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# Job Search Techniques and Networking

An effective job search is an important tool in building a successful career. There may be times in your professional life when you need to simply 'find a job'. However, a job seeker who chooses a job related to his/her career goals will be better prepared to begin a career on the right track. Preparing for and conducting an effective job search may seem like a lot of work but the more prepared and efficient you are, the more likely you are to find a job you want and not simply, a job.

Throughout this guidebook, we will focus on some of the key steps involved in conducting a successful job search. A key component for a successful job search is effective career planning. Therefore, we will also include some information on career planning and on the technique of 'informational interviewing', a career planning tool.

## Steps to Successful Job Searching

The Career Centre has identified 5 key steps to effective job searching:

- Step 1** → Self Analysis
- Step 2** → Career Research
- Step 3** → Developing Job Search Materials
- Step 4** → Targeted Job Searching
- Step 5** → Follow-up

As you review this guidebook, you will find information on how to successfully navigate these steps. Some of the steps mentioned above are covered in depth in other Career Centre resources or workshops. Where this is the case, alternate locations will be indicated for this information.

As you begin the job search process, you should consider compiling some of the information you gather to create a resource called your '**Portfolio**'. Your portfolio is simply a collection of information relevant to your career and job search.

Your **Portfolio** may be comprised of:

- Career Profile
  - Personal profile
  - Career research
- Job Search Material
  - Resumé and cover letters
  - Other documentation such as certificates, recommendation letters, etc.
  - Samples of your work

- Networking Information
  - Contact lists
  - Follow-up information
- Information on professional organizations and affiliations

## **The Traditional Job Search**

For many job seekers, the job search involves applying to advertised job postings. This traditional job search method usually involves:

- ✓ Job postings on job boards
- ✓ Job posting websites
- ✓ Completing applications
- ✓ Newspaper/magazine ads
- ✓ Sending out unsolicited resumés
- ✓ Registering with employment/ temporary agencies and recruiters

If you are conducting a traditional job search, you are missing as many as 75% of all possible jobs. The traditional job search taps into only a small portion of the actual job market. The more effective method of seeking employment is a non-traditional job search.

## **The Non-Traditional Job Search**

**The non-traditional job search is an informal job search.**

The key to undertaking a successful non-traditional job search is to conduct an active job search. If you have ever heard of the phrase, 'the hidden job market', you have heard of a non-traditional job search.

Service Canada reports that three out of every five job postings are not listed in newspapers, on job boards or in electronic job markets. According to this research, over 60% of job seekers reported locating jobs through the hidden job market including personal contacts, networking and other methods <[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/youjob/](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/youjob/)>.

As you speak to people and research job search techniques, it becomes clear that the hidden job market and a non-traditional job search can significantly increase your chances of locating employment.

## **The Four Stages of a Job Opening**

The successful job search process can take many forms and there is no one path which works for all job seekers. To understand how to search for work effectively, it is important to understand the evolution of most job openings.

<b>Stage 1 - There is no job now</b>	<b>Stage 2 - No formal opening exists, but insiders know of the possibility</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers always look for good employees</li> <li>• Gain an inside track by making contacts before there is a job opening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need is there, but not addressed</li> <li>• Someone is leaving but has not announced it to the supervisor or Human Resources</li> <li>• Someone is about to be moved or fired</li> </ul>
<b>25%</b> of jobs filled at this stage	By stage 2, <b>50%</b> of jobs are filled
<b>Stage 3 - The job opening exists, but has not been advertised</b>	<b>Stage 4 - The job is advertised</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Resources may not even know of openings at this stage</li> <li>• Referrals and applications are encouraged, often received from insiders or contacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openings only reach this stage if not filled previously</li> <li>• Job is open to everyone, therefore increased competition and fewer jobs left</li> </ul>
By stage 3, <b>75%</b> of jobs will be filled	Only <b>25%</b> of job openings reach this stage

adapted from **The Very Quick Job Search**, by M. Farr

If approximately 75% of all job openings are filled prior to being advertised, you can understand why it may take longer to locate an appropriate job opportunity when conducting a traditional job search.

**The key components of the non-traditional job search involve:**

- ✓ Researching
- ✓ Networking
- ✓ Prospecting

As we examine the Steps involved in an effective job search, you will see why these components are vital to your job search.

**The Long Job Search Process**

It is not uncommon to take several months to successfully target a job and gain employment. That is not to imply that you cannot find a job quickly if you need one to pay the bills. However, if you want to find a specific job in a specific industry or organization, it is not unrealistic to expect the process to take between three and nine months in a good economy. It is not unrealistic for a job seeker searching for a higher-level position to spend six to 12 months before locating the ‘right’ opportunity. That is why the earlier you begin, the better.

As a Laurier student or alumnus, you will find that many employers post jobs during the fall and winter terms, even though the jobs may not begin until spring or summer of your graduation year. If

you are seeking a job following graduation, it is worth your time to begin an active job search at the beginning of your final year.

## **Step 1 → Self Analysis**

To begin a successful job search, you should first know yourself and the types of careers or jobs in which you are interested. Even if you are only seeking a job to 'pay the bills', you will be in a better position to locate a job you will enjoy if you know what you want and what you have to offer.

If you are unsure about how to begin this process, the Career Centre offers career planning workshops and appointments with career consultants who can assist you in generating this information. During these workshops and appointments you will be provided with assessment tools to help you identify your skills and generate a personal profile which could include your personality type, values, interests and work preferences. In addition, there are many resources in the Career Resource Centre and on the Internet to assist you during this step in the process. Contact the Career Centre or visit the Career Centre's website for more details <[www.wlu.ca/career](http://www.wlu.ca/career)>.

Once you successfully complete Step 1, you will be ready to create the first part of the Personal Profile component of your Career Profile. This part of the profile may contain an inventory of the following:

Your Key...

### **→ Skills and Qualifications**

- Identify what you think are your main skills or qualifications.
- Identify your 'transferable skills' (visit the Career Centre for information on transferable skills).

### **→ Interests, Values and Motivations**

- What types of hobbies, activities and interests do you have?
- What types of things are important to you – money, fun in a job, social issues?

### **→ Personal Preferences**

- What is your personality type? How do you interpret and interact with the world around you? How do you process information, learn and make decisions?
- What are your core or natural strengths and preferences?
- What do you need to be satisfied or fulfilled in a career/job?

### **→ Experiences**

- What have you done in the past – work, school, volunteering, clubs, activities, etc.?

### **→ Work Preferences**

- Where would you like to work (geographic location, type of location)?
- What is your ideal work setting?

- With whom would you like to work?
- What would you like to work with – your hands, information, people, data, etc.?

The information you gather in this step will make up a key part of your Career Profile.

## Step 2 → Career Research

Now that you have completed the first part of your job search (Step 1, Self Analysis), it is important to learn about the jobs and/or careers which you might wish to consider.

To assist you in identifying potential job/career objectives, both for short-term jobs and long-term career planning, the Career Centre provides you with many resources:

- ✓ Appointments with career consultants to match your profile (skills, interests, personality and values) and your major with potential careers or career fields
- ✓ Workshops on how to conduct career research
- ✓ Workshops for various majors with potential career options
- ✓ Workshops with information on specific careers ('Careers in Consulting', 'Careers in Technical Communications', for example)
- ✓ Print resources and website information relative to all majors offered at Laurier
- ✓ Print and video resources on various careers and majors
- ✓ Website information and links to relevant websites
- ✓ Graduate survey data (information on jobs or careers of previous graduates)

Did you know that HRSDC has a website which contains definitions and descriptions of thousands of jobs - The National Occupation Classification (NOC) database located at <[www.hrsdc.gc.ca/noc](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/noc)>.

The following sites provide data on various majors, careers, industry sectors and labour markets:

<[www.jobfutures.ca](http://www.jobfutures.ca)>

<[www.workapedia.ca](http://www.workapedia.ca)>

<[www.careercruising.com](http://www.careercruising.com)> username: wlu, password: laurier

Hard copies of these resources are also available in the Career Centre.

Research current job postings to familiarize yourself with requirements employers are seeking. Look for industry-specific websites or use a search engine such as Eluta that collects employer job postings, <[www.eluta.ca](http://www.eluta.ca)>.

As you conduct this research, you might want to consider gathering and assessing the following information about potential jobs:

- ✓ What are the key or main responsibilities of this type of job?
- ✓ What are the requirements for this job (education, experience, skills)?
- ✓ What are the conditions of this job (setting, hours, wages, geographical location)?
- ✓ What is the future outlook for this job, career or industry?

