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(Sources of information for this handbook were *The Very Quick Job Search* by Michael Farr (2001) and [www.quintcareers.com](http://www.quintcareers.com).)
Introduction

Looking for a job is not high on anyone’s list of things they look forward to. Job hunting takes time, persistence, follow through and courage. This handbook will give you some guidelines for conducting an effective search. If you follow this advice, you will have a much greater chance of landing the kind of job you are hoping for. As you conduct your job search, keep in mind that with every contact you make, every call you complete and resume you send, you’re getting closer to the finish line.

How to Conduct a Job Search

The old career exploration saying, “If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll end up somewhere else,” is also true of looking for a job. The most effective job search is a targeted one, so it is important to decide what kind of job you are looking for. It is certainly possible to be interested in more than one career option, but you need to individually target your search for each industry or career field that interests you. Just follow the following steps.

Step 1: Identify Your Skills

The first step in any job search is to understand what you have to offer the work world. Understanding your skills and strengths can help you focus your search and uncover appropriate jobs for your set of abilities and aptitudes. Most job seekers cannot adequately answer the question, “Why should I hire you?” Understanding your skills and being able to relate them to the job in question, therefore, gives you a distinct advantage in the job search.

Do an inventory of all your academic, work, and volunteer experiences in order to identify your strongest skills. Analyze the impact you made---how you performed the job or task differently from anyone else and what results you achieved. Be able to discuss each one in depth and give specific examples. Whenever possible, try to quantify these accomplishments. If you need some assistance with this task, a career counselor in the Center for Career Planning can help.

A useful way to identify your skills is to think of your accomplishments in three basic categories:

- **Adaptive skills** (personality traits) are the skills you use every day to function effectively in all aspects of life. They allow you to adapt or adjust to a variety of situations. Adaptive skills can be considered part of your basic personality. A few examples of adaptive skills valued by employers include honesty, enthusiasm, getting along with others, self-motivation, and perseverance. Be able to describe those personality traits or adaptive skills that best define you and your approach to work tasks, especially those that are particularly relevant to the job you are seeking.
Transferable skills are general skills that can be used in a variety of jobs. For example, writing clearly, good presentation skills, the ability to organize and prioritize tasks, and leadership skills would be desirable in many jobs. They are called transferable skills because they can be transferred from one job or career to another, and are the skills that are developed most effectively in a liberal arts setting. These are skills you learn through a variety of life experiences in the classroom, at work, volunteering, traveling and many other settings, so everyone can compile a substantial list of these types of skills. Sample lists of transferable skills can be obtained at the Center for Career Planning.

Job related skills are what people typically think of first when asked about skills. These are the technical skills related to a particular job or type of work. For example, an accountant needs to know how to create a general ledger and use computerized accounting programs. A science researcher needs to be familiar with standard lab equipment. In many cases, job-related skills are learned on the job or in technical training programs, so new college graduates are not necessarily expected to have developed these before their first professional job experience. You may not have a long list of these skills, but employers expect to train their new employees in their specific systems and procedures.

Skills Employers Want Most
All employers, no matter what the industry or career field, are especially interested in these skills:

- A lifelong learning focus
- Communication skills
- Interpersonal/teamwork skills
- Leadership skills
- Creative problem solving skills
- Personal management skills

Once you have determined your skill set, you can apply them to the work world in step number 2.

Step 2: Have a Clear Job Objective

Many people look for a job without knowing exactly what they are looking for. Saying you are open to any job is a very ineffective approach and often leads to a very poor match. Even though it may be difficult, it is very important that you try to define your “ideal job” as closely as possible.

You need to consider what elements will make a job most satisfying for you. Think about:
- the skills you want to utilize, especially your natural aptitudes
- special knowledge you would like to use
- what kind of people you would like to work with or for
- what types of work environments you prefer
- what industries appeal to you

Not only is a focused job search much more likely to lead to satisfying work, but focused job searches are much more efficient and effective than a “willing to accept anything” search.

