



CONNECTIONS

EMPOWERING EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS

Job Search Success Strategies Part I



Those who don't plan for success, plan for failure. Successful job seekers know who they are, know how to best utilize their particular brand of skills to stand out from the crowd and can identify their unique talents, strengths and accomplishments.

Part one of this workshop covers three critical areas of job search strategy:

- **Planning Your Job Search**
- **Exploring Career Options**
- **What Makes YOU Unique?**

Planning Your Job Search

Get Organized

The best way to be successful in your job search is to treat it like a job, setting targets and goals for yourself every week. Ensure your email address and voicemail message are professional. Keep your voicemail inbox empty. Determine where in your home you are the most productive and make that your job search center. If you cannot focus, you won't be as productive. These little details are often overlooked in a job search.

Each week, you should be working 30 – 40 hours on your job search. This time includes networking, updating your LinkedIn profile and resume, participating in educational and training workshops to sharpen skills, and researching jobs, companies, and industries. Use the Job Search Check List at the end of this handout as a resource to help get and stay organized. The more structured your job search, the more you will be able to focus on the desired outcome.

Focus on a Specific Employment Target

Whether you are staying in the same industry or transitioning into a new one, you should generally focus on one specific industry or job type in your job search. Many people can work in different roles and send out resumes for those various roles simultaneously, like marketing and customer service, for example. But would you rather hire an expert in a single field or someone who knew a little of various fields? Focusing on one targeted industry or role allows you to narrow your job search and put all of your energy into developing a more persuasive resume, LinkedIn profile and personal brand, making you a better-prepared candidate for a prospective employer.

Spend some time researching your desired industry, updating yourself on keywords, concepts, trends and changes that you can make you stand out as a candidate. If this is a new industry for you, find job descriptions for those roles in which you are interested to use as samples. This will not only provide insight into whether you would enjoy the role, but it will allow you to start matching your skills and background to this new position and industry.

Exploring Career Options

Career Aptitude Tests

When you are not sure what type of job you want or where you want your career to go next, an aptitude test may help you narrow down the choices to a path that is compatible with your interests and skills. The following resources are free career assessment tests, which can assist you in determining what type of career you should pursue or research next.



- **Pursuit Wise** was developed by the California Community College system and identifies high-growth career areas within your specific region. Their Career Compass assessment takes 3-5 minutes to complete and helps you discover career areas in which you have an interest. The Micro Compass assessment identifies job titles that are considered "middle-skills" jobs that do not require a bachelor's degree but do require some specific training. The website also lists the community colleges that offer training for these job titles.
<https://pursuitwise.com/career-assessment/>
- **The Princeton Review** is a tutoring and test prep organization. Their career assessment test is developed for students who are looking to enter the workforce, but it can also help those who are looking to transition their career path.
<https://www.princetonreview.com/quiz/career-quiz>
- This popular aptitude test uses the **Holland Code** personality types to help you learn what kind of work environments and occupations suit you best. The results of this career test provide you with a list of professions and occupations that fit your career personality.
<https://www.123test.com/career-test/>
- The **U.S. Department of Labor** sponsors this career interest assessment. You will answer 30 quick questions by indicating your interest level in an activity and get a list of careers that might be a good fit for your interests. This list will show which career fields are the best fit and even include what education is needed to work in that field.
<https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/careers/interest-assessment.aspx>

Carefully Assess Whether the Job Meets YOUR Needs

Before you apply for a job, it is essential to review the job description and analyze whether the requirements and benefits match what **you** need. You don't want to waste your time or the employer's time by applying for a job that, if offered, you will not accept, or one which you will leave as soon as you find something better suited to your needs.

Consider the following elements in each role:

- What is the salary?
- Are there any benefits attached to the position?
- Is the position full-time, part-time, or temporary?
- What are the hours for the position?
- Are there travel requirements attached to the job?



What Makes YOU Unique?

Identifying Your Skills & Qualifications

A strong resume should highlight your skills and qualifications and it should match the position for which you are applying. In the skills section of your resume and your previous work experience, include the relevant skills and qualifications that you have developed. Review your various past professional and non-professional experiences (even if they do not apply to the position) and make a note of the skills that you have utilized. There might be some aspects of those experiences, which you can apply to the position.

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Review the following sections and list any useful leadership roles or anecdotes that showcase the skills you learned.