As you gather this information, your goal should be to compare what you find with the information you compiled in Step 1, your Personal Profile. You are trying to select careers which are of interest to you and which match your personal profile (including your personality, skills, values and interests).

You may need to work with a career consultant if you are not able to identify potential careers or figure out which careers match your profile. Career consultants can work with you to identify and research many potential jobs or careers which may match with your profile and/or your major. Do not limit yourself at this stage. You may want to identify as few as 10 or as many as 50 careers or jobs to consider and research.

You can also identify career options when you consider opportunities which match your:

1. Education and Training
2. Work/Volunteer/Life Experiences
3. Labour Market Trends and Opportunities

## **Labour Market Research**

More than ever before, it is important for job seekers and anyone interested in planning a successful career to be aware of information related to the labour market. The labour market is driven by information, and information is constantly changing. To thrive in the current market-place, job seekers must have an awareness of labour market trends, skills in gathering and assessing labour market information and the ability to anticipate and prepare for changes in both the labour market and in their chosen career field.

As part of your career research, you need to learn more about the careers and career sectors you are considering.

To assist you in researching the labour market, the Career Centre offers a wide range of information and resources. The Career Centre staff can assist you in locating resources, including videos and books in the Career Resource Centre, and you can also attend workshops and schedule an appointment with a career consultant. The information you gather at this stage will be equally

valuable for career decision-making and job search preparation. When you begin contacting organizations during your job search, you will be a stronger and more informed candidate and have the potential to conduct a more effective job search.

HRSDC has extensive labour market information (LMI) available for review.  
Visit the HRSDC online LMI site at  
<[www.labourmarketinformation.ca](http://www.labourmarketinformation.ca)>  
This site also includes labour market information by region or city.

Once you conduct paper and Internet research into a variety of career options, your next step should be to make contact with people within these career fields.

### **Informational Interviewing**

During this stage of your career/job search, it is recommended that you spend some time talking to professionals in the career fields which you are considering. To assist you in making your career decisions, you should go beyond the paper and Internet research, beyond talking to career consultants, and expand your research to include speaking to professionals in the career fields you are considering. This technique is called Informational Interviewing.

#### **What is Informational Interviewing?**

**Informational Interviewing** is a method of conducting in-person research for the purpose of gathering accurate and up-to-date information about possible career options and/or potential employer organizations. Informational interviewing enables you to make face-to-face contact with people who may be in positions to provide you with relevant information, suggest potential job leads or even offer you a job. Conducting library and Internet research into careers and employer organizations can be very helpful, but the most valuable information comes from meeting people who are in a career field or organization.

#### **How to Begin Making Connections**

First, you need to know what you are seeking and in which careers you are interested.

Once you have identified your career options and conducted basic research into the relevant career fields (as discussed in the preceding pages), you will be ready to make contact with relevant professionals. Remember, you must have an idea of the basic tasks and requirements of a career before you connect with relevant people. You can then begin to contact specific individuals, organizations and associations who have relevant information.

After you identify a specific contact person or organization, do some homework and gather basic

information about the industry and the employer organization. While you are meeting with a person to gain more information, you should be prepared with some industry and organizational information so you can ask intelligent questions.

### **Meeting with an Industry Contact**

Picking up the telephone and calling a stranger (phone is the preferred choice but email is an option where a phone number is not available) to ask for a short **meeting** (not an interview) can be quite intimidating. However, if you have taken the time to conduct some research and acquire an individual's name, and you are clear and specific about the kind of assistance or information you need, people generally want to be helpful. You are expressing interest in their chosen line of work and you are asking for their professional guidance to assist you in making important decisions in your life. You are not asking for a job, but the opportunity to learn from a professional.

During an informational interview you can gather valuable information on:

- the major advantages and disadvantages of the career field
- personal opinions and observations about day-to-day job activities
- inside 'tips' on how to get started in the field/occupation/organization
- the type of entry-level jobs available and where to find them
- accurate information regarding salaries, earning potential, career prospects
- volunteer, summer or internship opportunities related to a career field
- opportunities for advancement and/or lateral moves in the field
- the most up-to-date information/trends about a career field
- the 'tricks of the trade' on how to break into the field or organization

You also have the opportunity to:

- put yourself, your skills and personality in front of people in a position to help
- observe first-hand, working environments, expectations and requirements
- demonstrate your interest and initiative to potential employers

See pages 25 - 27 for information on how to make successful telephone contact. The method for making contact for the purposes of informational interviewing is very similar to the process for making telephone contact when job searching.

### **Outcome of an Informational Interview Meeting**

During a meeting, you are trying to obtain information and gather relevant information. You are also trying to learn about other sources of information. During the meeting you should gather information on:

- Relevant professional associations and/or events
- Industry magazines, journals, Internet sites and discussion groups which professionals in the industry find valuable
- Suggestions for other professional contacts in the industry

### **The Option of Taking a Resumé**

Some experts say taking a resumé is appropriate because it shows you are prepared for any outcome. Others say do not because you have told your contact that you are coming for information/research, not to apply for a job. If you are interested in working for the organization in the near future, you could take a resumé and request feedback on it. If you are asked for a resumé and do not have a targeted one with you, you could say that you do not have a targeted resumé with you but you would be pleased to drop one off. Going back may give you a second opportunity, however brief, to make another contact with a potential employer. An alternative to taking a resumé is to develop and take your 'Networking Card'. You can read about this card on page 22.

### **Finding Potential Contacts**

To assist you in researching specific occupations and organizations, the Career Centre, in conjunction with Alumni Relations, has developed the **Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK) program**. ASK provides students and graduates with the names of alumni who are willing to share information on their careers and/or organizations. Alumni from a variety of disciplines and occupational areas participate in the program. The ASK information is organized by major, occupation and organization. Alumni are a great source of information on specific careers, organizations or other leads.

Other resources to consider include:

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| • Career Centre employer literature          | • Employer/industry directories |
| • Professional associations                  | • Local newspapers              |
| • Relevant magazines and industry journals   | • Career Fair and Job Fair      |
| • Professors or other professionals you know | • Networking events             |
| • Community organizations                    |                                 |

### **Sample Questions for Informational Interviewing**

You should prepare your own relevant questions which address issues unique to the line of work you are considering. The following are merely suggestions to get you started.

- How did you decide to get into this field? What background do you have?
- What qualifications/education/training are required to get into this field?

- What would a typical day/week look like for you?
- What do you like best about this line of work/organization?
- What are some of the frustrations/difficulties you experience?
- What do you feel are the most important skills, interests and attitudes that would make a person happy/successful in this job?
- What type of personality is best suited for this work?
- What do you feel is the best training route leading to this position?
- Could you describe some other environments where a \_\_\_\_\_ might work?
- Are there similar or related occupations which require less/different training?
- Who might be able to give me information about similar or related fields?
- What do you see as future trends for this occupation?
- What work/volunteer experience would benefit me in targeting this career area?
- Are there any professional associations I could join? Which would you recommend?
- What else should I be doing to increase my chances for success in this area?
- Are there many opportunities for advancement in this field? Into what kinds of positions might one be promoted?
- What are the starting salary ranges and earning potential in this field? (Do not ask the person about his/her own salary, ask for entry-level and potential salaries)
- Is there anyone else you would recommend to whom I could speak in a similar or related area who might give me another perspective?

The informational interview is an excellent way to gather information about careers of interest and, in the end, it is also an excellent way to lay the ground work for a future job search.

### **Identify Clear Career or Job Objectives**

At the completion of Step 2, you should be in a position to establish clear career targets. Combine the information you gathered during your self analysis and the information you gathered from your career research (including Informational Interviews) and narrow your options to a clear set of career targets. Once this is completed, you are in a much better position to conduct an effective job search.

### **Step 3 → Developing Job Search Materials**

A successful job search is an active, targeted job search. To improve your chances of success, the materials you develop for your job search, including your resumés, cover letters and other portfolio material, should be created with specific jobs or industries in mind.

To assist you in developing effective, targeted resumés and cover letters, the Career Centre has created a **Resumé Guidebook** (free in the Career Resource Centre). The Career Centre also offers a Resumé Writing Workshop, various print material including resumé books (with sample resumés), as well as sample resumés available on the Career Centre's website. The Career Centre staff are also available to meet with you to review your resumés and cover letters.

In addition to your resumés and cover letters, your job search portfolio should contain:

- ✓ a list of references (3 professional references)
- ✓ reference or recommendation letters
- ✓ samples of your work (see discussion on page 15)
- ✓ performance evaluations
- ✓ certificates or other training certification (copies of certificates, diplomas or degrees)
- ✓ awards

All of your job search material should be reviewed and updated frequently. It is important that your job search material be designed to target specific career options. This may require you to prepare several versions of your resumé and cover letter.

