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Conducting a job search can be time-consuming and stressful. This guide provides you with advice on how to prepare an organized and effective job search.

Identify Your Career Goals

Before you jump into the job search, it is important to have a good sense of your skills, work values, the types of jobs that interest you, and the location(s) where you are interested in living.

Ask Yourself These Questions:

- What can I do with my major?
- What types of positions am I seeking?
- What are my skills and abilities?
- What are my top work values?
- What industries interest me?
- What employers am I targeting?
- What state do I want to live in? What towns and cities?



If you are uncertain of your answers to the above questions, consider taking **Focus 2**, our online career guidance assessment tool. All students can create an account by entering *Bridgew* as the access code. Also, check out the *What Can I do With This Major* site. Both resources can be found on the Career Exploration page off the Career Services webpage.

Organize Your Job Search

STEP 1: Plan Ahead

- Start your job search at least 3-6 months in advance
- Update your resume and have it reviewed by Career Services
- Create a LinkedIn profile
- Draft a cover letter and have it reviewed by Career Services
- Generate a reference page with three references
- Purchase/borrow professional clothing for interviews

STEP 2: Create a system

- Develop a weekly schedule dedicated solely to the job search. Set aside time each day or week.
- Create a spreadsheet to track progress of job applications and interviews, including employer name, job title, a link to the posting, date submitted, date of interview, and the contact information
- Save all your job search documents in folders, labeled with each employer's name
- Sign-up for job alert emails that notify you when there are new job openings that match your interests
- Bookmark each job search site and company website of interest on your browser

STEP 3: Devise a weekly job search plan

- Create a target list of employers to track weekly for jobs and networking opportunities
- Job hunt on your saved job search sites, including Handshake – BSU's Job and Internship Database
- Visit employer websites to review new job postings
- Submit customized resumes and cover letters for new jobs
- Connect with 1-2 new people from your field on LinkedIn
- Call employers after 7 business days to verify that your job application materials were received
- Follow-up with professionals that you have met through networking to schedule informational interviews
- Practice 1-3 of the commonly asked interview questions on the Career Services website

- Check Career Services' upcoming events and register to attend relevant workshops and programs
- Attend Career Services Job Fairs
- Contact local Massachusetts colleges and universities to see if their career fairs are open to the public
- Google upcoming career fairs in Massachusetts
- Check out virtual networking events offered through Handshake

Job Search Methods

There are a variety of ways in which someone may find a job or get hired. Below, review the different methods that you can implement during your job search.

Online Job Postings

There are many tips on how to conduct a successful online job search that you should consider.

1. Search a variety of job search sites, including Handshake
2. Sign up for free job alerts for any jobs that meet your criteria
3. Search the careers sections of the employer websites that you have an interest in working
4. Google jobs in your career field to find industry specific search engines
5. Google professional associations within your industry for job announcements
6. Type "jobs near me" into Google's search bar to see jobs posted by local employers

Job Search Site Recommendations

Handshake (<https://app.joinhandshake.com/login>): Review job and internship opportunities on BSU's online career management database. All students have an account with their @student.bridgew.edu email and corresponding password



Indeed (www.indeed.com): Find positions posted from thousands of job boards

LinkedIn www.linkedin.com: Search for jobs, identify contacts at organizations that have postings, and follow employers of interest

Glassdoor (www.glassdoor.com): Access job listings as well as user generated content including employer specific salary reports, ratings and reviews, interview questions and more

USAJobs (www.usajobs.gov): Search the federal government's official employment site

Commonwealth of MA (www.mass.gov/find-your-future-commonwealth-job): Visit the state of Massachusetts' employment website

FlexJobs (www.flexjobs.com): Find remote, work from home, and flexible job opportunities

Snagajob (www.snagajob.com): Review jobs that pay for hourly work

Idealist (www.idealists.org): Find position openings at non-profit employers

Dice (www.dice.com): Check out the leading site for tech job seekers

SchoolSpring (www.schoolspring.com): Access one of the top job boards for school personnel

Networking

Studies reveal that up to 80% of jobs are found through some form of networking. Most jobs are never advertised and are filled through referrals. This is referred to as the "hidden job market." Networking can take place both in-person and online. It can occur through face-to-face interaction, virtually, online, via email, and over the phone.