Once you’ve identified your objective and personal accomplishments and skills, you can start
developing your “unique selling proposition.” This is a statement about what makes you unique and what your goals are. What can you say about yourself that will set you apart from other entry-level job candidates? What makes you memorable and special? What do you have to offer as a new employee? Some career experts refer to this as your “elevator speech,” because this introduction statement can be delivered in the time span of an elevator ride (thirty seconds or 100-150 words).

Crafting Your “Elevator Speech”
Continuously during many phases of your job search you will be asked, “So, tell me about yourself.” At this stage in your life, this most often means, “So, tell me about what kind of job you are looking for and why I should help you get it.” Take some time before you start your search to think about what you are going to say to answer these questions.

Here is how to develop your own personalized pitch or elevator speech, using some of the information you determined above:

1. **State who you are.** Some examples:
   - “I am a student [or recent graduate] from Otterbein University and…..
   - I graduated magna cum laude with a B.A. in history…..
   - I am a volunteer little league coach and president of my fraternity…..
   - I am a jazz bass player and have been managing a band to put myself through college…..”

2. **Explain what you are good at.** Some examples:
   - “I’m really a good organizer. In my internship as a production assistant, I received two promotions in one summer.”
   - “I would say my biggest strength is multi-tasking. During my last year in college I was able to juggle working 20 hours a week, working on my senior honors project, while still keeping my GPA at a 3.6.”
   - “I am a quick learner. During my study abroad quarter in Spain, I was able to greatly increase my fluency in Spanish.”
   - “I love working with people. As a volunteer for the Red Cross, I was the person they always assigned to put first-time blood donors at ease.”

3. **State what you are looking for.** Some examples:
   - “My principal career goal right now is to attain an entry-level job at a talent agency, and I’m very interested to learn what actions you think I should take to do that.” (networking contact)
   - “I believe very strongly in your company’s mission to serve children and families living in poverty. I’d love to explore with you how I might make a contribution to that mission.” (job interview)
   - “I have always wanted to be involved with an environmental organization, and I hope that my past experience in promoting sustainability on campus provides a good foundation for work at a green company.”
Write your elevator speech on an index card and carry it with you. Refer to your card before you walk into any situation where you might need to use this introduction—a networking event, informational interview, job interview, or anyplace else where you will meet people. A quick look ahead of time will help you articulate your interests and give you extra confidence.

Step 3: Know Where and How to Look for Job Leads

Only about 25% of all employers advertise their job openings. While the Internet has changed how some employers find candidates, most employers (especially medium to small organizations) still prefer to hire referrals, people they know, people who are referred to them by people they know, people who find out about the jobs through word of mouth, people who happen to be available and apply at the right time, or people from within the organization. “Being in the right place at the right time” is still a matter of luck, but the good news is that by using the right techniques you can significantly increase your “luck.”

Two Important Points about Job Search Methods

➜ It is essential that you take an active rather than a passive approach to your job search. You can’t sit back (or sit in front of your computer) and wait for employers to call you. You must talk to people in order to find the jobs.

➜ It is unwise to rely on just one or two job search methods. You should use every feasible option available to you.

Traditional Job Search Methods

Most job seekers don’t know how ineffective some traditional job hunting techniques tend to be. For example, a recent New York Times survey showed that fewer than 15 percent of all job seekers get jobs from responding to want ads and online job postings. However, since these methods can sometimes produce positive results, it does not hurt to try them, but spend most of your time on more effective methods. Following is a list of traditional job search methods, starting with the least effective and ending with the most effective.

Newspaper help wanted ads: Everyone who reads the paper knows about these openings, so competition is fierce. At one time they were the main source of job leads for job-seekers, but now most companies are posting openings on their corporate sites and/or with online job sites. Still, a few people get jobs through newspaper ads, especially entry-level positions, so go ahead and apply if a job looks right for you. It’s worth noting, however, that career experts have never placed great value on replying to want ads because many times these positions have been filled by the time the ads are published.
**Private employment agencies:** Recent studies have found that employment agencies work reasonably well for those who use them. But be aware that these agencies work best for low-level entry positions or for those with very specialized, technical in-demand skills. Any organizations that demand up-front fees should be avoided at all costs. The best strategy is to find a staffing agency that specializes in a field you are interested in or that serves as the outsourced recruiting agent for a company you are interested in. The truth is, most people who use a private agency end up finding their jobs using some other source, making the success rate of these businesses quite modest.