## **References**

Frequently you will be asked to provide references as part of the job application and interview process. In the following section, you will learn about who to use as references, what to do about the possibility of negative references and the distinction between letters of reference and letters of recommendation. A letter of recommendation is preferable to a letter of reference. However, both are often referred to as a 'letter of reference'. In recent years, many employers have preferred to be given three professional references but it is not uncommon for an employer to ask for a personal reference.

In general, a professional reference is any individual (other than a family member) who can comment on the quality of your work or your work style. As a result, anyone who has seen you in a work setting (paid or unpaid), is an appropriate reference. Usually, you should include at least one person who has acted as a supervisor or manager. As you job search for your first position following graduation, you may be asked for an academic reference. Select a professor who is familiar with your accomplishments in the classroom.

A personal reference is usually an individual who has known you for several years (at least three) and is not an immediate family member. These are people who can comment on the type of person you are, your personality and your personal traits.

### **→ Professional References**

- ✓ Manager, Supervisor or Director
- ✓ Co-worker, Co-volunteer
- ✓ Professor or Teacher
- ✓ Coach (sports, music, games)
- ✓ Client or Customer
- ✓ Professional Colleague

### **→ Personal References**

- ✓ Neighbour
- ✓ Roommate
- ✓ Family Doctor
- ✓ Long-time Friend
- ✓ Teacher or Professor
- ✓ Sports Teammates

People you select as references may be asked to comment on:

- ✓ What you are like to supervise or work with
- ✓ Your key skills or specific skills related to the job
- ✓ Your weaknesses or negative traits
- ✓ How well you get along with co-workers, supervisors, customers and clients
- ✓ Your work habits (detail-oriented, dependable, for example)

## **Negative References**

If you are concerned that you are going to receive a negative reference from a past employer, it may not be enough to simply omit the name of this person from your reference sheet. A prospective employer may see a job listed on your resumé and decide to contact the organization, even if you have not listed someone from that organization as a reference. In this case, you may decide to leave the job off your resumé. However, if omitting a job from your resumé leaves a gap in your history, this is probably not the best solution. There may be two alternatives you can consider.

First, you could consider requesting a letter of reference (a letter of reference confirms your employment with an employer but does not necessarily comment on your qualities as an employee) from the Human Resources Department or from a supervisor. Most organizations will provide a letter of reference which contains information including your dates of employment, job title and main duties. This differs from a letter of recommendation. A letter of recommendation includes the same information as a letter of reference, but it also includes positive comments about your work performance and key strengths. Usually a letter of recommendation will end with a statement which says the person writing the letter would recommend you as an employee.

The second option is to request a reference from a co-worker, colleague or manager of another department within the organization with whom you worked well. This is not ideal, but it will at least enable you to list a reference from the organization. Generally, if the prospective employer is provided with a contact name, he/she will not seek out an additional reference from the same organization.

## **Requesting a Letter of Reference**

A letter of reference may be solicited either by calling the organization (if you left on good terms, you can contact your supervisor; if not, try Human Resources) or through a written request.

### Sample Letter Requesting a Letter of Reference

Date

Mr. Robert Casman  
Human Resources Manager  
XYZ Company  
1725 Huron Street  
Kitchener, ON N3S 2L7

Dear Mr. Casman: *(addressed to either a specific individual or specific department supervisor)*

I am currently seeking employment in the field of \_\_\_\_\_ and I am requesting a letter of reference confirming my employment with \_\_\_\_\_ (the name of the organization).

Your records should indicate that I was employed at \_\_\_\_\_ (name of the organization) from 20\_\_ to 20\_\_ (dates of employment) in the \_\_\_\_\_ (department or section name). My job title was \_\_\_\_\_. Could you please also indicate the main responsibilities and tasks involved in this job.

Thank you very much for your assistance. If you have any questions, please contact me by telephone at (519) 883-1234 or by email at jsmith@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,  
*(Signature)*

John Smith

If you are comfortable calling the organization and requesting the letter, this is an acceptable option. Simply use the script from the letter to prepare a telephone script. If you believe that you must contact a supervisor, particularly if there is no Human Resources department, then keep in mind that the purpose of the contact is not to review any past issues. Simply indicate you are seeking employment and you would like the person, if contacted, to confirm your employment with the organization (ask this person to confirm the information as indicated in the sample letter). Requesting a written letter of reference is a preferable option as you cannot be certain what an individual may say about you when speaking on the telephone.

## Requesting a Letter of Recommendation

Many employers are pleased to provide a letter of recommendation for employees who left their organization on good terms. Unfortunately, many do not know what to say or may innocently say something which is not flattering. It is a good idea to contact your potential references and speak to them on the phone. State your request for a letter of recommendation, reminding them of your job and your key skills. In the course of the conversation, talk about what you did well on the job. If they request that you prepare a first draft, write a fair letter and then send it to the reference. Indicate that he/she is welcome to make any changes or comments.

### Sample Draft of a Letter of Recommendation

Date

To Whom It May Concern,

(The reference person may be willing to write to a specific organization or individual which makes a stronger impression.)

I knew John Smith (your name) as an employee of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of organization). John worked for me as a \_\_\_\_\_ (job title) in the \_\_\_\_\_ (department) from \_\_\_\_\_ (dates of employment).

In this role, John's main duties were \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. In performing these tasks, I found him to be very professional and diligent. John's strengths included \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. His work on \_\_\_\_\_ project was strong and he was particularly good at \_\_\_\_\_.

I found John to be a capable employee who \_\_\_\_\_ (include comments about how you worked with others). (Additional lines are appropriate.)

I enjoyed working with John and am pleased to provide a positive recommendation for him as an employee.

Should you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Robert Cassman

References are an important component of your job search. Contacting people and requesting that they act as references is also a great way to begin developing your network (for information on building your network, see Step 4 - Targeted Job Searching).

However, employers are becoming more cautious about providing recommendations or verbal references as there is some fear that a former employee may legally challenge an organization if a reference is not favourable. Do not be surprised if an organization will only provide a very basic type of reference.

### **Samples of Your Work**

As a component of your job search material, you may include samples of previous work. Obviously, if you are an artist, architect or photographer, samples of your work are part of your professional portfolio. However, other professionals may also have samples of work to add to a portfolio. For example, if you are interested in marketing, you could take pictures of a display you developed for a local store. If you are working in a job in social sciences, you could take an example of an outline you developed for a series of workshops on a specific topic or an example of an information brochure you wrote.

If you do take samples of your work, be prepared to leave them if the employer requests this. It is recommended that you take both originals (if appropriate) and good-quality copies to leave behind.

You can never be certain what a contact person or a potential employer may ask to see. If you maintain an up-to-date portfolio of job search materials, you will be in a better position to provide required material in a timely fashion.

## **STEP 4 → TARGETED JOB SEARCHING**

### **Focus on the Active or Non-Traditional Job Search**

The active job search is the most effective type of job search. By conducting an active job search, you increase your chances of getting the job you want and not simply getting any job. The active, targeted job search is effective because it allows you to concentrate your resources and efforts on a clearly defineable and often connected series of industries, jobs and/or employers. As you target one employer or industry you will find connections to other related opportunities and develop more leads as you build your industry knowledge.

Once you have successfully completed the first three job search steps, you should be in a position to begin targeting specific employers and searching for specific jobs. At this stage, you are trying to tap into the first stages of the Four Stages of a job opening (discussed on pages 2 and 3). Targeted employer research is the key component of a non-traditional job search.

To assist you in targeting employers and focusing on your job search, the Career Centre has gathered a variety of resources. You will find the following resources in the Career Resource Centre:

- ✓ List of employers who recruit on campus
- ✓ Information on specific employers and previous jobs posted by employers
- ✓ Directories of organizations (by sector and geographical location), for example:
  - Local directories
    - The Greater K-W Chamber of Commerce Business and Members Directory
    - 'Who's Who' in K-W
    - The Blue Book Directory of Community Services (Waterloo Region)
  - National or International directories
    - The Heritage Directory (Heritage Canada Foundation)
    - The National List of Advertisers
    - Directory of CA firms
    - Scott's
- ✓ Professional Associations

The Career Centre also hosts events to assist you in connecting with potential employer organizations. Events include:

- ✓ Annual Career Fair
- ✓ Annual Job Fair
- ✓ Recruiting Information Sessions
- ✓ Networking events (Careers In... events, for example)

### **Narrow Your Options**

The resources identified in the last section can assist you as you begin to conduct an active job search. As you review these resources, you should compile a list of potential organizations you would consider. If you are not certain where to begin, consider:

- ✓ The type of organization in which you would like to work
  - Large, medium, small; national, local; new, established
- ✓ Your geographic preference
  - Country, province, region; urban centre, small town
- ✓ Your chosen sector
  - Travel/tourism, social services, government, retail, manufacturing
- ✓ The types of products and services in which you are interested
  - Sports products, environmental products, financial services, social services
- ✓ Your own values
  - Are there certain ethics/values/practices/services which are important to you?