Building Your Network

Before you start networking, first begin with those people who comprise your current network. This may include family, friends, current and former co-workers, current and former work supervisors, faculty, classmates, fellow team/club members, community members, or any other acquaintances. Speak with people that know you best and would be most willing to refer you to a job opening. Networking is the most effective when you are specific about the type of job(s) that you are seeking.

Types of Networking

In-Person Networking

In-person networking can occur during networking events, both virtual and in-person. Some examples of networking are job fairs, conferences, professional association meetings, employer information sessions, workshops, work functions, and community service group meetings. The Bridgewater State University Career Services Office offers several networking opportunities each semester that are available to students.

Online Networking

With over 830 million members and over 58 million registered employers, LinkedIn is one of the most popular online professional social networks worldwide. 87% of recruiters regularly use LinkedIn to recruit new hires. A LinkedIn profile allows a recruiter to learn more about you than just what is on your resume. LinkedIn is the top tool for creating a professional online presence for yourself.

Below find tips on how you can get started on networking through LinkedIn:

- Create a profile, including a professional headshot photo, and connect to people that you know
- Use keywords in your profile so that recruiters can find you easily when they are searching for candidates
- Join the BSU Student and Alumni Networking Group to interact with alumni in numerous career fields
- Check out the Bridgewater State University page to connect with BSU alumni in your career field
- Set up informational interviews with professionals of interest
- Join groups that match your career field of interest
- Follow your favorite employers. Search to see if BSU alumni work there
- Send personalized requests to connect with every new person that you meet
- Share professional articles and posts related to your field of interest

Professional Etiquette

Email

- Use a professional email address
- Use a descriptive subject line such as "Marketing Assistant Position"
- Keep your message professional, short, and concise
- Do not use casual language, abbreviations, all CAPS or emojis. Write in complete sentences
- Use an easy-to-read font
- Be sure to spell-check and reread your message before sending
- Thank the professional at the end of the email or LinkedIn correspondence

Phone

- Record a professional voicemail message. For example, "Hello, you have reached _____. I am unavailable at the moment. If you could please leave your name, number, and a brief message, I will get back to you as soon as possible. Thank you."
- Choose a quiet environment for phone conversations

Digital Presence

- Maintain strict privacy settings on social media and monitor them regularly
- Share content that is professional in nature including photos
- Google yourself. Delete and/or update inappropriate information (at least during job search)

Reasons Why You May Not Be Getting a Response

There are many reasons why you may not be receiving a phone call for an interview after applying to a job.

Ask yourself the below questions to be sure you are representing yourself as a professional candidate.

- Are your cover letter and resume free of spelling and grammatical errors?
- Are you customizing your resume and cover letter to each job that you apply for?
- Are you highlighting your relevant skills and experience for the jobs that you are applying for?
- Are you qualified for the positions you are applying for?
- Did you follow the application instructions?
- Have you followed up with each employer that you applied to after 7 business days, to ensure they received your application documents?
- Did you send your documents to a specific person vs. sending it to “Whom It May Concern”?
- Are you using the same keywords that are used in the job description on your application documents?
- Are your salary requirements too high?
- Have you asked your network of family, friends, and co-workers if they know anyone at the organization you are applying to? If so, ask if they would be willing to refer you.
- Did you “google” yourself to make sure your digital presence is professional? Is your LinkedIn account updated? Are your Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages appropriate?

There could be a variety of reasons why you are not receiving a call to schedule an interview, some of which are out of your control. Sometimes an employer will opt not to fill an open position. An employer may already have an internal candidate in mind for the position but are legally required to post the position. Other candidates that are applying may simply have more experience or are overly qualified.

Struggling In Your Job Search?

The job search process can take a considerable amount of time, approximately 3-6 months. Throughout your search, it is essential to continue building upon your skills and experiences. Below are a few ways in which you can gain more experience while waiting to hear back from potential job prospects.

- Work for a temp agency
- Find a part-time job (with benefits if possible)
- Find a post-graduate internship
- Volunteer
- Conduct informational interviews with people in your field
- Join and attend professional association events to network
- Learn a new skill. Take a class
- Complete courses on LinkedIn Learning and Coursera
- Renew your certifications (First Aid, CPR, etc.)

How to Avoid Job Scams

It is important to be aware that not all job postings are legitimate. Below are tips on how to avoid job scams.