**Temporary staffing agencies:** Temping is a short-term way to bring in some income while you look for long-term employment. Temp jobs also give you experiences in a variety of settings, which can help you land full-time jobs later and add important skills to your resume. People who enjoy temping say that working as a temp is a great networking opportunity because you are working in many companies, not just one, giving you the chance to show many people what a valuable employee you can be.

Temping can be most effective if you try to meet as many people as possible while on the job and make sure you impress your supervisors. Recommendations from supervisors mean that the agency is more likely to place you in increasingly better jobs. More and more employers are using these jobs as a way to evaluate workers for permanent employment, so consider using these agencies if it makes sense in your situation. Some larger organizations have even outsourced all their entry level hiring to these kinds of organizations. Use these agencies, but don’t stop looking for a full-time job on your own!

**Sending out unsolicited resumes/targeted mail campaigns:** Some experts say you need to mail hundreds of unsolicited resumes to get one interview! Like other traditional methods, use this one sparingly - the numbers are stacked against you. You greatly increase your chances with the following approaches: target your resume to organizations that you know hire people like you, address the letter to the person with the hiring power, and follow-up the letter with a personal phone call. Compile a list of potential employers using business and trade periodicals, company directories, and the phone book. Once you have collected the key research on each company, including the all-important name of the hiring manager for the position you are seeking, mail out a specifically-tailored cover letter and resume to each employer. Note that we are not suggesting you do a “mass mailing” but a targeted direct-mail campaign. Mass mailings almost never work. While this can sometimes be a successful strategy, save your “prime time” for more effective job search techniques.

**Online Job Sites/Job Boards:** The most current trend in job-hunting, at least from the job seekers perspective, has been to use the Internet’s many job boards and job sites to search for jobs and post resumes. And while there are hundreds of thousands of jobs listed on the endless number of job sites, and while some job seekers have received interviews from these postings, searching online should be only one small source of job leads, not your only one.

Three basic categories of job sites are available to job seekers. First, there are big general sites such as Monster.com and CareerBuilder.com. These sites carry job postings in many different career fields from numerous employers. Second, there are industry-specific niche job sites such as
Workinghealthcare.net. These sites carry job postings for jobs within a specific industry. Third, there are geographic-specific job sites. These sites carry job openings specific to a certain region of the U.S. or other parts of the world. To find a list of major sites in each category, check out:

- [www.quintcareers.com/general_job_sites.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/general_job_sites.html) (general job sites)
- [www.quintcareers.com/indres.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/indres.html) (industry specific)
- [www.quintcareers.com/Global_job_resources.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/Global_job_resources.html)

**Employer Web Sites/Corporate Career Centers:** One of the fastest growing sources of job leads has been online corporate human resources centers. Many companies, large and small, continue to build these sites which include job openings, guidelines for submitting job-search materials, online applications, and a wealth of information about the company. Following are some tips for filling out online applications:

- Follow directions very specifically. Be careful to enter the correct information in the correct field.
- Tailor your application information to the position. Don’t copy and paste text from your generic resume.
- Use key words, buzz words, and industry-relevant phrases. Use the wording in the job description as your model. Employers search for key words when they’re looking for people to fill specific positions.
- Include numbers and statistics if they are available. (Example: counted five cash drawers daily; responsible for more than $10,000 per 8-hours shift; trained six new staff members.)
- Complete all fields, even those that aren’t required.
- If the company offers an online assessment test, take it.
- Make sure your resume can hold its own in a plain text format.
- Make sure your application is error-free because this is the first impression the employer has of you. If possible, spell and grammar check electronically.
- Include a strong and focused objective.
- Another use for the comments section: use it to demonstrate that you’ve done research on the company and industry.
- Follow-up your electronic application with a personal e-mail to the recruiter. A follow-up phone call might be permissible if the ad does not say “no phone calls.”

