and maintain your momentum until you have accepted a job offer.

_____ **5.** Consult with Career Center staff if you are not making progress.

_____ **6.** Once you have accepted an offer, remove yourself from other consideration.

STAY FOCUSED - RESOURCES

Evaluate and Negotiate Offers

_____ **1.** Refer back to your *Identify Work Values* tip sheet (Part I) to consider the factors most important to you in a position.

_____ **2.** Read the Career Center's *Successful Salary Negotiations* tip sheet and follow up with Career Center staff if you have questions.

_____ **3.** Determine when, what and how to negotiate (keeping benefit packages in mind).

_____ **4.** Obtain accurate salary data using the Career Center library and web resources.

_____ **5.** Draft and rehearse a script to assist you in the negotiation process.

EVALUATE AND NEGOTIATE - RESOURCES

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