

# Strategies for a Successful Job Search

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A HELPFUL GUIDE FOR ENTERING THE JOB MARKET



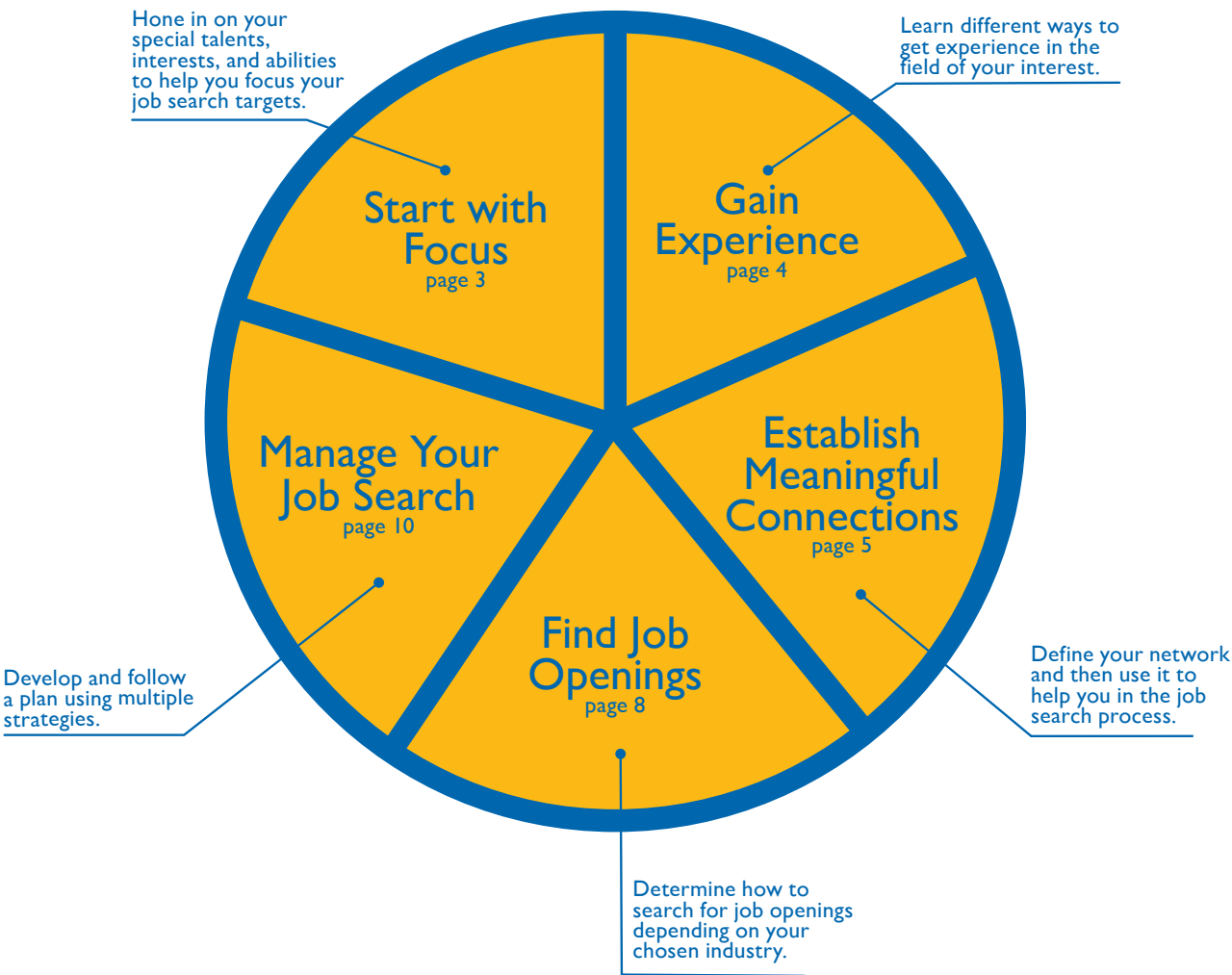
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# Finding the job you want is a process that takes multiple steps and involves many decisions.

To be successful, job seekers need relevant information and well-developed job-hunting skills that allow them to be strategic in their search. Whether you are looking for an internship, job, or making a career change, the principles and the process of conducting a successful job search are the same.

The tips offered here are designed to guide you through the broad process of identifying job targets to the specific steps of finding openings and applying for positions. Each strategy is equally important and may not necessarily follow this exact sequence! A successful job search plan may involve doing all of the activities simultaneously. Be prepared to revisit any step, evaluating and adjusting your strategy as your search evolves and changes.



## Start with Focus

An important first step in a successful job search is focusing your job search targets, which are specific types of jobs within specific industries.

Here are some examples:

- Social Media Coordinator for an environmental non-profit organization
- Naturalist for a state agency
- Brand Manager for an outdoor clothing line
- Software Developer for medical diagnostics/healthcare
- Financial Analyst for home lending institution

Not sure how to start? The following process will help you generate a list of targets.

## Turn Talents into Keywords

Your talents are the best place to begin thinking about job search targets. Make a list of your interests, natural talents, academic strengths and skills you have learned through your experiences. Ask friends and family what skills they see in you. It may also be helpful to remember peak experiences in your past that demonstrated your best qualities. A brief descriptive statement with highlighted keywords can help you start connecting your talents to job titles.