If you have an idea of the type of job in which you are interested, but not the sector, go back to your Career Profile and review your interests. For example, if your career choice includes marketing and your interests include the environment, you could target a marketing job with an organization which develops and markets environmentally-friendly products. If you are interested in a career in accounting and you like music, you could target an accounting job in a music distribution organization. It is important to think beyond the obvious (a marketing or accounting firm) and consider your interests when identifying potential target organizations.

To successfully complete this Step, you should be able to generate a list of specific target industries and organizations.

<b>Job Search Tips</b>	
➡	Target a type of career, job or department
➡	Target a specific industry
➡	Target specific geographic locations
➡	Target specific employers
➡	Target specific people in organizations

### **Working The Hidden Job Market**

Many job seekers find this step the most difficult. This component of the job search requires that you begin actively contacting individuals to inquire about potential employment opportunities. Many people revert to a passive job search at this stage. While they may have been active up to this point, once they have identified specific organizations, many people simply decide to send good resumés. Sending numerous unsolicited resumés is simply a targeted passive job search.

To conduct a truly active job search and effectively access the hidden job market (Stage 1, 2 and 3 of the job opening where approximately 75% of jobs are located), you must be prepared to contact people directly and become known as a person to them, not a piece of paper which crosses their desk.

### **How to Conduct an Active Job Search**

The best way to connect with people as part of an active job search is to meet people in person at events. This is not always possible but it should be a component of your on-going job search. However, if you cannot connect with people in person, you need to connect with people over the telephone.

## **Networking**

You have probably heard the expression 'it is not what you know, but it is who you know'. We prefer to say that 'it is not necessarily who you know, but who you can come to know' which makes the difference in successful networking.

### **Warm Contacts**

A successful network begins with warm contacts. Warm contacts are people you already know. Any person who knows your name is a warm contact. To begin to make warm contacts, sit down and create a list of people you know.

- Friends
- Your Teachers
- Professors
- Relatives
- Your Banker
- Classmates
- Neighbours
- People with whom you volunteer
- People on sports teams or community clubs

1. List the people you know
2. Create a warm contact call sheet (names and phone numbers)
3. Use warm contacts to generate additional warm contacts

Your contact list may include people you speak to every day, but perhaps you have never spoken specifically about your job search or career plans. People are generally willing to assist you if they are able, but if they do not know you need the assistance, they will be unable to provide you with tangible information.

### **5 Steps for Effective Networking**

#### **Step 1 - Set up a meeting**

- Call a person on your list and begin with the following:
- "Hi, Joan. I'm looking for employment (or looking to make a career move or trying to gather information) in the field of marketing. I was wondering if I could come by and talk with you."
- Remember, you are not asking for a job, just a meeting.

#### **Step 2 - Present yourself well**

- Prior to your meeting, prepare what you want to talk about. If the person is in the specific field or works for an organization you are considering, you should arrive at the meeting with knowledge of the field or of the specific organization. You should have an idea of why you are meeting with this person and what information you hope to gather.
- Your goal for the meeting is to gather information.
- It is appropriate to leave a copy of your resumé.

### **Step 3 - Leave with new contact names**

- Be focused on building your network. Prior to the completion of each network contact (in person or telephone), you should always request names of other contacts.
- Three questions to ask to get a referral name
  1. Do you know of anyone who might have an opening for a person with my skills?
  2. Do you know of anyone else who might be aware of an opening?
  3. Do you know someone who is very involved in the community who might be able to refer me to others?

### **Step 4 - Follow up on all referrals**

- When you ask a contact person for another name, you should also ask if you may use that person's name when contacting the new referral. When you call the new person, indicate who provided you with the contact name.
- Following up on referrals

“Hello, Ms. Smith, my name is Mary Reid. I am a friend of Joan Lawson. I was speaking with Joan and she suggested that I call you. I am a recent Communication Studies graduate from Laurier and I am looking for a marketing position. Joan suggested that you might be an excellent person with whom to talk.”

### **Step 5 - Thank You**

- You should always thank your network contacts for taking the time to meet with you.
- A simple thank-you note makes a professional impression.
- Keep your contacts informed of your progress.
- Inform your initial network contact when you follow up with a referral.

adapted from **The Very Quick Job Search**, by M. Farr

## **Cold Contacts**

Ideally, you want to use your warm contacts to reduce the number of cold contacts you need to make. A cold contact is a person whom you do not know or who has been referred by another contact. Although the majority of people do not enjoy making cold calls to generate contacts, it is a very effective job search and networking tool.

### **Identifying Cold Contacts**

- ✓ Utilize directories, professional associations, even the Yellow Pages, to compile a list of organizations.
- ✓ Conduct research to identify specific people who work in these organizations.

- Review organization websites for contact names.
  - Read press releases from the organization or on the Internet.
  - Review local or national newspapers for articles on the organization.
  - Contact local libraries for company information.
  - Read trade or industry magazine articles to gather names.
- ✓ Create a list of contacts (names, contact information, organization information).

## **Alumni Contacts**

To assist you in researching specific occupations and organizations, Laurier has a resource developed of alumni who are willing to share information on their careers and/or organizations. Alumni from a variety of disciplines and occupational areas participate in the program. The ASK (Alumni Sharing Knowledge) program is a searchable database you can access through the Career Centre's website. Contact the Career Centre for more information on this resource.

If you are unable to locate an individual's name through the methods listed above, you may have to contact the organization directly.

## **Attend Networking Events**

When possible, make every effort to seek out and attend professional or community events. These events provide you with an opportunity to connect with relevant professionals. These professional events could include Laurier-sponsored events such as Career Fair or Job Fair, Recruiting Information Sessions held by employers interested in recruiting Laurier students and alumni and other similar events. Attendance at these events is an excellent starting place, but these events represent only a fraction of the number of professional events available in the community.

A quick review of the local newspaper may reveal a range of other events in your community. For example, once weekly the Business section of **The Record** includes a list of upcoming business and professional events such as:

- ✓ Chamber of Commerce Networking Breakfasts
- ✓ K-W Business Women's Meetings
- ✓ Communitel Luncheons (a local hi-tech professional organization)
- ✓ IABC (International Association of Business Communicators) Meetings
- ✓ and more

These types of events can serve two key purposes. First, you can gain information about a career and an industry and second, you can make specific connections with individuals who work in these careers or industries. Many of these organizations have membership fees at a reduced rate for students or allow you to attend specific events without being a member (you may have to pay a nominal fee to attend an event).

## Working the Room

Here are a few key tips on how to effectively work a room at a networking event.

### Introductions and Greetings

- Be prepared to approach others, introduce yourself and begin conversations.
- Always smile, extend your right hand for a firm handshake and establish eye contact.
- Personal distance in North America is 18 inches.
- Introduce yourself using your full name and the title and last name of the other person.
- Prepare a greeting and benefit statement:

“Good evening Ms. \_\_\_\_\_. My name is Kelly Smith and I am in my final year at Wilfrid Laurier University studying \_\_\_\_\_. I was very pleased to learn that your organization would be represented here this evening. I enjoyed your presentation and was interested in learning about your new initiatives.”

- When approaching a group of two or more people, introduce yourself first to the person of the highest status, then continue introductions right to left. If their status is unknown, speak first to the most senior person. If age is not apparent, introduce yourself to women first.
- When introducing others, always introduce the person lower in status to the person higher in status. Draw the new person into the conversation. For example:

“Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, I would like to introduce Robyn Jones. Robyn is a classmate at Wilfrid Laurier University. Robyn, (or Ms. Jones, depending on familiarity) this is Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ from ABC Company. Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ and I were just discussing \_\_\_\_\_.”

- If you are seated and you are approached by another person, stand up. You may invite the person to sit with you; if the person declines, remain standing.

At this time present a little more information about your skills and what you have to offer. Be prepared to discuss your main qualifications very briefly.

### Effective Mingling

- Do not monopolize one person’s time; try to limit a conversation to 10 minutes.
- To end a conversation, excuse yourself, thank the person for his/her time, shake hands and withdraw. You may say something like:

“Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me, Ms. \_\_\_\_\_. You have been very generous with your time, but I do not want to monopolize your evening. Would you mind if I contacted you in the future?”

