

Job Search Strategies

WITH AN OPEN MIND and a sense of adventure, you'll find multitudes of sources available to you in your job search. Family and friends provide a personal network that may lead to people in your field of interest and to recommendations of employers to contact. Professional societies, trade groups, guidance counselors, libraries, and the Internet can relate training requirements, earnings ranges, and names of employers.

You will need to learn to determine the value of a job by comparing pay, promotional opportunities, health insurance, and other benefits of the employer you are considering with similar aspects of job possibilities from other employers.



Objectives:



1. Describe information sources for job opportunities.
2. Develop a system to evaluate job openings.

Key Terms:



career interest
assessments
direct calling
job advancement

job description
job security
placement services

private employment
agencies

public employment
agencies

Sources of Information for Job Opportunities

Finding a job is a search process. The first step is locating information about, or sources of, job opportunities. **Placement services** are services that help people find jobs. They are typ-

ically associated with high schools, postsecondary schools, colleges, and universities. These services are usually offered at no charge to students enrolled in the schools. There are a variety of other placement services.

- ◆ **Career interest assessments** are tests that help identify the types of careers that would match well with a student's interest.
- ◆ Résumé- and application-writing services provide instruction and training in how to write résumés and how to fill out applications.
- ◆ Interview training involves instruction in how to act in an interview situation.

Employment agencies consist of two types: public and private. **Public employment agencies** are agencies operated by local and state governments. **Private employment agencies** are agencies that provide many of the same services as public agencies, except they charge a fee.

Media include newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. All these sources are used to advertise job openings.

The Internet has become an increasingly important source of information about job openings. Companies routinely list employment opportunities on their websites. Also, some communities list job opportunities in their area on their websites.

Friends and family are excellent sources of information. These individuals know you best. They can make you aware of jobs that would match your interests and goals.

Direct calling is personally contacting employers to ask about job openings. Calls can be by telephone or in person.



FIGURE 1. To climb the ladder of success, you will need to find the career path that fits your knowledge, skills, and aptitudes.

Evaluating Job Openings

Opportunities may be available as an entrepreneur or as an employee. An individual can be successful as either. Evaluating whether a potential job is right for you involves researching multiple topics and opportunities.

- ◆ **Job description**—This is a written explanation of the type of service to be performed by the jobholder. Job candidates must make judgments as to whether they are suited for the work described.



DIGGING DEEPER...

UNCOVERING ADDITIONAL FACTS: Job Evaluations

A job can be evaluated in many ways. A company's compensation policy is a major consideration. Fair pay can be determined by comparing similar positions in multiple companies. The company's policies on benefits, pay raises, and promotions are important considerations.

Job evaluation will help you determine the relative value, level, importance, and complexity of jobs in a company. One job should be compared with another, and its place in the company hierarchy understood. Job content refers to the type of work performed and the skills and knowledge needed to fill the job.

You will need to evaluate job descriptions and position responsibilities and then compare the differences in like companies. A job description must be precise yet flexible to accommodate changing needs and growth of both the employee and the company. How does your potential job fit within the organization's structure? What interaction is there between various levels of the company? What are the policies regarding problem solving, independent judgment, and accountability? What supervision and training are provided? What are the physical working and environmental conditions?

The evaluations and comparisons you make between jobs and organizations will affect your attitudes toward both your professional and personal lives.

- ◆ **Job security**—This is an understanding as to how long the job will last. The job candidate must consider whether the job will be available for the short or long term.
- ◆ **Training opportunities**—This is an explanation of the training and instructional programs the company offers. Will the job seeker be trained before actually starting the job?
- ◆ **Job advancement**—This is the opportunity for jobholders to advance in the company if their performance meets expectations. It is helpful to determine if employees in higher positions began working for the company in lower positions, having advanced through the company.



FIGURE 2. To achieve success in your job choice, both your personal criteria and your employer's must be met.

Summary:



Finding a job is a search process. The first step is locating information about, or sources of, job opportunities. Placement services help people find jobs. Jobs are advertised through the media: newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. Internet job sites advertise job openings. Friends and family may give you leads.

Placement services can offer you career interest assessments to help you identify the types of careers that match your interests. Résumé- and application-writing services can teach you to effectively write your résumé and fill out job applications. Interview training is important to prepare you for successful interview situations.

Evaluating whether a potential job is right for you involves researching multiple topics and opportunities. A job description will tell you if you are qualified for the advertised job. You will want to understand what job security will be offered—that is, how long you can expect to hold the position. It is important to learn what training and instructional programs the company provides. Knowing what type of job advancement is offered will help you determine your future with the company.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. Where can you find placement services?
2. Why should career assessment tests be part of your job search?
3. Explain direct calling.
4. What do job descriptions tell you?
5. How should job security and advancement information affect your decision?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Selecting a career will be one of the most important decisions you will ever make. The more information you gather about various career opportunities, the better your choice will fit you. Begin with the guidance counselors at your school. They can help you assess your interests and skills and direct you into higher education or into the job market.

Visit your local libraries for career information. Colleges, universities, and trade schools solicit applicants. The Internet can expand your research even further. Investigate careers, schools, and job descriptions from these sources.

Web Links:



Office of Career Services

<http://careers.cua.edu/job-list/fulltimejobs.cfm>

Pathways to Career Success

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

Where to Look for Job Opportunities

<http://www.wisconsinjobcenter.org/publications/9467/9467.htm>

Job Evaluation Process

<http://www.case.edu/finadmin/humres/compensation/spprocess.html>