**The Two Job Search Methods that Work Best**

While the methods described in the section above are traditional, commonly-used job search methods, the truth is that *two thirds of all people get their jobs using non-traditional methods*, tapping into what is called the “hidden” job market. Hidden market jobs are those that are not advertised in traditional ways. How can you find job openings that are not posted?

Most jobs are filled by people the employer has met before the job is formally open or who is referred to them personally. There are two basic methods for uncovering “hidden” jobs:

1. networking with people you know (in person and using online social networks), and
2. making direct contacts with employers.
These methods are both based on the most important job search rule of all:

\[ \textit{The Most Important Job Search Rule} \]
\[ \textbf{Don’t wait until the job is open before contacting the employer!} \]

Networking with People You Know

1. **Make lists of people you know.** Develop a list of anyone with whom you are friendly, and then make a separate list of your relatives. These two lists alone usually add up to 25 to 100 people or more. Then think of other groups with whom you have something in common: coworkers, classmates, social or sports groups, professional organizations, church members, etc. You may not know these people well, but most will be willing to help you.

The staff in the Center for Career Planning count as people you know! Ask us about people in the CARDINAL CAREER NETWORK. These are alumni from Otterbein in a number of fields who have volunteered to serve as career consultants or advice givers to current Otterbein students who are collecting career information or looking for a job. They are great people to add to your own network.

Though it may seem counter-intuitive, the most effective networking contacts may be those people you know only casually. This is because people you know well are familiar with many of the same people you are. More casual acquaintances travel in different circles, and therefore may be able to connect you with a wider variety of contacts.

2. **Contact the people on your list in a systematic way.** You can call or e-mail them, or you may see them in person. Obviously some of your lists might be more helpful than others, but almost any one of these people could potentially help you find a job. Keep records of the people you contact, the dates you contact them, and the information they provide.

3. **Present yourself well.** Begin with friends and relatives. Tell them you are looking for a job and need their help. Be as clear as possible about what you are looking for and what skills and qualifications you have. (See the sample phone script on page 12 to help you with this call.)

4. **Ask them for leads.** It is possible they will know of a job lead. If so, get the details immediately. More likely, however, they will not, so ask them the most important questions:

\[ \textit{The Three Most Important Job Networking Questions} \]
- **Do you know of any openings for a person with my qualifications?** If the answer is no, which it usually is, ask the next question.
- **Do you know someone else who might know of such an opening?** If your contact does, get that name and ask for another one. If they don’t, ask the next question.
• Do you know anyone who might know of someone else who might?  Another good way to ask this is “Do you know someone who knows lots of people?”

5. **Contact these referrals and ask the same questions.** For each original contact, you can potentially extend your network of acquaintances by hundreds of people. Eventually, one of these people will hire you or refer you to someone who will. If used thoroughly, networking may be the only job search technique you’ll need.

Look at networking as a way to build relationships with people who know other people, who may know other people who know of jobs. You may also be able to help them! Networking is also about getting advice about your search and insight into organizations you are interested in.

As Selena Soo, Director of Campus Relations of The U.com, says, “It’s the best networkers, not necessarily the best students, who land the best jobs!”

**Using Social Networking Sites**

Social networking sites are fast becoming effective networking tools for people who are looking for a job. In fact, many experts predict that over the next decade, online social networks will emerge as the primary “connection” source for job seekers and hiring managers, while online job posting sites will become obsolete. While this job search strategy may be best suited to experienced workers, new graduates should also consider tapping into the advantages social networking sites have to offer.

In order for online social networking to become a viable job search tool for you, you need to make sure your online presence is professional. This means adapting your current Facebook (or MySpace) content, creating a separate, professional Facebook profile, or using a business-oriented social networking site like LinkedIn.com. For complete information on how to use social networking in your job search, see the CCP web site: [http://www.otterbein.edu/careerplanning/social-networking.asp](http://www.otterbein.edu/careerplanning/social-networking.asp)

**Making Direct Contact with Employers**

It takes more courage, but contacting employers directly is a variation on the networking idea and a very effective job search technique. These are called “cold contacts” because you don’t have any existing connection with the employers. Here are three techniques for making cold contacts:

1. **Use the print version of the Yellow Pages, trade journals and employer directories, or online sources to find potential employers.** Look under headings of industries or organizations that interest you, such as hotels, publishers, marketing firms, fitness centers, etc. Call each organization (check out their website first) and ask to speak to the most likely person to hire or supervise you. Refer to the telephone script on page 12 for ideas. Other good sources are various types of employer directories, the Chamber of Commerce, or the city’s business journal or newspaper.
2. **Drop in without an appointment** and ask to see the person in charge. This may not be possible with large organizations, but works well with smaller companies. Remember that you want an interview, even if there are no openings. If your timing is inconvenient, ask for a better time to come back for an interview. While this method can be effective, it is very time-consuming, so use this method only occasionally when it seems most appropriate to get yourself out and about.

3. **Use the phone to get job leads.** Create a telephone contact script that clearly and concisely outlines your interest in a job and your experience and accomplishments. Once you get the person on the phone, present your phone script. Don’t share your entire background; your goal is to pique the interest of your audience and transform your monologue into a dialogue. Make sure you practice beforehand so you sound as natural as possible. Though it doesn’t work every time, with practice, you can generate a few interviews in a few hours time.

### Small Employers Provide the Greatest Number of Available Jobs

About 70% of all people work in small businesses---those with 250 or fewer employees. While the largest corporations have steadily been reducing their employee number, small businesses have been creating as many as 80% of the new jobs over the past decade. Smaller organizations are where most of the job search action is.

### Make Sure You Research Employers of Interest

Employer research is an essential part of any job search. Researching employers and asking informed questions can help you decide if an employer is a good fit for you, identify key people in the organization for you to contact, and uncover important information that you might be overlooking.

Most important, employers are looking for someone with a real interest in their organization, and research reflects interest and enthusiasm. A favorite question of employers is, “Why are you interested in our company?” When you know something about an organization, you can describe in more relevant terms how you could work within that environment or how your skills could help the employer be successful.

Some key Internet tools for conducting for-profit and not-for-profit employer research can be found at [www.quintcareers.com/researching_companies.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/researching_companies.html).

### Step 4: Spend at Least 25 Hours a Week Job Searching

The average length of time spent on a job search is three to six months. (Older workers and higher earners are two groups who usually take longer.) Most job seekers spend only an average
of 10 to 15 hours per week looking for work. There is a clear connection between how long it takes to find a job and the number of hours spent looking daily. You should spend a minimum of 25 hours a week on hard-core job search activities. Here is how to organize:

1. **Decide how many hours you will spend job hunting.** Realize that looking for a job is actually a job in its own right, so adopt that mindset.

2. **Decide on which days and at what times you will look for work.**

3. **Create a specific daily schedule.** Include such tasks as reviewing the schedule, following-up old leads, developing new leads, making network or employer phone calls, revising your resume, following-up, conducting research, etc.

4. **Record your schedule in a daily planner of some kind.** Write the daily schedule a week in advance, and then add interviews as they come. Writing down your schedule prevents wasted time and procrastination. It also gives you a feeling of accomplishment as you review all your “checked off” items, which helps keep you motivated.

**Step 5: Aim for Two “Interviews” a Day**

The average job seeker gets about four to five job interviews a month. Yet many motivated and active job seekers can routinely get many more “interviews,” especially if you redefine the meaning of an interview.

### The New Definition of an Interview

An interview is any face-to-face contact with 1) a networking contact who can give you additional contact names, 2) a person who can directly introduce you to a hiring manager, or 3) someone who has the authority to hire or supervise someone with your skills (who may or may not have a job opening at the time.)

With this definition, you can see how it is not as difficult as it may seem to get an interview.

These face-to-face experiences do not necessarily result in a job offer. However, they frequently provide you with additional information and contacts or lead to a more formal interview. If you impress an employer, you may be the first candidate they think of when an opening does occur in the future. Many job seekers can generate two “interviews” with just one hour of telephone calls and the telephone contact script found on page 12. Others drop in on a potential employer and ask for an impromptu interview. And networking (getting names of others to contact from those you know) is extremely effective if you persist.
Step 6: Follow-Up on All Contacts

People who follow-up with potential employers and network contacts get jobs faster than those who do not. This is another principle that seems too simple to be so important, but it is true.