- When accepting a business card, look at the card and place it in a predesignated place (do

not place cards in your back pocket). Consider purchasing a business card holder.

#### Leaving an Event

- Be prepared to leave on time (as indicated on the invitation). Seek out the host and thank him/her before leaving.
- If you must leave early, seek out the host, thank him/her and apologize for leaving early.

Networking is a skill which you can develop with practice. You do not have to be the most outgoing person to network effectively. Be prepared to approach people and introduce yourself. In the end, you want to leave with at least one contact name and permission to call the person at a future time.

#### Develop A Networking Card

A Networking, Prospecting or Contact Card is an effective tool for providing people with your name and contact information when a resumé is not appropriate. A networking card is similar to a business card in that it contains your name, contact information and area of interest.



When you are in your graduating year, or if you are a recent graduate, you may include your graduation date and name of the university on the card. If you are a current student, you could indicate your degree and major (BA, Communication Studies).

You can vary the layout and fonts, add colour and even some simple graphics (depending on the field or industry). If you have access to a good quality printer, you can buy business card stock from an office supply store and print your own cards. If you do have access to a printer, you could print a small number of cards (each with a slightly different field or job objective).

It is appropriate to offer your card at either the beginning or end of the conversation. The card is something people may keep, whereas they might discard a resumé if no opportunities exist at the time. You may even attach these cards to your resumé, take them along to Job Fair or Career Fair or hand them out at the end of an interview.

## **Social or Online Community Networks**

Another component of effective networking is using your online presence, your social network, as a way of connecting with potential contacts. Whether you are using Facebook, IM or other electronic media, remember, you are not asking for a job, you are asking to connect to people who are connected to other people or organizations within your desired area of interest. Unlike when you are speaking to individuals within your personal community network, where you are asking for names of people so you can connect with them yourself, on your electronic social network you are often going to have your 'request' posted or forwarded for others to see. In this case, you want to control the message as much as possible and provide a little detail about who you are and what you are seeking. To this end, you want to create a very brief 'broadcast statement' of between three and five sentences. For example:

'Looking for someone within the community services career field! Highly motivated and creative Psychology student, about to graduate from university in April 2009, with a background that includes solid experience in community outreach and program development, seeking to connect with someone who works within the Waterloo Region or Southwestern Ontario in a community-based service organization.'

What is your online presence? If you are using Facebook or other social media, you want to ensure your online profile is professional and provides the right image about who you are and what you have to offer. Have you searched yourself lately? Are your postings on blogs and other sites reflective of the person you want to present? What image are you presenting to a potential employer? Check out Digital Tattoo, <http://digitaltattoo.ubc.ca>, for more information on protecting your online profile. Have you heard of LinkedIn? Check it out on the Web also and see if this networking tool is right for you.

As with any networking process, the responsibility to continue the contact remains with the job seeker. You will want to follow up with your contacts and not assume that because you provided your contact information, they will follow up with you. You are responsible for developing and nurturing each contact.

## **Volunteering in the Community**

Volunteering in the community or with any organization or group is an excellent way to build your network. If you are not already volunteering with an organization (usually a not-for-profit organization), you should consider this option. Volunteering works well as a career research tool and it is also an effective networking technique.

As a way of developing skills, you may be interested in contacting private (for-profit) or government businesses and offering to volunteer your services. For-profit businesses may not be as receptive to hiring volunteers. Although you can try this approach, do not be discouraged or take their rejection personally if your request is unsuccessful.

You should strongly consider selecting a volunteer opportunity where you can develop skills relevant to your career choice. Try to select a volunteer opportunity which enables you to work in a professional capacity. When selecting volunteer opportunities, keep in mind that you are trying to gain skills and make contacts. This may involve volunteering in a capacity which enables you to make decisions, manage, plan or organize events. Keep this in mind as you search for volunteer positions.

Laurier students can access volunteer opportunities in the local community through an online database at <[www.wlu.ca/volunteer](http://www.wlu.ca/volunteer)>. The Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union also coordinates a program for students interested in volunteering. There is also a resource called the 'Blue Book', also referred to as the 'Directory of Social Service Agencies' for the Waterloo Region, which contains lists of community organizations. Most communities will have similar resources which can be located at a local library.

### **Newspaper and Magazine Research**

Although many job seekers consult the newspaper when seeking employment, they do not always see possibilities beyond the classified ad section. An excellent source of job search leads in your community can be found by reviewing a variety of sections in the newspaper. For example, an article in the local news section may discuss the opening of a new food bank or community centre, or perhaps a small local company recently won an award or launched a new service. There may be no mention of job openings in these articles, but you now have a name of an organization, some information or news about the organization and perhaps a contact name. You can use this information to access the hidden job market in your community.

Be creative in your search. You may read an article about a city council meeting where a developer requested a zone change to develop a business at a certain site. While reading, ask yourself what opportunities this may provide. Perhaps the developer is building a retirement complex. In addition to building the facility, there may be opportunities for individuals with business backgrounds (managing the development, budget, marketing the facility, finding investors), as well as social services and humanities opportunities (planning and organizing activities, working with community members, recruiting volunteers and fundraising). There may be many more opportunities if you try to think about how your skills and career options may be applied to the information you have gathered.

Another excellent source of professional or contact information is professional magazines. There may be local, regional or national magazines relevant to your career field. For example, each year the advertising industry publishes a glossy magazine of the previous year's advertising award winners. If you were interested in an advertising career, you could use the information from this magazine to identify and develop job leads. When you contact an organization, you can 'break the ice' by mentioning their award. When you demonstrate this type of initiative, you may find that you make a very positive impression on potential employers.

## Organizing Your Job Search

Take a systematic approach to your job search. Plan your activities in a logical sequence and record your progress. You do not need to spend every day of every week on all tasks. Develop a monthly or weekly schedule of activities and incorporate goals or targets. For example:

- **Friday** - Every Friday afternoon (which is usually not a good day for making initial contacts with employers), go to the local library and review local newspapers and magazines or employer and/or professional directories. You could set a goal of identifying 10 new potential employers each week.
- **Monday** - You could spend Monday conducting more in-depth research on the 10 organizations you have selected, i.e., review their websites).
- **Tuesday** - Every Tuesday you could plan on making 10 cold calls to the organizations you previously researched (some people find it easier to make many of these calls all at once, instead of anticipating making the cold calls every day).
- **Wednesday** - Each Wednesday you could work on your job search and career material.
- **Thursday** - You could set aside every Thursday to try to arrange meetings with contacts and place follow-up calls to people you have tried calling previously.

Obviously, this is a very simple and brief example of a plan of action. You should design a plan which works best with your schedule. You do not need to spend seven hours a day, five days a week job searching, but you should spend some time several days a week if you want to enhance your chances of finding employment. A goal of 10 new contacts and 10 follow-up contacts in a week is a realistic goal in many industries (some job seekers have set goals of over 25 a week and found this manageable). The key is to devise a plan with which you are comfortable and goals which are realistic and challenging.

## Effective Telephone Contacts

As effective as meeting people at events can be, you will not always have such opportunities. A very important and effective component of your job search must also include contacting people by using the telephone. Sometimes it may be your only option, but it should not be your first option.

Once you have identified a potential employer and conducted some initial research, your next step should be to contact an individual within the organization either by telephone or in person. Do not simply mail out a resumé and cover letter. This is not an effective job search technique. You can send out hundreds of unsolicited resúmes and receive very little response. It is easier for a potential employer to discard a piece of paper than it is to ignore an individual. Person-to-person contact, in person or over the telephone, should be your goal.

## 5 Steps for Effective Telephone Calls

### **Step 1 Set up an effective and organized system**

- ✓ make a list of the organizations you want to contact
- ✓ track your phone calls; keep a record of who you called and when you called
- ✓ conduct initial research on the organization

### **Step 2 Select specific times to call**

- ✓ the best times to call are usually between 9:00 and 11:30 a.m., and 1:30 and 4 p.m.
- ✓ the best days to call are Monday to Thursday
- ✓ you do not have to call every day of the week; you may want to make initial cold calls every Tuesday and Thursday morning so you do not have to face the prospect of calling every day

### **Step 3 Set a goal for the number of calls you want to make each week**

- ✓ set a goal for the initial number of new contacts
- ✓ set a goal for the number of follow-up phone calls

### **Step 4 Prepare a Benefit Statement**

- ✓ your benefit statement may vary, depending on the type of call you are making
- ✓ sample benefit statements are provided in the next few pages

### **Step 5 Ask for a meeting or a visit, not for a job**

- ✓ when you are speaking on the phone, your first goal is to set up a meeting or a visit (similar to the informational interview)
- ✓ your second goal is to ask for permission to send a resumé
- ✓ your third goal is to ask for additional contact names

If you have been fortunate enough to locate the name of an individual at an organization (as a result of networking or other research), do call and connect with this person. If you do not have a specific name, then you should ask for this information during your initial contact with an organization.

