

Conducting an Effective Job Search

Source: Manitoba Career Development

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1. Preparing For Your Job Search

Job Search can be a continuous process for many different reasons:

- Looking for change and new opportunities
- Wanting to develop your skills beyond where they are now
- Looking ahead to potential lay offs
- Moving to a new town, city or country
- Changing occupations
- dealingwith a job loss

You may be looking for work because you're ready for new challenges or you may currently be unemployed. Whatever circumstances lead you to this point, it's important to take charge of your job search. Even though it's your responsibility to find new work, there are lots of resources to support you. This Information Session is one of them.

Understanding the Cycle of Job Loss

If you've lost your job, it's important to know that people feel many different emotions when they are out of work. Feelings may include:

- Shock
- Relief
- Sadness
- Excitement
- Frustration
- Lack of energy
- Hopelessness
- Determination

Feelings may be very different from one person to another. Your own feelings may depend on:

- How you lost your job.
- How long you've been out of work.
- Whether you can provide for your family or others who depend on you.

Many people who lose their jobs couldn't have done anything differently. It's not their fault! people lose jobs because businesses close, the economy shifts, or technology changes how work is done. If you were a good worker and lost your job, you may be very frustrated. However, it's important to stay optimistic and keep your eyes open for new opportunities.

The Importance of Optimism

Optimism involves staying positive and being confident that things will work out. It is a factor in both career success and job satisfaction and an important quality to maintain during a job search. If you feel discouraged, try these tips for staying positive:

- Practice positive self-talk.
 - Tell yourself “I will find a job.”
- Believe in yourself.
- Ask others for positive feedback on skills and qualifications.
 - Ask “what am I good at?”
- Focus on the positive contributions you will bring to an organization.
- Look for work in a growing industry.
- Be flexible and open to new opportunities.
- Get assistance from the Career Centre.

Keep Your Eyes Open

You might be hoping to get a very specific job. However, when you’re looking for work, it’s important to be flexible and open to all possibilities. Lots of people seem to end up in jobs by chance or because of a lucky break. However, if you look deeper you’ll usually find that the person was actively in the right place at the right time. People who are open to possibilities tend to be connected to other people. In turn, those connections introduce work or learning opportunities, or lead to new interests or passions.

To increase your chances for a lucky break, take part in activities that get you around different people. Consider:

- Taking a class
- Travelling
- Coaching a sports team
- Participating in community activities
- Taking time to talk to the people around you

Be curious about new experiences and actively try to increase chance encounters. You might find interesting work that you’d never thought of doing!

Job Seeker's Checklist

Before you begin your job search, make sure you have everything you need. This will help you to avoid setbacks or missed opportunities when you do get a good lead.



Use the following checklist to get organized before beginning your job search. Check the box for each item you've prepared.

Do you have...

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| A social insurance number? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No - Contact Service Canada at 1-800-622-6232 www.servicecanada.gc.ca |
| A cover letter? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No - Attend Writing Cover Letters eLearning |
| A resume? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No - Attend Writing Resume Letters eLearning |
| Access to newspapers, computer, internet? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No - Visit your local library or Employment Ontario Office |
| A network of contacts for job leads? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No - See the Networking section of this guide |
| List of informed work references? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No- Attend Outstanding Interviews eLearning |
| A job search focus? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No - See the Researching the Job Market section of this guide |
| A reliable way to be contacted (phone or email)? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| A polite greeting on your voice mail/ answering machine? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| A safe place to store your resume electronically and on paper? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Recording Your Job Search



You'll likely apply to several different positions over a short period of time. Use the Recording Your Job Search worksheet to track the positions you apply to. Use the "Follow up Notes" section to record:

- Follow-up phone calls or emails.
- Meetings with employers.

NAME: _____

JOB SEARCH RECORD

Active Job Search can include, but not limited to: development of resumes; cover letters; compiling references; practice interviews; attending interviews; researching & contacting employers; applying for employment; attending job fairs & information sessions; networking

| Date | Company Contacted &/or Job Search Activity | Contact Name & Title | Phone / Fax Email / In Person | Job Applied for | Time Spent & Outcome |
|------|--|----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
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Copies of a Job Search Record have been included in your handout package.

2. Networking

A Network is a group of people, from all parts of your life, who can help you with job search and career planning. Networks are important; everybody has one. About 80 per cent of jobs come from networking.

People in your network may include:

- Teachers
- Neighbours
- Family friends
- Current or previous employers and co-workers
- Team members
- Professionals (ex: doctors, dentists, employment counsellors)
- Community leaders

Developing your network is a lifelong activity; it began long before you started your job search. You have several groups of people in your life which make up your own personal network. To expand and strengthen your network:

- Keep in regular contact with people
- Help people when they need it or ask for it
- Attend events to meet new people
- Join a club or professional association
- Volunteer
- Contact people when you know something that may interest or benefit them
- Connect on special occasions (ex: sending out an annual “Happy New Year” email or newsletter)

To add to your network at face-to-face events:

- Speak to everyone you know
- Approach small groups and introduce yourself
- Hand out business cards
- Ask others for their business cards

Networking Effectively

Many contacts in your network know you well and can speak about your skills and abilities. To ensure they are helpful, keep people up-to-date with your job search goals and activities. Also, stay current with your network contacts' needs and goals so that you can be helpful in return.

