

How to Maximize Your Job Search

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Planning a Job Search

Have a Plan. Before you search for jobs, be prepared so you maximize time and have a successful job search!

Process of Job Searching

1. Self-assessment: identify your strengths and skills, know what you want to do and where you want to work (industry, possible companies, location), know what you have to offer employers.
2. Write an exceptional resume that will get you interviews and cover letters that are customized for each job. A Career Counselor can help you with this.
3. Network: send the message to friends, relatives, mentors, and previous employers that you are looking for a position.
4. Do informational interviews.
5. Use all possible methods to find opportunities (posted and unadvertised). A Career Counselor will team with you to explore your options.
6. Follow-up on the jobs to which you applied.
7. Prepare for interviewing by researching common questions and developing answers.
8. Do mock interviews.
9. Interview for jobs.
10. Send thank you note and follow up.
11. Evaluate offer packages and accept/decline.

Locating Opportunities

How do you job search?

There are many ways to find jobs. The most successful job search will incorporate several different strategies, not just one! Below is a list of ways to find opportunities.

Handshake

The Experiential Learning and Career Development Center's online service, "Handshake" is available 24/7 for Albright students and alumni to search for full-time, part-time, seasonal, or internship opportunities. It's on our website and at <https://albright.joinhandshake.com/>.

Career Shift

Career Shift is an excellent resource for when you are job searching in another region or state. It offers many ways to filter your results, and searches multiple job posting sites so it can serve as your "one stop shop" for job openings. As a free resources for Albright students and alumni, Career Shift is accessible through Handshake or on its own at <https://www.careershift.com/?sc=Albright> .

Career Fairs

These can be on campus and in the community. We also participate in Teacher Recruitment Day, a job fair just for teachers. More information and a list of additional job fairs can be found on the Experiential Learning and Career Development Center's website. You can also find them through professional organizations and online.

On Campus Recruiting:

Through the Experiential Learning and Career Development Center during both fall and spring semesters. Employers contact the college when they are looking to hire employees and interns. Check on Albright Handshake for which companies will be on campus and sign up for interviews. You must submit your approved resume a minimum of 7 days in advance of the interview date. Schedule an appointment with a Career Counselor who can review your resume with you to make sure it's perfect for the position!

Attend Employer Information Sessions

Employers will often contact the Experiential Learning and Career Development Center, faculty members and/or student organizations to schedule on campus information sessions. This is a great opportunity for you to learn about a company and make contact with someone inside. Definitely talk to the presenter and ask for a business card. This is a great way to start networking and possibly set up an informational interview. Go to the session with a little knowledge about the company and presenter, if possible.

Attend Other Events on Campus

Each semester, the Experiential Learning and Career Development Center offers events that provide an opportunity to hear from and network with Albright alumni and other professionals from that field. Even if the event is not related to your field, you never know who the presenters know! Check out our calendar of events online at <http://www.albright.edu/elcdc/calendar-of-events.html>.

Chamber of Commerce

Whether you are considering moving to a new area after graduation or simply want to learn more about the organizations/companies in your local region, the local chamber of commerce website is one of the best sources. A chamber's membership directory can usually be accessed by keyword, company or by category. The directory may list top professionals within each company/organization which will enable you to make connections through informational interviews. Some even offer employment opportunities

listed by their members. You can also find out information about housing, cost of living, school districts, and recreational activities. Many chambers provide young professionals in the area an opportunity to make valuable connections and gain an insider's view of the local business community through young professional networks or groups.

Databases

Resources like D&B Hoovers (<http://www.hoovers.com/>) allow you to find companies and information about those companies in any geographic area. Also a great resource for doing company research as it provides information a company overview, top executives, competitors, financial overview and more. The Experiential Learning and Career Development Center also provides Buzzfile and Career Shift for students to find opportunities.