Education/Training Courses:

Volunteer Work:

Sports and Hobbies:

Previous Employment:

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Dispensing Information	Keeping Accurate Records	Seeing Big Picture
Drafting Budgets	Listening Actively	Selling Products
Drafting Reports	Making Decisions	Serving as Travel Guide
Editing	Managing a Group	Social Networking
Empathizing with Others	Managing Finances	Speaking to Groups
Enforcing Policies	Mediating Between People	Summarizing Information
Estimating Space	Motivating Others	Supervising Employees
Financial Decisions	Observing Behavior	Synthesizing Data
Following Stock Market	Operating Equipment	Thinking Logically
Gathering Information	Organizing Data	Training Others
Handling Complaints	Persuading Others	Understanding Cultures
Handling Detail Work	Planning Social Events	Working with Children
Identifying Potential	Preparing Food	Writing Computer Programs
Improving Efficiency	Prioritizing Tasks	Writing Creatively
Inspecting Physical Objects	Problem Solving with Math	Writing Letters
Interacting with People	Promoting Events	Writing Proposals
Interpreting Information	Raising Funds	Writing Reports
Interpreting Languages	Recruiting Volunteers	Writing Speeches
Inventing New Ideas	Resolving Conflicts	
Investigating Problems	Retaining Information	

What are some ways you can develop the skills with checkmarks?

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Soft Skills

Our world is rapidly changing. Consequently, jobs and the requirements of hiring managers for some roles are also changing. While "hard skills," which are teachable and measurable abilities, such as writing, reading, math or the ability to use computer programs, are important to most positions, "soft skills," are proving just as valuable and, in some cases, more so.



Soft skills are a combination of people, social and communication skills, as well as traits that make you a good employee, such as etiquette and listening. Developing soft skills involves becoming more self-aware, changing attitudes, developing an effective work philosophy and working to overcome personal character flaws. It requires commitment, awareness of one's weaknesses, and having a learning mindset.

Transferable soft skills are becoming so important, that by 2030, around 2/3 of all job roles will require soft-skill intensive employees. Soft skills are the transformative skills necessary for innovation to take root and grow in any company and hiring managers recognize this.

Soft skills can lead to success in any type of work. By honing your soft skills, you will be able to demonstrate that you are the best candidate for any role and that you can bring value to any organization.

Here are some soft skills that every applicant should have in their skillset:

- **Critical Thinking** - Critical thinking is the ability to seek relevant sources of information to make decisions and solve problems. It is a disciplined process of actively and skillfully observing, analyzing and evaluating data and situations and applying sound judgement in order to make well-informed decisions. A skilled critical thinker is a problem solver, which is a valuable resource to every organization.

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- **Leadership** - Leadership is not just about being in charge and leading a team. Authentic leadership is about persuading and inspiring others. Leaders are people who can work alongside others, develop relationships, build teams, and resolve conflicts. An employer needs leaders who can guide others to produce effective outputs and make decisions that align with corporate values and grow organizations.
- **Collaboration** - Collaboration is the process of working with others to solve a problem by uncovering an effective solution. When team members successfully collaborate, they can use the diverse knowledge, experience and skills of everyone involved.
- **Communication** - The ability to communicate effectively and clearly cannot be overrated. Skilled communication, which involves listening, speaking, observing and empathizing, is one of the top skills requested by hiring managers. It would be challenging to succeed in today's workforce without excellent communication skills.
- **Stress Management** - Work-related stress is becoming a very common issue. Businesses are looking to create a resilient workforce that is engaged, productive and able to handle the increased pressures of work. The ability to effectively manage stress is seen as a valuable asset because it enables employees to avoid the many stress-related problems that cost companies productivity and negatively affect bottom-line results.
- **Data Literacy** - Data literacy, which includes the ability to read, work with, analyze, and argue with data, helps businesses to stay relevant. Hiring managers are looking for employees who can look at information and interpret with confidence the story which the data is telling. This ability leads to the right questions to ask and better communication of alternatives leading to enhanced decision making.
- **Emotional Intelligence** - Emotional intelligence is generally defined as the awareness of one's emotions and the awareness of the emotions of others. This knowledge can then be used to help guide decisions and interactions with others.
- **Technological Skills** - Digital technology is commonplace in our daily life. Being comfortable with technology and able to learn new technology quickly is a very employable skill that helps to increase productivity and innovation.

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- **Complex Decision Making** - Decision making is the process of identifying and choosing alternatives based on values, preferences and beliefs and made through either an intuitive or reasoned process, or a combination of the two. This is an important skill for organizations, as they want employees who can solve problems by making decisions which are profitable and best for the company.
- **Organizational Skills** - Organizational skills refer to one's ability to stay focused on different tasks. They encompass the use of time, energy, strength, mental capacity, physical space, etc. effectively and efficiently to achieve the desired outcome. Being organized means more than having a to-do list. It means that you can plan and prioritize your thoughts and actions, delegate more effectively, and manage your time appropriately.

If you don't have some of these soft skills, it is never too late to develop them. We generally tend to focus our time on learning technical expertise, but neglecting soft skills can make it challenging to advance your career.

Tying Your Strengths to Your Skills

Everyone has strengths that they bring to a job and an organization. To really impress a recruiter or hiring manager, you need to demonstrate your strengths and show how they apply to the particular position.