To get the most out of your network, be specific with your requests. Let them know that you're looking for work, what type of work you're looking for, and what you hope they can do to help (ex: introduce you to a contact in a company that interests you). Don't expect people to respond to your requests immediately. However, if you don't hear back after a few days, it's fine to follow up with a polite reminder phone call or email.

Jennifer Meyer: Jennifer recently graduated with a Computer Systems technology diploma. She has developed an extensive network including instructors, family, friends, fellow students, her practicum supervisor and co-workers. Jennifer is currently looking for job leads and is interested in working for a good organization. She decided that the best way to find job leads is to email people in her network. Jennifer wrote: "I'm looking for a Junior Assistant Network Administrator position at Charge university; do you know who the best person is to contact?"

Use contacts in your network to:

- Get connected with other people who can help you.
- Personally introduce you to hiring managers or employers.
- Learn more about a specific occupation or industry.
- Act as references and referrals.

Here are some sample scripts to help you prepare for contacting members of your network.

By phone: Hi. It's _____ [your name]. How are you? I'm looking for a new job as a _____ [insert name of occupation] and wondered if you know of anyone who might be hiring?"

or

I'm looking for a new job as a _____ [insert name of occupation] and wondered if you can suggest anyone I should talk to about job vacancies in this field.

By email:

Hi _____ [insert contact name]:

How are you? I was wondering if you had some time to get together and talk? I'm looking for a new job as a _____ [insert name of job here] and was hoping I could talk to you about possible places to apply. if you have any job leads or know of anyone who I should talk to, I'd really appreciate your help.

thanks,

_____ [your name]

After getting help from contacts in your network, always be sure to follow up with your thanks.

Networking Etiquette

When networking (ex: at events, on the phone or online, or just meeting someone for a coffee) always be professional. A rule of thumb is to behave just as you would at a job interview.

Always:

- Be on time
- Be confident
- Respect cultural differences
- Be polite and respectful to everyone
- Keep conversations and small talk appropriate and professional

For in-person networking, also:

- Dress appropriately
- Avoid using perfume or cologne
- Keep your breath fresh
- Refrain from alcohol
- Avoid smoking



Remember

Effective networking is not a one-sided relationship. Make sure that you help others in your network and don't just rely on them when you need something.

Social Networking Sites

Online networking, through sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and twitter, is another popular networking option. However, there are special guidelines for e-networking:



- Create a new professional account for job seeking.
- Use an updated and professional photo.
- Be cautious of security settings; limit who can post to your profile.
- Keep your network engaged by updating your status, uploading pictures from your portfolio, or posting links to samples of your work.
- Keep contact information up-to-date.
- The "Info" or "About Me" sections should include information about the kind of job(s) you are looking for.

Avoid

- Providing too much information (ex: if you work from home, you may not want your home address available to the public)
- Posting inappropriate content (ex: personal photos, unprofessional comments, non-job related content)
- Accepting "friend requests" or requests to be connected from people you don't know

It's also a good idea to occasionally search for your own name online (ex: using Google) to see what your online presence says about you.

Elevator Statements

An elevator statement is a quick way of sharing information about you with other people. Your statement should talk about your career goals, accomplishments and qualifications. be brief - 30 seconds or less.

Why an elevator statement? Because if you got into an elevator with someone who asked you what you do or what you want to do, your statement would clearly answer the question before you left the elevator. An elevator statement can be used anywhere, any time (not just in elevators); if used well, it could open the door to more conversation.

Having an elevator statement is good insurance. You will be ready to talk to anyone at any time about who you are and what you are looking for. There's nothing worse than walking away from an opportunity wishing you'd presented yourself better! With a good elevator statement, you won't miss opportunities to let people know about your skills and the type of work you're interested in.

Darel McDonald: Darel recently lost his job as a general labourer. He's the main earner in his family and is anxious to get back to work. Darel prepared an elevator statement to make sure he's ready for any opportunity. He'll use it when he drops off resumes or chats with people at social events; he also hopes to use it in an interview.

"Hi, I'm Darel McDonald. Right now I'm looking for a full-time position where I can apply my skills and experience. I have over 20 years' experience as a general labourer but was recently laid off. I'm fluent in Cree, which has been a real asset in my previous jobs. If you know of anyone who's hiring, or might be, I'd love to know."



To create your own elevator statement, answer the following questions:

1. What type of work are you looking for? What is your career goal?
2. What have you accomplished so far to meet that goal? (ex: education, awards)
3. What else do you need to attain that goal? What are your next steps?

3. Researching the Job Market

Finding Employers

There are countless places that may have work for you. Attempting to find work without a clear focus can result in frustration and wasted time. If you don't have a clear focus yet, attend Planning Your Career eLearning Information Session to discover jobs that will use your knowledge, skills and abilities and set you on your preferred career path.

