JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

Looking for work can be very time consuming and difficult. Job search strategies are constantly evolving with our new economy which makes it essential that you keep up with the changes and adapt your techniques to ensure that you don’t get left behind! You must:

1. **DEFINE YOUR GOALS – What do you want to do and why?**

If you don’t know what work you **REALLY** want to do how do you know where to look for it? A self-assessment will assist you in narrowing down your job search to 2-3 key industries. Ask yourself a few critical questions:

- What unique skills and attributes do you offer?
- What do you enjoy doing?
- What skills do you want to use at work?
- What is essential for you to enjoy work? Consider the opportunity for advancement, your need for flexibility and creative freedom, what work-life balance you want, and rewards (financial and other).
- What goals are realistic for you considering your education, skills and experience?

2. **RESEARCH YOUR OPTIONS – Locating the hidden job market**

Once you have a sense of what work you want to do, research is necessary to determine where the employment opportunities are. Asking key questions can narrow down your work search tremendously.

- What type of work fits with your answers from the above questions?
- Which businesses and organizations offer this type of work?
- What are these employers looking for in an employee?
- Who are the key people you need to network with?

Conduct your research by using the internet, through informational meetings with employees and supervisors of the company, and by reading a variety of newspapers, business reports and trade magazines. Look for specific labour market information (which companies are moving to town, which ones are expanding and which ones are merging). Make it your goal to know what is happening in your community! From this information set employment related goals and develop a ‘job leads list.’

3. **CONTACT OPPORTUNITIES – Tapping into the hidden job market**

When conducting your research on employment options you will begin to unravel the ‘hidden job market.’ As over 85% of jobs are never advertised, this leaves a lot of employment opportunities to be discovered. Employment experts agree, networking is a significantly better way to secure work than sending resumes to advertised job postings! Networking can be done a variety of ways, it can include having a cup of coffee with a friend, attending industry trade shows, joining industry associations, and asking for informational interviews with key decision makers in your chosen field. When networking consider talking to:

- Family, friends, neighbours
- Teachers, coaches, mentors
- Past employers, co-workers and peers
- Members of clubs, religious groups and other organizations you belong
4. **MARKETING – Make the most of your resume and cover letter!**

Through these carefully nurtured networking opportunities you will begin hearing about employment opportunities. When you hear about an exciting opportunity don’t wait for them to advertise it – go speak to someone in the company. At this time it is very important that you have the right ‘tools’ to demonstrate your interest. A well thought out and carefully worded cover letter and resume is imperative.

5. **VOLUNTEERING – A proven stepping stone to paid employment**

* A key ingredient many students use to ensure a successful transition from school to work is volunteering. Through volunteering you have the opportunity to use the skills and knowledge you gain in school, you acquire job related skills and experience, you begin establishing a reputation in the community and you have the opportunity to meet key people. Volunteering is a proven stepping stone to paid employment.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Search Myth</th>
<th>New Reality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If I scan the newspaper’s ‘Help Wanted’ section, review job posting boards and surf the net I will find work.</td>
<td>Maybe, about 15% of work is still advertised in these traditional ways. The important point is not to get caught in the trap of looking at <strong>JUST</strong> these jobs. Also, keep in mind your odds are much better at finding work <strong>BEFORE</strong> it is publicly advertised.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faxing out 100 resumes to random companies will land me a job quickly.</td>
<td>You will have better success targeting 5-10 organizations you would like to work for and arranging informational interviews with those responsible for hiring.</td>
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<td>All I have to do is let a few people know I am looking for work and wait for the phone to ring with that job offer.</td>
<td>Looking for work has never been this easy. A good work search involves a lot of time and energy; looking for work is a full time job in itself. See answer above.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The most qualified person will get the job.</td>
<td>Not necessarily, the person who can network with key decision makers and can present the right skills and education will be offered the job.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The traditional work search strategy worked for my parents it will work for me.</td>
<td>Perhaps. There are an amazing employment opportunities out there that you may never find unless you start looking.</td>
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Looking for work is not easy. By following the advice discussed on this sheet you will have a structured and effective strategy that will give you results!