Job Search Guidelines

Targeted Job Search

Following a targeted approach and identifying specific areas to pursue will generate the best results while allowing you control over your search. Today’s economy dictates that job hunters be more savvy, determined and focused than ever before to reach their goals.

First, select a job market by choosing a 1) geographic area, 2) an industry, 3) companies and 4) job functions. These will reflect your skills, interests, values and cultural needs. By following this targeted approach, you will be working strategically, smarter and efficiently. Everything you do next in your job search stems from these initial targets. When your process is more focused, you are more convincing in your interactions with hiring managers, you are more polished and networking becomes easier. It is imperative that you position yourself correctly in your job search. This means that you are pursuing the right kind of position for your skills and interests. Aiming either too high or too low can cause delays in seeing results.

Conduct Self Analysis

Two kinds of analyses that will help you position yourself correctly are the SWOT and Gap analyses. In a SWOT analysis, you assess your internal Strengths and Weaknesses as well as your external Opportunities and Threats related to your search. With a Gap Analysis, you simply assess any gaps between your current skills set and the requirements of the targeted position. Incorporating these analyses into your process will ensure you are positioning your product (that is, yourself) accurately into the marketplace and you will see better responses to your employer outreach.

Research

Research is a key part of your search process. Through research you can actually develop an understanding of company needs, and use this information to better sell yourself as a desirable applicant. This point is vitally important: You need to connect your abilities to the needs of the employer to convince them to hire you!!! It is your responsibility to do this – also called “connecting the dots” for the employer. Through research you can ask smart and relevant questions. Employers put significant weight on the questions you ask during networking and in interviews. Additionally, research is imperative to developing a sound strategy for negotiating. Your overall compensation package may depend on your research.

Set Goals

Any sound job search plan will include goals in it. Use SMART goals for your internship search, which are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely. Share your goals with others – find a job search buddy who can help keep you accountable to your stated goals. Putting them out there makes them more real. Studies have shown job seekers who identify clear goals are more likely to obtain them than those who bypass this important part of their strategy.
Job Search Targets & Strategy
A Job Search Checklist is another critical part of your Internship Search Action Plan. It is more than a “to do” list. It represents your overall strategy or methodology for how you are conducting your search efforts. (show sample checklist in webinar). Note that there are a variety of activities on it, ranging from goal setting, marketing materials, to research and networking. Note how much of the checklist is committed to networking activities. Are you Running Good Campaign? You should have 6-10 things in the works at all times. Assess your progress regularly and keep some kind of records-track activity. This Job Search Targets & Strategy is available in your Career Development Handbook.

The Black Hole
It’s midnight and you’re online visiting your favorite job posting site. You see your dream job...it’s calling to you. After perfecting your materials you submit your application, cross your fingers and hope for the best. Meanwhile, down the street a classmate is looking at the same posting thinking and doing the exact same thing. Multiply this scenario 1000 fold and you can start to see the problems inherent with relying solely on the internet for your job search process. It is still an employers’ market and the numbers will work against you. Many of the broad-based internet posting sites make their money through advertising and through high fees charged to the employers who post to their sites. They don’t make their money off helping you find a job. Take care in using such posting sites; look for trends in kinds of positions being posted in your geographic or industry target areas. THEN use this information to help develop your search process. Limit your time applying to internet postings to 25% of your search process time. 75% if your job search time should be focused on direct human interaction, with networking and informational interviews being primary approaches.

Next Steps
1) Conduct further Job Search Self Assessment by using both SWOT & Gap Analyses
2) Read through Goal Setting & Job Market Research
3) Begin creating your Job Search Targets & Strategy