Once you have a job focus, create a list of potential employers. To get started, you'll find some great sources of information using the following:

Labour Market Information

- Search for employers by occupation and then geographic location
<http://workingincanada.gc.ca>

Yellow pages

- Use the index to locate headings for specific businesses
Ex: If you are looking for a health care aide position, look for headings like hospitals, personal care homes, health care services

Want ads

- Signs on the highway
- Signs in shop windows
- People that you know



To help you focus your job search further, create a list that prioritizes your search. Use the space provided to create a “top ten” list of places that you want to work. You may find it easier to cluster your choices (see the left column subheadings – you may have three to-four options listed for each category; for example, your “Top Three” listed jobs may all be in the “first choice” category).

Where I most want to work (first choice)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Where I wouldn't mind working (second choice)

4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Where I'd consider working if the first and second choices don't work out (third choice)

8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

The Hidden Job Market

Many people believe if a job isn't advertised, it doesn't exist. However, there are different types of hidden jobs. The first type is finding out about unadvertised openings while researching jobs, conducting informational interviews or through your network. The second type is what people working for a company may know about (ex: an employee knows that his or her co-worker is leaving in March for maternity leave). Some positions are created to suit a particular applicant (ex: if an employer is convinced that hiring you will bring in significantly more money than you will cost, or if you are eligible for a wage subsidy if an employer creates a new position).

It is estimated that only about 10 – 25 per cent of jobs are advertised. This means about 75 – 90 per cent of jobs aren't posted.

There are lots of ways to uncover the hidden job market:

- Word of mouth
- Your network
- Contacts made during informational interviews
- Cold-calling (ex: phoning the HR department of a company to find out about any possible openings)
- Warm-calling (ex: making in-person contact with employers to find out if they have any job opportunities or anticipate any in the future).

There is usually much less competition for unadvertised jobs, so it's worth searching for them

Contacting Employers Regarding Unadvertised Jobs



Before contacting an employer to introduce yourself or follow up on a potential job lead it's important to know what you're going to say. Fill in the blank spaces to prepare yourself before phoning or meeting an employer in person.

Hi my name is _____. I got your contact information from _____ [fill in the name of an appropriate reference].

I am calling to discuss _____ [fill in the name of the position you are phoning about].

I am interested in this position because _____

Do you have a moment to discuss this with me?

Sometimes the employer or hiring manager may not be able to speak to you. Be sure to let him or her know that you aren't looking for much time – only a few minutes. Ask if there's a more convenient time that you could call.

If contacts tell you they're not hiring, ask them for any leads, ideas, or referrals for similar positions.

If someone asks you to send a resume, offer to deliver it in person if you can. If this is not possible, fax or email the resume and follow up with a phone call to discuss it.

if you phone and are put straight through to voicemail be sure to:

- Leave your name, contact information and reason for calling
- Say that you will call back; there is no need to return your call

4. Gaining Relevant Work experience

After reviewing job postings, receiving feedback from your network, and conducting some informational interviews, you may realize that you need more work experience. Perhaps volunteering, job shadowing, or completing a work internship would be helpful.

Volunteering

Volunteering involves working without pay. Treat volunteer experiences just as you would paid employment; be professional, arrive on time, build important relationships and set goals.

Benefits of volunteering include:

- Showing your skills and abilities to employers
- Developing skills and knowledge
- Exploring and learning more about potential careers
- Helping out in your community

To make the most of your volunteer experience, look for opportunities with organizations in your community that match your interests and values.

Job Shadowing

To job shadow is to observe someone at work, for a few hours or a few days. Some job shadowing is informal; you can watch people in public jobs (ex: restaurant server, bus driver, teacher) without making an appointment. However, arranging a formal job shadow opportunity may give you a richer experience. You may be able to see behind the scenes in an organization that interests you and have time to ask specific questions.

To get the most out of a job shadow experience:

- Ask questions
- Offer to assist with tasks
- Offer input on challenges
- Demonstrate your skills and knowledge
- Ask for feedback

After completing a formal job shadow experience, be sure to follow-up. Send a thank you card or letter to each person that helped you (ex: receptionist, manager, the person you shadowed). Be sure to mention your appreciation and what you learned while shadowing.

5. Job Search tips

We've created a list of some basic "tips" to help get you focused and ready for your job search.



- Expect to spend a considerable amount of time at the job search stage.
- Create a job search plan.
- Use your network and provide them with updates on how your job search is going.
- Tailor your resume and cover letter.
- Organize and track your efforts.
- Be wary of job posting scams.
- Get assistance if needed.
- Use all sources to job search (networks, newspapers, online...).
- Treat your job search like a full-time job.
- Stay Optimistic.

Summary

this guide has provided tips, examples and activities to help with your job search. Here are some key points to remember:

- Be optimistic about your job search and believe in yourself.
- Keep your eyes open for new opportunities.
- Take the time to develop your network.
- Prepare an elevator statement to tell people who you are and what you are looking for.
- Figure out what's most important to you in a job.
- Conduct informational interviews to get more information about a job.
- Remember that only 10-25 per cent of jobs are advertised.
- Be open to volunteering, job shadowing, and work internships as ways to gain work experience.
- Keep track of your job search activities.