

Job Search Strategies: Pros and Cons

There are many ways to look for a job, some of which are better than others. Presented below are some of the most popular ways, as well as helpful hints and pros and cons of each.

STRATEGY	TOOLS	PROS	CONS	HELPFUL HINTS
WANT ADS Scan want ads. Mail resume with cover letter tailored to specific job qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspapers • Journals • Newsletters • Trade magazines • Cover letters • Resumes 	Involves minimal investment of time in identifying companies. Resume and cover letter are sent for actual job opening.	Resume and cover letter will compete with large number of others. Ads follow job market; least effective in times of economic downturn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use as a meter on the job market in a certain career field. • Try to get your materials in as early as possible.
EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES Respond to employment agency ads in newspapers; check phone book for names of agencies to contact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resumes • Business attire 	Fee-paid jobs for graduates in technical fields or those with marketable experience.	May be less help to non-technical/inexperienced graduates. Be wary if you, instead of the employer, have to pay a fee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify agencies that specialize in your field. • Make frequent contact with your counselor to obtain better service.
WORLD WIDE WEB Search online job banks and company Web sites. Submit resume online/post on job boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the Web • Electronic resume 	Actual job openings. Many employers use a wide variety of job listing services. Many listings have free to low-cost access. Worldwide geographic reach.	Competition is growing as use of the Web increases. Many jobs listed are technical in nature, though the visibility of nontechnical fields is growing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Web frequently as information and sites change quickly. • May need to conduct your search at off-peak times (early morning or late at night).
TARGETED MAILING Develop good cover letter tailored to a specific type of job and the needs of the company. Send letter with resume to selected companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of well-researched companies • Tailored cover letters • Resumes 	Better approach than the mass-mailing method. Investment of time and effort should merit stronger response from employers.	Requires a significant investment of time in researching companies and writing cover letters as well as following up with contacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to find out who is in charge of the area in which you want to work; send your materials to that person. Great method when used in conjunction with networking.
IN-PERSON VISIT Visit many companies. Ask to see person in specific department. Submit resume and application, if possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business attire • Company address list • Resumes 	Resume and application are on file with the company.	Requires a great deal of time to make a relatively small number of contacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the companies prior to your visit. Ask for a specific person or ask about a specific type of job.
NETWORKING Talk to everyone you know to develop a list of possible contacts; ask for information on job/companies and to circulate your resume.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of contacts • Resumes • Business attire 	May learn of unadvertised openings. May result in a courtesy interview. Often results in a closer match of your interests to a job.	A contact in itself is not enough to get you a job. You may exhaust all leads without landing a job. Quite time-consuming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow through on all leads. • Keep broadening your network of contacts.
ON-CAMPUS RECRUITING Follow specific procedures to secure on-campus interviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling interviews • Employer literature • Resumes • Business attire 	One of the primary ways in which companies recruit for technical and business positions.	May be less effective for nontechnical/nonbusiness candidates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the interview schedule as a way to identify possible employers, even if you don't get to interview on campus with those employers.
RESUME REFERRAL Register with one of the many national referral services. As jobs are listed by employers, the data bank of registrants is searched for matches. If your materials match, they are sent to the employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration form supplied by service 	Another way to monitor the job market and get your qualifications to the attention of employers.	May involve a fee. Often more helpful to those in technical or specialized fields. May not learn of the status of your materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use only in conjunction with other job search strategies.

Adapted and reprinted with permission from Career Development and Placement Services, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.