The immediate goal of the phone call is to demonstrate your professionalism and briefly communicate your skills. The overall goal of the call is to arrange a personal meeting.

If you do not have a specific contact name, select a department in which you are interested. Call the department directly, or if you do not have a direct number, call the main line. The following is a sample of what you might say in the initial phone call:

“Good morning. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am interested in gathering some information on your \_\_\_\_\_ department and I was wondering who would be the appropriate person with whom to speak.”

If you are asked, “Is this regarding employment?”, respond as follows:

“Although I am not inquiring about employment at this time, I am conducting research on various organizations, including yours, for future reference. However, I may be interested in future employment. At that time, whom would you suggest I contact?”

You do not want to say that you are looking for employment if you can avoid it. However, you may be inquiring about employment in the future, and as a result, you do not want to mislead the person on the telephone.

### **Making the First Contact**

1. To begin, make a list of organizations, companies, agencies and people of interest.
2. Prepare yourself to make the phone call. Have your list of names nearby, have a pen and paper to record information (if you use a computer you need to avoid entering data while you are speaking to the person on the phone as this is considered poor etiquette). You should have gathered some information on the industry and organization prior to your phone call. Have this information nearby as you make the call.
3. Prepare a telephone script. See script suggestion below and sample questions on page 6.
4. Make the call. You may be transferred from person to person. Be pleasant and patient with everyone, even if they are not. If you call and a receptionist answers the phone, begin by identifying who you are and to whom you wish to speak (either the contact person’s name or the name of the department). If you are asked about the nature of your call, state that you are hoping your target person will assist you with your research.

#### **Sample Telephone Script**

**NOTE:** Prepare a script so that you have a clear idea of what you want to say when you make the telephone call. DO NOT memorize or read your script.

“Good morning/afternoon, Mr. or Ms. (person’s name). My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a student at Wilfrid Laurier University and am currently conducting research on a variety of careers (or organizations) within the \_\_\_\_\_ field. One of the occupations (organizations) which is of interest to me is \_\_\_\_\_. I am interested in talking to people like you who are knowledgeable in this field (or about your organization) in order to learn more about my options. Would it be possible to set up an appointment to meet with you for 15 minutes so I could ask you a few questions about the \_\_\_\_\_ field (or your organization)?”

**IF NO:** Could you possibly give me the name of someone who might be able to help me with this research?

If you get the name of another contact, use the provider's name:

"Good morning, (person's name). My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I was recently speaking with (contact's name) of ABC company and he/she suggested that you might be able to help me with some research I am conducting (information I am seeking). I am a student at Laurier...."

Email Contact: You should include similar information if communication by email is required. The email should always be formal and professional. Introduce yourself, indicate your interest in the organization, refer to your attempt to contact the person by phone and indicate he/she is welcome to follow up by email or telephone, whichever is more convenient.

Tip: Make a few practice calls before calling your first-choice organization. Place your first few phone calls to organizations which are not as high on your list.

### **Navigating Voice Mail/Leaving Messages**

1. If the target person to whom you wish to speak is not available, or if you are connected to voice mail, leave your name and number and the purpose of your call. Indicate that **you will** phone back (do not give up control of the contact). Plan on phoning back within two to five days. If possible, find out from reception when would be a good time to call the person.
2. If, when you call back, you are still unable to speak to the target person, leave a slightly more detailed (but brief) message (include a summary of your benefit statement). Indicate you are sorry you have not been able to connect with the person. Tell the person you will either call again and indicate a **specific time** when **you** will call back or indicate you will follow up with email, if your research suggests this is appropriate for the industry. For example, indicate that you will call back Monday morning (within five working days). Make note of this time and date on your contact sheet. Ask the person to let you know if this is acceptable or if they could suggest an alternate time.

Tip: Try scheduling follow-up calls for the same day(s) each week. For example, you could schedule first phone calls on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and place follow-up calls on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. This pattern will assist you in being better organized.

3. If the person does not call you to suggest an alternate time, you should now place the call as you indicated.

4. When you place this call and the person is again unavailable, leave a message indicating that you realize the person is very busy. Tell the person that you will **send some email correspondence** (or regular mail if you do not have an email address) for his/her consideration. Invite the person to call you after he/she has reviewed your material.
5. Send an email (or letter of introduction immediately). Mention the attempted phone calls in the letter. Request a response verifying that your email was received. If you mailed a letter, follow up with a phone call a few days after the letter should have arrived and refer to the letter (in the letter, indicate that you will follow up and also invite the person to call you).

Note: You may find that you have to contact individuals several times and/or contact several people before you are granted a meeting. Although you do not want to become an annoyance, you do want to demonstrate your interest. Three or four phone calls over a one to three week period is acceptable.

### Difficult Phone Calls

Most of the time you will have no trouble. However, sometimes things do go wrong. You may get transferred from one person to another and never reach the person with the information. The person you reach may be unable to meet with you or may not have the answers you need. Always ask for a referral to someone else, e.g., "Do you know of anyone I could contact who might be able to help me with this research/my inquiries?" If you continue to get no co-operation or information, your best course is to remain polite but do not pursue that person/organization for now. Since you have prepared a list of several people/organizations to contact, simply go on to the next one on your list.

**Don't give up!** This is a critical tool for making career decisions and conducting a successful job search. You **will** find people who are willing to help you.

### Speaking to a Contact

1. Once connected to your target person, politely identify yourself and explain the purpose of your call. Offer your benefit statement. Ask if the person might have 15 minutes to meet with you (in person) to answer some of your questions (see the sample telephone script). Have a copy of your resumé in front of you in the event that the contact person asks specific questions.
2. Always try to set up a face-to-face appointment. You want to see the environment and be identified by your face and your personality. If an on-site appointment is

absolutely impossible, you may request a telephone meeting (this is not nearly as effective as person-to-person contact).

3. If asked, do provide a suggestion for a date and time for the meeting (so think of this ahead of time). Be flexible; remember the contact is doing **you** a favour. Make yourself available and set up an appointment time convenient to you both.

### **Meeting with a Contact Person**

1. Before going to the meeting, prepare a list of questions to take along so that you do not forget any important points. Without stopping the flow of the conversation, take notes to better remember what is being said. Practice good listening habits.
2. Be prepared to answer questions about yourself and provide reasons for your interest in this field/career/organization which demonstrate your relevant knowledge.
3. Do not overstay your welcome. If you agreed to 15 minutes, track the time, indicate when 15 minutes have passed and be prepared to leave.
4. Thank the person for his/her time and ask if he/she can suggest anyone else in the field (preferably another organization) whom you could interview to gather additional information.
5. Building a network is important, but maintaining it is **crucial**. Always ask the person if you may contact him/her again once you have made your career decision and begin an active job search. If the response is positive, be sure to call back and let the person know your current status.

When speaking with potential contacts on the phone if they are not willing to meet with you, ask for suggestions of others in the organization or industry in general. If they do not want to pass along names, then ask for suggested professional associations, magazines, discussion groups, websites and so forth that are relevant for the industry

### **Professional Follow-up**

1. Always send a brief letter (not email) thanking the people with whom you have met for the time they spent and the information they were able to provide. Mention something you learned or found interesting about the meeting.
2. If the contact provided you with leads (names of other contacts, associations, ideas for research and further training or ideas about resources), once you have had an opportunity to act on these leads you should also re-connect with the contact and let him/her know you followed up and provide feedback on how useful you found the resource (positive feedback only).

### **Cold Calling Goals**

Remember the '5 Steps for Effective Networking' on pages 18 and 19? The goal of a network contact is to meet in person. The goal of a cold contact is to get a **YES**

- ✓ Yes to a meeting
- ✓ Yes to providing you with additional referrals or information
- ✓ Yes to future contact

*This is how you build your network.*

### **Getting Past Reception**

If you are having difficulty getting past the receptionist in an organization, here are a few tips:

- Know the name of the person you are calling.
- Ask for the proper spelling of the name of the person in charge of the department. Indicate that you are sending some correspondence to this person.
- Try calling at lunch or before or after regular business hours (when the receptionist may not be around).
- Try to find the direct number to a specific department and call the department directly.
- When you call, ask to speak to someone in the \_\_\_\_\_ department (do not ask for the manager). Indicate you have some questions about the department (or a product or a service, which is true). When you are connected with the department, ask the person who answers for the name of the manager.