Below is a list of common strengths and examples of how each strength is seen in the workplace. Find the strengths which with you identify and use the correlating examples for ideas on how to demonstrate those strengths in your resume, social media profiles and interviews.



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Common Strength	Examples of Work Behaviors
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written communication skill evident in reports or correspondence. • Verbal communication skills evident in presentations • Able to manage conflicts • Selling, negotiating and customer service skills
Strong Work Ethic and Diligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard-working • Completes projects before the deadline • Takes on more responsibilities • Maintains a high quality of work • Works without supervision
Organizational and Planning Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled in time management and meeting deadlines • Able to prioritize responsibilities and multi-task while dealing with competing demands • Uses resources effectively to achieve objectives and goals
Flexible and Adaptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to quickly change activities and priorities to meet new demands • Willing and ready to learn new skills • Able to work and communicate effectively with a diverse team
Decision Making and Good Judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to gather the necessary information to make a sound strategic decision • Able to determine viable solutions to problems, analyzing and considering the pros and cons for each • Continuously follows through on plans and decisions
Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to identify and define problems • Analyzes problems to find the root causes and finds creative solutions • Considers the possible outcomes of solutions before deciding on and implementing the best solution
Gathering, Analyzing and Managing Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collects and integrates information before putting it together in a logical format • Processes information and identifies trends and patterns • Able to collect, store, and maintain information efficiently
Coaching and Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to effectively coach others • Enables and facilitates team learning • Imparts knowledge and helps people to identify and achieve what they are capable of • Assesses training and learning needs while developing appropriate learning interventions

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Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Able to work effectively in a team and contribute to team objectives• Communicates effectively with team members,• Respects, listens to, and encourages team members,• Puts the success of the team ahead of personal, individual success
Reliable and Dependable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistent work performance• Completes projects accurately and within the deadlines• Arrives on time, fulfills obligations, and follows through on commitments• Complies with workplace policies and procedures
Self-Reliant and Self-Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Able to efficiently use their resources, skills, and abilities fully• Ready to be held accountable for their activity, progress, and success• Completes projects and activities independently
Self-Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-motivated and prepared to work hard to achieve their goals• Sets their targets and can persevere with challenging tasks and activities,• Able to avoid distractions, does not procrastinate• Ready to continue with projects in the face of obstacles and challenges
Persistent and Resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deals effectively with rejection, stays enthusiastic after a setback• Maintains work performance despite difficulties, accepts criticism, bounces back quickly• Overcomes obstacles, keeps trying until their task is completed
Persuasive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills are evident in selling, customer management and negotiating• Dealing with objections, getting agreements/commitments from coworkers• Presenting ideas, motivating people, gaining the confidence of others.
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintains confidentiality• Provides complete and accurate information• Observes company policies and procedures• Complies with regulations• Maintains values and ethics in the face of opposition and pressure

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Energetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works long hours, maintains a fast work pace• Tackles challenging tasks• Stays positive• Takes on extra responsibilities• Maintains high productivity levels• Tenacious in achieving goals
Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proactively solves problems and issues• Provides ideas for improvement• Makes full use of opportunities• Identifies needs and comes up with solutions• Takes steps to do their job and make the company better

Your Accomplishments

When crafting a strong resume, your experience section should showcase the accomplishments that you achieved in your previous jobs. Understanding your past work and personal accomplishments can also help you better understand and identify your skills and strengths.

When considering your past accomplishments, you don't want just to note what you did. You want to include how your actions and your accomplishments benefited your employer. Try to recall how your coworkers, supervisors, and friends appreciated the things you did. Why were those things appreciated? Looking at accomplishments from different perspectives will help you understand the **benefit** of what you accomplished.

For each example, answer the following questions in regards to some of your past accomplishments:

1. What was the problem before you took action? Be specific.
2. How did the problem come to your attention, or how did you identify the problem?
3. What did you do? Describe the actions you took and how you identified, developed and implemented a solution.
4. What was the impact and results of your actions? Who benefited and how did they benefit?

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Example 1:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Example 2:

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

- 4. _____

Job Search Checklist

Job Search Success Item	Completed
Organize and Track Your Job Search in Excel or a Notebook	
Create or Update Your Budget	
Calculate Your Bottom-Line Salary Number	
List Your Job Requirements and Non-Negotiables	
List Your Concrete Skills and Transferable Skills	
Write Down 5+ Work-Related Accomplishments from Previous Jobs	
Create/Update Your LinkedIn Profile	
Update Your Resume	
Create Job Alerts on Online Job Sites	
Search for Jobs on Targeted Company's Websites	
Add to Your Employable Skillsets	
Develop Your Network	
Clean Out and Update Your Voicemail	
Google Yourself	
Clean Up Your Social Media Accounts	
Practice Your Elevator Speech	
Test Your Video Interview Setup	
Prepare and Practice Answering Difficult Interview Questions	
Contact Your References	
Take Care of Yourself	