Send a thank-you note to everyone who helps you in your job search, and do so in a timely fashion. It is important that you keep track of who helped you, when you contacted them, and what you need to do next to stay in touch and keep them aware of your progress.

One good way to organize your network is to use a simple 3 x 5 card to record essential information about each person. Keep a file box with dividers and tabs for each day of the month. (This is often called a “tickler” file.) File the cards under the date you want to contact the person, and the rest is easy. Staying in touch with a good contact every other week can really pay off. Here are some other tips for follow-up:

- Always take time to follow-up all job leads, no matter how busy you are.
- Follow-up in a timely fashion, usually a few days to a week for conventional job searching and sooner with online applications.
- If you apply online for a position, consider following-up the online application with a cover letter and resume sent to the hiring manager via postal mail. You will stand out over the other online applicants because few will also send a hard copy.
- Keep your follow-up brief, to the point, and professional.
- Focus your follow-up around your fit with the position and organization.
- Continue your follow-up regularly, but don’t overdue it.

When following-up by phone:

- If you are nervous, develop a short script about what you want to say (such as your fit with the job, knowledge of the company, or your elevator speech).
- No matter what, you should keep a short list of the key points you want to make.
- Keep a copy of your resume nearby in case you need to refer to something on it.
- Make the phone call from a place where you can talk calmly and not have distractions and avoid following-up from your current place of employment.
- Be prepared for a short screening phone interview by practicing answers to common interview questions.
- End the conversation thanking the hiring manager for his/her time and asking about the hiring timetable or next steps.

When following-up by e-mail:
Always address your e-mail to the hiring manager.
Keep your e-mail short and to the point. Simply again state your interest in the job and your key qualifications for it.
Be sure to spell-check and proofread your e-mail before sending it.
Remember to check your e-mail regularly and respond in a timely manner.
Because e-mail is such a one-way communication, and you don’t really know if your e-mail is even being read, consider asking for a phone number so you can then follow-up by phone. (And if you get no response, do your research and try to uncover the phone number yourself.)

Using the Telephone in Your Job Search

The telephone is one of the best job search tools available. People are usually willing to help and share information if you are courteous, respectful of their time, and grateful for the help you receive. Many job searchers resist using the phone because they are uncomfortable calling strangers and fear being rejected or making a mistake, so if you learn to use the phone effectively, you have a great advantage over your competition. The secret to using the telephone in your job search is to plan what you want to say, and anticipate how you will handle different situations before they occur.

Initiating the phone call

Hello, my name is Gina Jobyet. May I please speak to Mr./Ms. Career? (If the secretary asks what it is about or in reference to, you can indicate that Mr.______ (a person in your network) asked that you call Mr./Ms. Career today on a personal matter. Or you may also indicate you are following-up on a letter you sent.)

Hello, Ms. Career. My name is Gina Jobyet. I am a senior/junior/graduate [business] major at Otterbein University. May I take a few minutes of your time?

If the answer is YES, select one of the appropriate scripts below. If the answer is NO, then say:
Would there be a more convenient time when I can call you back?

Sample Telephone Scripts

1. To collect information about a career field:
   I am doing some research about the [marketing, social work, graphic design, etc.] field and am gathering information to help me make some career decisions. I’d like to set up an informational interview with you for about 20 minutes. Do you have any time next week....? Thank you for your time. I look forward to our conversation.
2. To collect information about a career field from someone who was a referral:
   a) Your name was suggested to me by Mr. Network (explain connection if appropriate)----------

   b) I got your name from the Cardinal Career Network at the Center for Career Planning.......and I understand you are in a line of work that I am very interested in. I was hoping that you could give me some insight into your profession.

   I’m sure that my questions could be answered in a 20-30 minute informational interview. Would you be able to meet with me some time next week?