Newspapers

Available in print and online, the newspaper will allow you to find local job opportunities. This is helpful for some career fields more than others. Higher level jobs are less advertised. However, this may also be beneficial in finding summer or part-time jobs.

Internet Job Postings

The Experiential Learning and Career Development Center subscribes to several job postings sites just for our students and alumni. These sites include Handshake, ArtSearch, and Environmental Job Opportunities. Contact us for additional information. Other sites that do not require a subscription include LinkedIn, Career Builder, or Hot Jobs. Many of these positions are in sales or through recruiters. We also frequently refer students to Indeed, Idealist, and field-specific sites such as Higher Ed Jobs.

Post Resume Online

There is no harm in posting your resume online. It is minimal effort and you never know what can happen. Be careful of the sites you post on, however. We recommend only posting on those that have limited access to viewing the resumes and also limit the contact information provided. You may want to list your email address and phone number, but not your physical address. Think before you post! Do you want your information getting out there to anyone and everyone? Schedule an appointment with a career counselor who can review your resume with you to make sure it's perfect before posting! There are more job posting sites in the last section of this guide.

National Publications / Journals

Trade journals specific to certain industries often have job ads. You may discover the names of publications and journals that relate to your industry through your coursework. If not, ask professors or use Albright's library as a resource.

Job Vacancy Listings Received by the Experiential Learning and Career Development Center

The advantage is that they are usually fairly local and recent. Since they are contacting Albright, they obviously think highly of our graduates! Act quickly – our center is not likely to be the only one the employer contacted. Although they are usually emailed out to students, the information can also be found on Handshake.

Professional Associations

These associations often they list job opportunities on their websites or in their publications. Better than posting on a general website, post your resume on the professional association website where more people in your industry will be looking. Also, attend conferences through professional organizations which provide an excellent opportunity to meet industry professionals. If there is a membership fee, there is usually a cheaper student rate.

During Informational Interviews

Sometimes a contact will tell you about opportunities when you are meeting with them. They may even offer to be a reference for you or pass your resume along. Read more about informational interviews on page 6 and also in our Informational Interview Guide on our website.

Networking

You never know who you are going to meet at networking events. Always have a business card or a networking business card. You can also connect through friends, family, alumni, and *their* friends and family. The more people that know you are looking and what you are looking for, the better the chance of you getting wind of unadvertised positions.

Company Websites

Often, companies will post job openings on their websites. However, if you don't see any, don't rule that company out. There are still often unadvertised positions. We also recommend looking into their social media, since there may be information on there that is not included on their website.

Temp / Employment Agencies

There are advantages and disadvantages to going through agencies. Some look just to fill jobs and do not necessarily care if it is a "good fit" for you. However, if you lack industry experience, this can be a way to gain experience, making yourself more marketable. Sometimes companies will only hire individuals through an agency because they can "try you out first". Sometimes they use agencies because the agency does the search and screening for them. If you do decide to go with an agency, we suggest ONLY using an agency that does not charge you a fee. The hiring company should pay the fees.

State Employment Service Offices

The State employment service, sometimes called the Job Service, operates in coordination with the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. Local offices, found nationwide, help job seekers to find jobs and help employers to find qualified workers at no cost to either. In Pennsylvania, more information can be found on the PA CareerLink website at <http://www.pacareerlink.com/>

Pennsylvania State Employment

www.scsc.state.pa.us/

Federal Government Employment

<http://www.usajobs.gov/>; <http://gogovernment.org/>; <http://bestplacestowork.org>

Success Rates of Job Searching Methods

Source: *What Color is Your Parachute*, Richard Bolles, 2015

<u>Using ONLY this method:</u>	<u>Success Rate of Finding a Job</u>
Creative (or Parachute) Approach (described below)	86%
Using the Yellow Pages to identify fields of interest, calling up employers, asking if they are hiring for the type of position you can do*	65%
Going into companies that interest you, asking about vacancies, expressing interest, meeting people	47%
Asking for job leads from family, friends, people in the community,	33%

career center staff, and social network contacts

Job searching with a group of friends – using the call and find out method above and sharing resources	10%
Answering ads in appropriate professional or trade journals	7%
Posting or mailing out resumes to employers at random	7%
Going to employment agencies (lower rates for higher salaried jobs)	5 - 28%
Answering newspaper ads (lower rates for higher salaried jobs)	5 - 24%
The Internet	4 -10%

*Please note, you can also research companies through their websites, LinkedIn, professional organizations, and your local Chamber of Commerce- not just the Yellow Pages!