### **Alternative Approaches**

If you know your industry, you may be able to generate additional, creative approaches to making contact. If you are struggling to make contact, here are a few other approaches you could try:

- Try dropping by without an appointment (you must look professional). Ask to speak to the manager for a few moments. In this situation, you are trying to set up a meeting, but you are not expecting a meeting on the spot. However, be prepared to meet with the person in the event that he or she is willing to do so.
- If you cannot get any names or make any phone contact, send a letter requesting a meeting.
- If you have an email address, try setting up a meeting via email (do not send your resumé with the request for a meeting).
- Create an interesting proposal or interesting material and send this to the organization to try to draw attention. Whatever you do should make sense for the industry. For example, if you were interested in a marketing position, you could design a resumé in the style of a brochure.

### **Target People In Decision-Making Roles**

When you select people to approach, you want to contact people in the position to make decisions. Do not be hesitant to contact very senior people in organizations. You can contact Directors, CEOs, Department Heads and even Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

When you contact a senior person, however, you are not requesting an opportunity to meet with that person. You want to ask for a suggestion from that person as to whom in their department or organization you could speak. In many cases they will provide you with a lead or pass your name along to another person for a response. In some cases they will be impressed enough by your initiative to offer to speak to you themselves.

### **Successful Interviewing**

After all of the work you have put into your job search, you must be able to interview well to be successful. To assist you in succeeding in the interview, The Career Centre offers a variety of resources and information. In addition to written material including books and a free **Interview Guidebook** developed by the Career Centre, videos, DVDs and workshops on this topic are available. You are also welcome to make an appointment with a career consultant to discuss how to prepare for an interview (interview coaching) and/or request a video-taped mock interview practice session.

## **STEP 5 → FOLLOW-UP**

Any time you speak or meet with an individual during your job search, you should be prepared to follow up and keep in touch with your contacts to let them know how you are progressing. If you add something to your repertoire (for example, if you complete a certification course or begin volunteering with an organization), you may use this as an opportunity to reconnect with a previous contact person. Perhaps you will add this information to your resumé. You can then re-connect by sending your contacts an updated resumé.

### **Ongoing Follow up**

Continue to stay in touch via phone or email. You should reconnect at least once per year and more if something professional has changed in your life (for example, you found a new job or you completed additional training).

It is also appropriate to reconnect if you hear of some 'big news' about the organization (positive news) or the industry (new innovations, new requirements or a new professional association).

You may also reconnect if you are asking professional advice. Perhaps you learned of a new industry magazine or website and want the person's input on whether it is a valuable resource in the industry.

## Thank-you Letters

When an individual provides you with time or information, it is appropriate to demonstrate your professionalism by following up with a thank-you letter or card. A thank-you card should not contain a lot of information; it is not a cover letter. The purpose of the thank-you card is to demonstrate your professionalism and to let the contact person know you appreciated his/her efforts. Below you will find an example of a thank-you card.

### **Subsequent Thank-You Letters**

Once you have an established connection with a contact, you do not need to be as formal with every subsequent thank you. You may send an email or even phone them and thank them for ongoing assistance and information. If your contact initiates a contact by sending you information or names, then it is very important that you immediately respond to their contact and that you do follow up on their suggestions in a reasonable time frame (within 7-14 days). Once you have followed up, reconnect with them briefly and let them know you have followed through and the results (if any) of your actions.

<b>Sample Thank-You Card</b>	
Date	
Dear Mr. Smith:	
	I wanted to express my appreciation for the time you spent meeting with me last Monday. I know that you have a very busy schedule and I am grateful that you were able to take the time to talk to me about _____ (your company or a career in advertising...).
	I enjoyed learning about _____ and _____. I think it is interesting that _____ (mention something the person told you). Thank you for suggesting that I speak with Mary Jones at _____. I have placed a call to Ms. Jones and am hopeful that I will have an opportunity to meet with her in the near future.
	I am confident that the information you provided will assist me with my future plans. Again, thank you for your time. I look forward to speaking to you again in the future.
Sincerely,	
Your name	

# Unique Job Searching Situations

## Job Search Tips for Working Abroad

Whether you want paid jobs or volunteer experience, short-term jobs or long-term career moves, international experience is a great addition to your repertoire. Before you begin, it is important to know that other countries have different expectations and requirements with regards to how you apply, what information you need to provide and what will happen to you on the job. In Canada, for example, potential employers are not allowed to ask questions about your age, marital status, religious affiliations, sexual preferences, health issues and so on. In other countries this is not always the case. You will need to be aware of cultural expectations, your rights and how to protect yourself before seeking to work abroad. For specific information on this topic, it is important that you do your homework. The Career Centre can provide you with some of this information and it is a good idea to make an appointment to discuss these issues.

If you are seeking work abroad, there are a few questions you should consider before you begin and before you make an appointment to see a career consultant.

- What type of work/internship/volunteer opportunity do you wish to pursue?
- How long do you plan to be away and where do you wish to work?
- Do you require language skills? TESL certification?
- Do you want a job or placement which relates to your career goals?
- Do you need to be paid and if so, how much?

## **Key Steps for Working Abroad**

### **Step 1. Research and Decision Making**

You should begin by thinking and making decisions about yourself and your options. Answer the questions asked above and use this to conduct research on your options. When making your decisions, you should be aware of and keep in mind issues such as travel advisories, costs, security, health warnings and economic and political reports before you make any decisions.

Information on travelling and living in other countries can be found on a variety of websites including <[www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca)>. The Career Centre has posted a list of some resources you may find useful on our website. As part of your research, take the time to talk to other students or professionals who have worked or volunteered abroad. Many organizations can provide you with a list of alumni who can provide you with first-hand information.

Check out 'The Big Guide to Living and Working Overseas' <[www.workingoverseas.com/wlu](http://www.workingoverseas.com/wlu)>; sign up with your Laurier email address. This guide is the most comprehensive online guide for international information which includes directories for international organizations, NGOs and internships, and resources to help build international experience.

## **Volunteering vs Working Abroad**

As part of this step, you should research whichever option you are considering and learn about the pros and cons of each option. For example, some volunteer positions or internships not only do not pay you any money, but may also require that you pay money for the opportunity. Research these carefully.

Some volunteering/interning abroad options to consider include:

- CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) at <[www.acdi-cida.gc.ca](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca)>
- Idealist at <[www.idealist.org](http://www.idealist.org)>
- Transitions Abroad at <[www.transitionsabroad.com](http://www.transitionsabroad.com)>
- AFS Interculture Canada at <[www.afs.org/AFSI](http://www.afs.org/AFSI)>
- SWAP - Student Work Abroad Program at <[www.swap.ca](http://www.swap.ca)>

## **Teaching English Abroad**

For the most part, you do not teach English abroad to make money, you do it to gain skills and experience travelling and living in a different culture. There are many quality opportunities and experiences available to those interested in teaching abroad. However, like everything else, you need to do your homework and be cautious. Contracts usually range in length from one to two years. Some positions may require specific certification and training such as TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language); visit <[www.teslontario.org](http://www.teslontario.org)>, but some do not. For some positions you must simply have an undergraduate degree in any subject.

Most opportunities for teaching English abroad are in Asia. There may be opportunities in other countries including Africa and South America and even some parts of Europe, but these are not the norm and are limited and more difficult to locate. If you are considering teaching abroad, there are organizations that you can work through which are organized and offer specific placements. For any organization you select, ask to speak to alumni of their program. Also, check with the Canadian consulate in the country to learn of any reports of problems with the organization and to ensure the information you have been given is accurate.

## **Working Abroad**

Every country varies in the types of job they will allow non-residents to obtain. In some countries you may be allowed to work in service industry jobs (such as wait staff and domestic work) without a work visa for a limited amount of time. In other countries you will be required to obtain work permits and even then, may be limited to certain jobs. Some countries will require that you have an offer of employment (and even a written contract or letter) before issuing a permit or visa.

If you are searching for work abroad, you should approach the search similarly to your Canadian search. You should identify target jobs in target industries in specific geographic locations. You could identify specific employers and contact them prior to relocating. There are job posting engines you can also search (visit the Career Centre's website for examples of these sites).

## Step 2. Planning and Preparation

The more time you allow yourself to plan and prepare, the more successful and less stressful this process will be. There are a variety of issues you will need to research and consider.