3. Following-up after a job inquiry letter:

   Hello, my name is Gina Jobyet. I am calling to follow-up on a letter I sent to you last week. Do you have a few minutes? I am calling to inquire about possible job openings in your company and wonder if you have 20 minutes some time next week to meet with me? (You may want to add some information about your qualifications. See “Elevator Speech” script on page 3.)

   If contact suggests a date and time: Thank you. I look forward to meeting with you on [date] at [time]. (Make sure you verify the place as well, and ask for directions.)

   If contact indicates they are not able to meet with you: I appreciate you telling me that. Is there anyone else you would recommend I contact?........... Thank you so much for recommending Ms. Anderson. May I tell her you suggested I call? Thank you for your time.

   If the contact indicates they are too busy at this time: Suggest a date later in the future, or suggest a phone interview at a pre-set time in the future.

4. To get a job lead (a good time to use your “elevator speech”):

   a) I came across your web site……

   b) I saw an article about your company in the newspaper……

   c) I learned about your company from an acquaintance……

   d) I came across the name of your company during my career research………..and I am very interested in a position in [hotel management, public relations, accounting, event planning, etc.] I will be getting a degree in [academic major] and last quarter had an internship at [company] in the _______________ department. I’ve also been very active in leadership activities on campus, and have worked part-time as a ______________ while I have been at school. I’m exploring potential job openings for [position] and wonder if you might have any vacancies at this time.

   (If they say they have no vacancies, ask if they could suggest someone else to contact. You may also ask if you can check back with them at a later time in case a new opening has occurred.)
Some General Tips about Using the Phone in Your Search

- Practicing your telephone script ahead of time is the best way to decrease anxiety and project confidence. Just make sure you don’t sound like you are reading.
- Always aim to sound friendly, relaxed, and confident, but business-like as well. Actually smile while you talk---it makes a real difference.
- Be concise. This is not a social call; busy professionals appreciate when you get right to the point.
- Keep paper and pen by the phone and make sure your resume, reference information, calendar, and questions you want to ask are always within reach.
- Always return phone calls as promptly as you possibly can---this is very important.
- Make sure the other people in your household are prepared to take messages for you in a professional way.
- Under no circumstances should you put an employer on hold to answer call waiting!

Voicemail Messages

**Leaving a voicemail message:**
To leave a message for someone to return your telephone call, make sure you state the following information clearly and slowly. (Also try to make sure you try to pronounce their name correctly.)

- Your name and telephone number---slowly.
- Your brief message (If you need to, write out your own script beforehand to help you.)
- The best time to reach you.
- Your name again and your telephone number again.

**Updating your outbound voicemail message:**
If you currently have an answering machine or voice mail, make sure to update your “unusual” or “unique” greeting. Ask yourself what a future employer will think and how that message represents you. Make sure your message is polite, direct, and businesslike. Make sure it can be understood clearly.

**EXAMPLE:**
Hello, this is [555-555-5555]. I am sorry I am not available to take your call right now. Please leave your name and number, a brief message, and the best time to reach you. I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Job Search Check List

As you begin your search, check over the following list to make sure you are clear about all the steps necessary for a successful job search. Ask yourself if you have:

- a clear understanding of the job search process and have developed a job-search strategy
- a clear understanding of the jobs that interest you and how your skills qualify you
- outlined a clear career path/track for yourself
- developed a short introduction or “elevator speech”
identified the main industries and companies that interest you

thoroughly researched the companies and organizations where you would like to apply

developed and strengthened your network of contacts and know the value and importance of networking in a job search as well as effective strategies

gathered a key list of references (people who will speak to employers about your abilities)

Key Points to Remember

• Approach your job search as if it were a job itself, professionally and systematically.

• Get organized and spend at least 25 hours per week actively looking.

• Be aware of your work skills and have a clear job objective.

• Get lots of exploratory or information-gathering interviews, which will lead to job interviews.

• Have a great answer to the question, “Why should I hire you?”

• Follow-up on all the leads you generate and send out lots of thank-you notes.

• Prepare diligently, then try to be yourself in an interview. Employers are people too. They will hire someone they feel will do the job well, be reliable, and fit easily into the work environment.

• Tell the employer that you want the job and why.

• Believe in yourself and ask people to help you. They will!