Creative (or Parachute) Approach to Job Searching

The Keys to This Approach Are:

1. Determine what you have to offer and identify your skills that relate to each employer. Decide which skills are important for you to use. Match them with skills employers are seeking. Look at past jobs in terms of your *transferable skills*. Transferable skills are general skills that are applicable to most jobs, such as communication, teamwork, and time management.
2. Decide exactly where you want to use your skills – including industry, field, and geographic location. Locate specific companies through research using company websites and databases. Conduct informational interviews to get the inside scoop about the company and meet people within the company. While you want to focus on people whose jobs relate to what you want to do, don't rule out people in other areas of the company besides where you want to work.
3. You must go after the organizations that interest you the most whether or not they are known to have vacancies. This means using your contacts, getting an appointment there, meeting those people who could be in a position to hire you. (Bolles' book has a great section that tells you how to find out who these people are, how to connect, and even gives suggestions for how to talk with them.)

Networking Facts

- Based on the information above, people who network have the highest success rate at finding a job, of about **86%**. Using the internet to network, such as Handshake and LinkedIn, may account for some of the 4-10%.
- The Department of Labor reports that **63%** of jobs are found through networking (leads/referrals from others).
- Somewhere around **80%** of all vacant jobs are unadvertised.
- Despite this information, **the majority** of job searchers look for the "right" job by searching through online postings, the newspaper, and maybe a few limited company websites.
- We know talking and meeting with people and expanding your network through informational interviews is time consuming. Networking does not always have an immediate payoff, which can be discouraging.

However, the long-term benefits of getting a job that you really want and having this network that can last throughout your career as you continue to make shifts and advance in your career is well worth the effort.

- Your network consists of everyone you know... and everyone they know, including your parents, family, friends, neighbors, classmates, friends, faculty and staff, alumni, student organizations, members of professional organizations, professional contacts in your field and not in your field, etc.

Informational Interviews

An informational interview is a meeting arranged by you with someone in your field, in a job title you want, or in a company you want to work for. These can be people you do or do not know. They can provide insight into the realities of working in the field, give you advice about how to get into the field, and tell you about their career path and experience. Meeting with people in this way can also lead to referrals and information about job opportunities.

Before arranging an informational interview, make sure you are prepared with what you want to say and the questions you want to ask. If you call someone, they may prefer to answer your questions right then over the phone rather than set up a time for you to meet or call later. You should be prepared with:

- **Introductory Statement.** Tell who you are and why you are calling. Include name, major, career objective, and why you want to interview this person. Ask for a 20-30 minute face-to-face meeting, but settle for 15-minutes and/or over the phone if necessary.
- **Company Information.** Know the basics about the company such as their mission and strategic plan, major products or services, integral people (like the CEO), major competitors.
- **List of Questions to Ask.** What do you want to learn from this person? DO NOT ask for a job or if there are any job openings in the company. However, you can express interest in the company, tell them what it is you want to do, and ask if they know of any openings in the field. Chances are if there are positions in the company, they will tell you.
- **Respect Their Time.** If you agree to 20-minutes and you still have a few questions, acknowledge that you have reached the time limit, say that you still have some questions you would like to ask and would you be able to call them at another time. This still leaves it open for them to tell you to continue.
- **Ask for a Referral.** Get the name of a new industry contact that you can learn from.
- **Thank Them.** Say 'thank you for your time' on the phone and also send a thank you note.
- **Follow-up after a referral.** If you meet someone they referred, touch base and let them know how it went.