- 1 Do you have a valid passport? Be aware that some countries want a passport that you have had for at least 6 months and that has over 6 months left before it expires.
- 2 Do you need a visa to enter the country? Visas vary in length and may not be renewable from within a country. You need to ensure your visa will allow you to stay your desired length of time.
- 3 Do you need a work permit? You should check with the country and not take the employer's word for this. Even if you are volunteering or working service industry jobs on a type of working holiday, you may need to obtain a work visa or you could find yourself in trouble, deported or even jailed.

It may take some time to obtain a visa or work permit. You need to check with the consulate or embassy of the country (some of this information is online) to which you are travelling to find out how long you might have to wait to get a permit.

You might also want to consider the following:

- Proof of emergency funds
- International driver's licence
- International student's card
- Additional life and health insurance
- Some countries require proof of immunizations 3 to 6 months prior to your trip

Check with <[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)> and the individual consulates or embassies for more information.

Before you travel it is a good idea to plan for issues of safety and notification. You should leave a detailed itinerary and contact information with several people. Provide friends and family with the travel address of your international location. Take with you a list of key contacts (i.e., the Canadian consulate). Take photocopies of key documents such as your passport, health and insurance policy information (you might also leave this information with family or friends).

When you are planning to travel you should inform and then register with Canadian Foreign Affairs, especially if you are planning on staying longer than three months or are working in a country that has a travel advisory or security concerns. Also consider registering with the police if there is not a Canadian consulate in the immediate region.

### **Step 3. Preparing your International Portfolio**

Once you have an idea of what types of opportunities you are seeking and in what countries, you are ready to put together your job search portfolio. This portfolio will contain information based on the research you have conducted, including information on requirements and contacts. It should also include traditional job search materials such as resumés, references, work samples and so on. Conduct research to determine the expectations of employers in other countries and prepare materials based on these expectations.

Gaining international experience can have excellent benefits. However, as with any job search, the more prepared and informed you are, and the more targeted you are, the more likely you are to be successful.

### **The Academic Job Search**

There are similarities between a general job search and searching for work as an academic in a university or college setting. Although you already know your job and industry targets, you still need to consider geographic locations, identify specific employer targets, learn about hiring practices in the industry and connect with specific individuals. Effective job searching methods and application procedures vary from faculty to faculty, institution to institution and country to country. Some faculties and institutions have specific hiring timelines. In Canadian universities, jobs are commonly posted in the fall, with deadlines in November and December, interviewing early in the new year and offers made in April or May with start dates in early July (this is not always the case in the US or abroad). In general, your preparation for obtaining your job should begin about two years before you want employment. Some employers will hire ABD (All-But-Dissertation) students, but others may not. Seek out opportunities to attend conferences in your field to make initial connections prior to applying. Contact faculty at other institutions to learn about their programs and make connections before applying. Gain teaching experience whenever possible and participate on departmental committees (such as hiring committees and curriculum development committees) while you are a student.

Did you know that according to the AUCC <[www.aucc.ca/](http://www.aucc.ca/)>, the majority of PhD students who graduate in Canada each year do not obtain employment in academia? Research indicates that there are not enough new Canadian PhD students to replace existing faculty and keep up with growth in student demand and that by 2011 Canada will face a challenge in recruitment and retention of university faculty.

For more information on conducting an academic job search and for information on successful interviews, the Career Centre has developed a series of resources which include information on job searching, how to put together your portfolio including resumé and CV writing, teaching and research philosophies and specific interview tips and questions related to different interview audiences, and lists of academic information and posting sites. There are additional resources in the Career Centre and you can meet with a career consultant for personal assistance.

## **Barriers to Job Searching**

(Including personal, family, health, disability and other potential issues)

Effective job searching takes time and effort. An effective job search can be made more difficult if you face challenges which may limit your opportunities to find and accept work and put barriers in the way of your success. There are a range of issues which can result in barriers to effective job searching. For example, you might have constraints on where you can live, you might have a family member with needs that limit your availability and flexibility, or you may have personal issues, learning difficulties or mental and physical challenges which make the process of searching more difficult. Part of your job search strategy may require altering your approach or your targets to increase your effectiveness. You may need to be aware of your options and your rights and be aware of the services and resources available to you in your job search.

To assist you in identifying the potential impact of these barriers and identifying how to manage these issues, the Career Centre has gathered resources and information for you to access. In addition you can book an appointment with a career consultant to assist you in developing strategies. A common question asked by job seekers who face extra barriers is around the issue of disclosing information. On the Career Centre's website, there is a resource you can access which contains some general tips and strategies for addressing potential barriers with employers, <[www.mylaurier.ca/career/students](http://www.mylaurier.ca/career/students)>.

## **International Students Searching for Work in Canada**

As an international student, you may not be familiar with how to conduct an effective job search in Canada. Whether you are looking for work on a part-time basis to support yourself during your studies or a job upon graduation, there are resources and services available to you in the Career Centre. Some employers may not understand, be aware of or may even be wary of the issues surrounding hiring an international student. It is important for you to be aware of your options and your rights and be informed so you can address these issues when speaking to employers. Depending on your circumstances and status, there may be many options for you. For information on your rights and options, you can check out the Government of Canada Citizenship and Immigration information for students website at <[www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work.asp)>.

If you have concerns around cultural questions or issues, you can ask a career consultant for information on how to plan for and manage these issues. Perhaps there are certain days or hours in the week when you cannot work; maybe you have restrictions on the types of situations you can be in or the type of tasks you can undertake. Do not let these issues hinder your ability to find and keep employment. If you are unfamiliar with Canadian etiquette, how to manage interactions with potential employers, how to interact with co-workers and how to fit into a Canadian work environment, the Career Centre offers resources, individual appointments and some workshops to help you prepare for these situations.

If you are looking to gain Canadian experience, but cannot find paid employment which suits your needs, you may be able to locate unpaid or volunteer positions where you can gain the skills and experience you need to transition into paid employment. Know your options and begin preparing as soon as you arrive.

## **Final Tips**

### **✓ Do your homework**

- Know yourself
- Know your career
- Know the labour market
- Know the organizations you want to target

### **✓ Organize your job search**

- Set goals and plan your job search schedule
- Compile job search material (resumés, letters, references, etc.)
- Identify potential contacts
- Track your contacts and the outcome of your contacts

### **✓ Build your network**

- Let people know you are searching
- Develop a Networking Card and a Benefit Statement
- Identify events and professional activities you plan on attending

### **✓ Be pro-active**

## Job Searching Checklist

Looking for a job is like anything else - there are things you can do to make it easier. The list below is a great way to get started and keep track of your progress. By following these steps you are more likely to increase your chances of finding a suitable job in the shortest time possible.

✓ Checklist For Success	Target Dates
✓ Identify the specific types of jobs you are seeking based on your skills, interests preferences and future relevance - job targeting is very important	
✓ Identify what you have to offer an employer by having a clear understanding of your transferable skills - you have to know yourself to sell yourself	
✓ Develop an organized action plan with weekly timelines and goals - think of your job search like a project with research, assignments and deadlines	
✓ Seek out assistance in your job search - do not be a passive job searcher	
✓ Update or prepare a quality, targeted resumé(s) - <i>it is a key marketing tool</i>	
✓ Ask past employers, faculty, people with whom you volunteer and others to act as references or for letters of recommendation - remind them of your top skills and qualities	
✓ Develop a list of potential employers - identify specific industries/fields/sectors of interest and specific geographic locations; then you can identify specific employers	
✓ Search out job leads and research organizations by networking with contacts in business and industry, other students, friends, family, faculty, people with whom you volunteer and others - check out the Career Centre's ASK (Alumni Sharing Knowledge) program	
✓ Identify and contact people in the position to make a hiring decision or who can refer you to other people who can make hiring decisions - do not ask for a job; ask for information and indicate that you want to learn about the organization or a career	
✓ Prepare suitable and targeted cover letters for each specific job - you have to connect specifically with an employer in your cover letter; form letters will not do	
✓ Keep in touch with your contacts and keep a file for relevant research materials - do not miss out on future opportunities by losing touch with past contacts	
✓ Prepare for interviews by researching organizations, identifying your transferable skills and practicing your answers - the more you know yourself and the better you know the job, the better able you are to connect these in the interview	
✓ Follow up on all contacts or leads (in person or over the phone) - do not wait for people to contact you; conduct an active search and be in charge of your success	
✓ Always remember to thank anyone who has been of assistance or interviewed you with a thank-you letter - a thank you today may lead to an opportunity tomorrow	

**For assistance with your job search, the Career Centre offers a variety of resources including workshops, guidebooks, videos/DVDs and appointments with career consultants.**