1. Research each employer before you apply to see if they are a legitimate company. Some red flags to keep in mind are: there is not a physical address listed on their website, the website has minimal information on it, there are spelling/grammatical errors, and there is no phone number indicated
2. Google the employer's name and the word "scam"
3. Check online reviews of the employer using [glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com) or the Better Business Bureau
4. Avoid employers that ask for upfront fees or personal information such as your social security number, driver's license information, credit card number, or bank account number(s)
5. Beware if the contact's email address is not from a company domain, such as [gmail.com](mailto:example@gmail.com) or [outlook.com](mailto:example@outlook.com)

For a more comprehensive look on how to protect yourself in the job search, visit the [Career Services website](#).

Evaluating a Job Offer

When you are offered a job, it is perfectly acceptable to thank the employer for the opportunity and ask for 2 or more days to consider the offer. Never accept a job on the spot. There are many considerations you should take into account when evaluating a job offer, as indicated below.

Research the Organization

Conduct an online search to see if there are current news stories about the organization. Consider the stability of the organization and the industry. How are they doing financially? Review their mission statement. What are their values? Read comments from previous and current employees about the organization through www.glassdoor.com.

Review and Compare the Salary Offer

Websites like www.salary.com, www.payscale.com, and www.glassdoor.com can provide you with a reliable benchmark for starting salaries.

Review the Benefits. Below are some considerations

<i>Medical Insurance</i>	<i>Dental Insurance</i>	<i>Vision Insurance</i>	<i>Life Insurance</i>
<i>Accidental Death Insurance</i>	<i>Disability Insurance</i>	<i>Sick Time</i>	<i>Vacation Time</i>
<i>Personal Time</i>	<i>Paid Holidays</i>	<i>Overtime/Comp Time</i>	<i>Pay Raises</i>
<i>Bonuses</i>	<i>Retirement Plans</i>	<i>Profit Sharing</i>	<i>Stock Options</i>
<i>Professional Development</i>	<i>Remote Work</i>	<i>Flexible Work Hours</i>	<i>Tuition Reimbursement</i>
<i>Maternity/Paternity Leave</i>	<i>Parking Reimbursement</i>	<i>Relocation Assistance</i>	<i>Company Car</i>
<i>Company Laptop +/-or Phone</i>	<i>Transit Passes</i>	<i>On-Site Day Care</i>	<i>On-Site Fitness Center</i>

Additional Considerations

<i>Weekly schedule</i>	<i>Travel time</i>	<i>Commuter time</i>
<i>Alignment with career goals</i>	<i>Company culture</i>	<i>Work setting</i>

Salary Requirements

If you are asked to answer the question – *What are your salary requirements?* – Do not! You might underestimate or overestimate your value. Put it back on the interviewer. Ask him/her for the salary range for the position with which you are interviewing. Is the salary in line with your research?

Example: *“Before I answer, may I ask what the salary range is for a Management Trainee with Enterprise?”*
“After performing research online regarding average salaries for Management Trainees in Massachusetts and learning about the salary range you offer here, my salary requirements are in line with what you offer.”

Negotiating Salary

After deciding that the job is a good fit, it is time to start negotiating. Crunch your numbers to ensure all your living expenses will be covered. This is the minimum that you need to make. After performing your salary research and asking the interviewer what the salary range is for your position, plan on asking for something toward the top of your range. An employer will almost certainly negotiate down, so you need wiggle room to end up with a salary you are pleased with. Be prepared to prove yourself and what your worth is. If you feel as if you deserve the higher range, be able to explain why. Reasons that may warrant a higher salary may be internship experience, research experience, course projects, relevant job experience, certifications, unique skills, or another offer from a different company.

You may begin the conversation as follows: *“Thank you so much for the offer. I’m really excited about the opportunity. Having one year of related internship experience and one year of related work experience, I feel as though I fall on the top of the range at ..”*

Salary Negotiating Tips

- Make your counter offer fair and well-reasoned
- Secure the salary first before negotiating other benefits
- Be flexible if the employer will not/cannot budge on the salary. Ask about additional benefits, such as a later starting date, extra vacation days, a flexible schedule, an option to work from home, a signing bonus, a performance bonus, future pay raises, company stock, retirement contributions, etc.
- Do not accept an offer that is not in writing
- Be willing to walk away if the offer isn’t right for you
- No matter the outcome, be appreciative and thankful for the opportunity