For additional information, please review our Networking in Informational Interview Guide.

Utilizing Social Media in the Job Search

It is possible in this day and age to use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to help you in your job search. First and foremost, these sites allow you to network with more people, particularly on LinkedIn. On all three sites, if you know the individual personally, you can see who they are connected to and

asked to be virtually introduced. Another option is to send them private messages through the sites if you don't have their email. You can ask who they know in the field you can connect with or have informational interviews with.

A feature on Twitter that helps with the job search is utilizing hashtags (#) to search for different locations or fields. For example, you can search for “#GreenJobs” or “#Accounting in #NJ.” You can also search for and follow companies you are interested in, or you can follow users such as @USA_Internship, that only post internships or jobs in the field you are looking for.

On Facebook, you can “like” companies you are interested in to learn more about them. It also shows your loyalty to their business or service. It may provide contact information for people as well, so you can call to set up informational interviews.

With LinkedIn, you can connect with many people based on where you have worked or went to school. You can also view who they are connected to, and usually you can see the basic profile information even before you are virtually introduced and connected. There are also groups you can join based on your interests, education, and professional organizations, so you can connect with people through those. In addition, you can choose to follow companies you have a relationship with.

Of course, you don't want to abuse the power of social networking. Always think before you post anything, particularly status updates or pictures. Also, don't use your social networks to connect with every single person you can. Think about what you are requesting before asking to be introduced. If you ask to be connected for potential job opportunities or for an informational interview, make sure you follow through with your end of the request.

What to Do 1-2 Years Before You Graduate

- Join a campus student organization related to your major.
- Subscribe to at least 1 trade journal (preferably 2-3) with classified listings. READ IT – to stay aware of industry trends.
- Join a professional association. Most have low membership rates for students.
- Visit the Experiential Learning and Career Development Center to learn about the variety of services offered. The earlier you start preparing, the easier your job search will be.
- Get out there – go to campus events (especially those related to your industry) and talk to the presenters.
- Be involved – do volunteering or be involved in your community.
- Conduct informational interviews and “shadow” people in jobs you think you might like.
- Make a plan to improve weak skills. Some of the top qualities employers are seeking are:
 - Exceptional communication skills (listening, speaking, writing)
 - Team-oriented and leadership ability
 - Creative problem solver
 - Self-motivated
 - Confidence
 - Ability to learn quickly
 - Desire to learn / interest in the job
 - Easy to work with (outgoing and friendly)

Job Searching Tips

- Apply to targeted jobs and send a targeted resume and cover letter.
- Keep a job search journal of dates you send your materials, follow-up, interview, etc.
- To maximize time and effectiveness of your job search, make “To Do” lists and stick to them.
- Have a professional voicemail for the phone numbers listed on your resume.
- Check your email at least every other day. Many employers contact you through email.
- Follow up with employers (the person you addressed your cover letter to) within 1-week of applying or 1-week after the application deadline. Call to check status and/or send follow-up letter of interest.

Evaluating Work Environment

Take note of the work environment when you visit a company and when you interview. Many candidates never ask to see the area where they will be working or meet some of the co-workers. How do you know whether the work space is something you can deal with or whether you think the co-workers are people you can work with on a daily basis?

Job Search Websites

A listing of Job Search Websites can be found, based on your major, on the Experiential Learning and Career Development Center website or can be directly accessed at:

<http://www.albright.edu/academics/wcidwam/index.html>

- www.snagajob.com
- www.pennsylvaniajobs.com
- www.phillyjobs.com
- www.entryleveljobsite.com
- www.careerjet.com
- www.idealists.org
- www.careerbuilder.com
- www.linkup.com
- www.greenjobsearch.org
- www.indeed.com