

# Wackerle Career and Leadership Center

## Job Search Strategies

In a competitive job market it's important to develop and implement a comprehensive job search plan that employs a multi-faceted approach, using a number of job search strategies. Although a multi-faceted approach is important, the largest amount of time and effort should be directed towards networking. Networking is the most effective way of finding work, as it helps to "open doors" and taps into the "hidden job market."

Any effective job search begins with a clear, concise and customized resume that focuses on accomplishments and achievements – displaying the value that you can potentially bring to your next employer. It is commonly believed that employers predict future success through past performance. So a "results-based" resume will get you noticed, and increase your chances for a job interview. The Wackerle Career and Leadership Center can help you develop this type of resume; contact us at [wackerle@monmouthcollege.edu](mailto:wackerle@monmouthcollege.edu) for more information and to schedule an appointment.

With your results-based resume in hand, it's now time to develop a job search plan. Here are some recommended strategies for your plan, along with the estimated amount of time you should devote to each.

### **Grow and Expand Your Network: 40% of Your Job Search Time Recommended**

Finding a job requires a process of continually growing and expanding your network of contacts. Doing this will increase your chances of uncovering new job opportunities and advancing your career.

Although this is not an all-inclusive list, consider these proven ways of expanding your network:

- **Ask People in your current network for referrals**

Remember, people in your current network may not always be able to help you directly regarding a job. But perhaps they know someone, or know someone who knows someone, who can. The beauty of networking is working "those layers of contacts" and getting introductions to people who can help.

- **Use business and social networking sites, such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter**

These sites are an increasingly valuable way to establish new networking contacts, re- connect with people from your past, keep everyone updated on your career status, promote your career brand, actively search for jobs and be found by recruiters looking for talent.

LinkedIn is considered to be the premier business networking site. Consider these statistics:

- According to a recent survey of over 35,000 recruiters (Source: CommPRO.biz):
  - 98% of recruiters use LinkedIn – compared to Twitter (42%) and Facebook (33%)
  - 48% of recruiters use LinkedIn exclusively
  - Recruiters are building their followings – the average recruiter has 616 connections.
- All 500 of the Fortune 500 companies are represented on LinkedIn. In fact, 499 of them

are represented by director-level and above employees (Source: Guy Kawasaki).

- According to the Society for Human Resource Management, LinkedIn is the “suit and tie network” and Facebook is gaining interest for the more blue-collar jobs.
- **Contact, Join and get involved in professional associations in your field**

National, regional and local professional associations exist to help members with career. They are a “gathering place” for people in the same profession, and provide rich opportunities for professional development, industry news and updates, and networking. In addition, many of these associations provide job listings right on their websites.

Consider joining one or more associations; many have affordable student memberships. Access the membership listing and attend regular meetings to network with other members.

To find a professional association in your field of interest reference the following sites for a listing of professional associations across fields: [www.careeroverview.com/professional-associations.html](http://www.careeroverview.com/professional-associations.html) and <http://weddles.com/associations/index.cfm>.

- **Attend conferences, workshops, seminars and other events in your field**

Attending conferences, workshops, seminars and other events in your field will contribute to your professional development, keep you in touch with new developments in your industry and put you in touch with valuable contacts in your field. They provide wonderful networking opportunities. Professional associations are typically great sources for conferences, workshops, seminars and other events in your field.

- **Seek inside advice through informational interviewing**

One of the best tactics you can use in any job search is informational interviewing, or meeting briefly with people working in your field of interest for the purpose of career exploration and networking. Informational interviewing is even more helpful when you’re trying to “get a foot in the door” with a specific organization.

So see if you can meet with, or at least talk to via phone or e-mail, someone who works for your target organization(s). Try using LinkedIn to see who you know – first, second or third level connections – to get an introduction.

The inside advice you gather through informational interviewing will help you spot opportunities often before they’re ever advertised publicly. In addition, the person you interview is now in your network.

See our handout on informational interviewing for much more information about this networking tool.

- **Tap into the Monmouth Alumni Database**

Practically all colleges/universities have a list of alumni, many of whom are working in a field that may be of interest to you. Connecting with these alumni can open doors to valuable career information, networking opportunities and potential job openings.

- **Check out Monmouth’s on-campus events**

Whenever possible, you should attend on-campus events that involve alumni and other employers in your field. Some of these individuals will be on campus to recruit for specific positions, while others will be coming to talk about their career and/or organization.

These events are great networking opportunities and can make you aware of relevant job openings.

- **Seek out volunteer opportunities in your community**

The link between volunteering and getting a job is supported by a study from the Center for Economic and Policy Research, a progressive think tank. The study – “Does It Pay to Volunteer” – found that unemployed people who volunteered between 20 and 99 hours during the year were roughly 7% more likely to have found employment one year later compared to those who didn’t volunteer.

Volunteering is a great opportunity to:

- Acquire new knowledge and skills that can help market you for your next job.
- Stay engaged in constructive and productive activities within a professional environment, and “fill the gap” when you’re between jobs.
- Grow and expand your network of contacts, which may help get you closer to your next job.
- Give back to your community in meaningful ways.

Contact Jake McLean Assistant Director of Leadership Development and Service if you would like to volunteer: [wackerle@monmouthcollege.edu](mailto:wackerle@monmouthcollege.edu)

- **Become an author and contributor to your field**

Start blogging about your profession – blogging is a terrific way to grow your network, show your expertise and attract job offers. Also, find blogs in your field and actively participate. In addition, become a contributor (by writing articles) for online and print publications/newsletters in your field. Becoming an author and contributor to your field will get you noticed.

- **Consider other ways of growing your network**

Check out our networking strategies handout for more information on these and other ideas.

## **Tap into Your Existing Network: 30% of Your Job Search Time Recommended**

Make a comprehensive list of your contacts, including family, friends, neighbors, professors, classmates, present/former colleagues, present/former supervisors, your doctor, your dentist and anyone else you know that you can think of. Then develop an “elevator speech” or “30 second pitch.” Go to the following site for more information about elevator speeches: [www.quintcareers.com/job-search\\_elevator\\_speech.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/job-search_elevator_speech.html).

Approach these contacts and share your career goals, provide them with some version of your elevator speech and ask for assistance and/or referrals. Remember, your contacts know other people as well. So they can put you in touch with others who may be able to help, even if they can’t help you directly.

## **Use Wackerle Career and Leadership Center: 25% of Your Job Search Time**

Career Services is available to help you with every aspect of your job search – from writing a dynamic resume and cover letter, to developing a job search plan, to interviewing techniques and much more. Schedule a personal appointment at [wackerle@monmouthcollege.edu](mailto:wackerle@monmouthcollege.edu).

## **Participate in Career/Job Fairs: 2% of Your Job Search Time Recommended**

Career and job fairs are rare opportunities to have employers come to you. Check your local newspaper and Wackerle for upcoming job fairs. Prior to attending prepare to be at your best. Reference the following site for tips, suggestions and other resources regarding career and job fairs: [www.collegegrad.com/jobsearch/Job-Fair-Success/](http://www.collegegrad.com/jobsearch/Job-Fair-Success/)

## **Use a Meta Job Search Engine: 1-2% of Your Job Search Time Recommended**

Also called vertical job search engines or aggregators, a meta job search engine “scrapes” job openings from a variety of job boards and employer websites and dumps the data into one central site. This offers the user a searchable and comprehensive database of open positions.

Some of the top meta job search engines include: [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com), [www.simplyhired.com](http://www.simplyhired.com), and [www.jobster.com](http://www.jobster.com). You may also want to check out [www.linkup.com](http://www.linkup.com). This site allows you to search directly for jobs on company and organization websites.

Make sure you access the job search tools or widgets on these sites to help customize your job search, and to help bring jobs to the places where you spend your time online – social networks, blogs, your website homepage and your mobile phone.

## **Search Other Online**

### **Visit the Websites of Specific, Targeted Companies: 2% of Your Job Search Time Recommended**

Think about companies that may be of interest to you, based on your knowledge and research of the geographic areas where you’re interested in working. Many of these companies post job openings on their website – usually under an “Employment” or “Career Opportunities” link. Visiting a company’s website also provides you with an opportunity to research the organization.

### **Consider Temping or a “Gap Job” – If all other strategies do not produce desired results**

By working briefly as a “temporary worker” for an organization, you can position yourself to be hired for a full-time, permanent position. Even if that doesn’t happen, temping can help you see various organizations from the inside, meet people in your field of interest (who could become part of your network) and develop valuable experience that can go on

your resume.

Check your local yellow pages for temporary placement agencies near you that may be able to provide assistance.

You may also want to consider a “gap job” to help you get through difficult periods of unemployment. These jobs may not be your “ideal” position, but they can help you pay your basic bills and develop valuable transferrable skills while you search for your ideal position.

## **Final Thoughts – Assemble your “job search team”**

Searching for a job is a job in itself. On the job, we all have colleagues who work with us as part of a team and support our efforts to be successful. When it comes to your job search, you have family, friends, classmates, professors, colleagues and others who can function as part of your team.

Here are some ways in which your job search team can provide assistance:

- Ask your team to provide constructive feedback on your job search materials and methods. They can provide the value of “fresh eyes,” offering perspectives that you may not see or consider on your own.
- Work with your team on building a job search plan. If you’re unemployed, you may be grieving the loss of a structured work environment. Or perhaps you have not been very good at building a structure for yourself, inside or outside of work. If that’s the case, it’s time to turn to someone on your team who has excellent organizational and planning skills. Have them mentor you in developing a daily job search schedule, complete with work plans and timelines.
- With your daily schedule, work plans and timelines in place, you now need an “accountability supervisor.” Turn to someone on your team who can commit to hold you accountable for your actions, or inaction. This needs to be someone who is not afraid to “hold your feet to the fire.”
- All work and no play can be exhausting. So ask your team members for their gift of time beyond the job search. Schedule social activities each day or week as a “reward” for the hours devoted to your job search. Mixing work with play will help keep you fresh and energized as you conduct your search.
- Can you think of other ways your team can help? Add these to your list.