### What are you good at doing?

“When I created a recycling group last year, I managed our social media and promoted all of our activities and events there. I also spearheaded a campaign to create a single-stream recycling unit in the dining center including: co-designing the composting bins and student recycling stations. We raised \$2,400 in donations to implement the program, and I oversaw the budgeting and prepared the financial reports.”

### TAKE A CAREER ASSESSMENT

If you are having difficulty identifying your talents or strengths, consider taking a career assessment. See your career services office for more information.

## Convert Keywords into Job Titles

Keywords that reflect your talents are the building blocks of job titles. Use job search boards (see “Job, Internship and Volunteer Boards” on page 14) to search for positions using the keywords you created and make a list of the job titles that you find. To broaden your search, add related terms and synonyms. For example, when you search the keywords “social media,” and add “communications,” you may find job titles like “Digital Account Executive” and “Communications Specialist.”

### Can you connect actual job titles based on your keywords?

Keyword: recycling  
Related terms: environmental, green, sustainability  
Job Titles: Environmental Education, Lobbyist, Naturalist

Keyword: management  
Related terms: leadership  
Job Titles: Brand Manager, Manager-in-training

Keyword: social media  
Related term: communications  
Job Titles: Digital Account Executive, Communication Specialist

Keyword: promotion  
Related terms: event planning  
Job Titles: Fundraiser, Brand Ambassador

Keyword: design  
Related terms: engineer, project management  
Job Titles: Project Engineer, Staff Environmental Engineer

Keywords: budget, financial analysis  
Related terms: credit analysis, financial operations  
Job Titles: Financial Operation Specialist, Credit Analyst

Review specific job postings that match your job titles to learn about employer expectations, desired candidate qualifications, typical duties and required skills or training. If some of the job titles do not represent a good match for you, eliminate them and replace them with others that you are discovering through your search.

*“I wasted so much time at the beginning [of my job search] because I didn’t really know what I was looking for. It was only after I found some focus that my job search started to take off.”*

-Brandon, Graduate Student



Adapt Job Titles to Industries

Keep in mind that job titles are not universal. In fact, many jobs that require the same skills are identified very differently depending on the industry, its geographic location, or work culture. As you research job titles, take note of the employers who are hiring for these positions.

What industries do these employers reflect? For example, non-profit organizations, educational institutions or state and local agencies might seek an “Outreach Coordinator.” Internet companies, retailers and the media industry might be looking for “Account Managers.” Continue to evaluate these industries for their appeal and fit for your skills, experience and values.

Who is hiring these job titles?

- Environmental Education - museums, county/state enforcement agencies, national parks, school systems
- ~~Manager-in-training—corporations, retail, restaurants—~~  
\*eliminated due to lack of interest
- Social Media - media, non-profits
- Promotion/Event Planning - non-profits, retail
- ~~Staff Environmental Engineer—engineering companies—~~  
\*eliminated, not qualified
- ~~Credit Analyst—financial institutions, educational services—~~  
\*eliminated due to lack of interest

Identify and Prioritize your Targets

Take time to develop more than one target so you will have a robust strategy that is resilient to changing plans and priorities. To help you manage your time and efforts, rank your list of job search targets based on interest, fit or likelihood so that you can strategically and quickly move through this process. Keep an open mind throughout the entire search process to new information, leads and connections so you can reprioritize your targets as you adapt to an ever-changing job market.

Have you identified multiple targets and prioritized them?

- Digital Account Executive for an environmental non-profit organization (Plan A)
- Naturalist for state agency (Plan B)
- Brand Manager for an outdoor clothing line (Plan C)

Gain Experience



To confirm that a job would really be a fit for you, there really is no substitute for gaining “direct” experience of what that job is like. There are multiple ways to get a feel for a profession or a field before you wholeheartedly commit to it.

Join Professional Organizations

Many professions have their own national, regional, or local organization, dedicated to promoting the philosophy, the benefits, or the opportunities available to those in the field. Joining an organization can provide you with a deeper understanding of a profession and the realities of doing the daily work. Many organizations will offer discounted memberships for students and young professionals. They may also provide opportunities for internships and will often sponsor job posting boards where you can further research possible targets.

Volunteer

Volunteering is another great way to confirm that a field or job target is a good fit for you. Consider engaging in service opportunities in a setting that helps you gain hands-on experience in your interest area. If you are considering a job in healthcare, see what volunteer options are available at your local hospital or community health agency. Interested in pursuing a job as an event planner? Local charities or nonprofits are often in need of volunteers to help stage large public events. Would you like to do web design? Look for organizations that need to improve their websites and volunteer to help them.

The Center for Community Outreach at KU can help you find local service opportunities that fit your interests, and large, searchable databases can help you identify places where you can provide a service while exploring possible job targets (see “Job Search Resources”, pg. 14-15). As you are gaining direct knowledge of a type of work, you are also adding to your skill set, building important professional relationships, and gaining valuable experience to add to your resume!

Job Shadow

If you would like to see firsthand what a professional does during a typical day at work, you may want to arrange for a job shadowing experience. A job shadow is a short-term, unpaid, informal opportunity to spend time observing someone as they go about their daily routine. As you watch this individual perform his or her job, you will gain insight into the work setting, tasks performed on a

regular basis, and skills that are necessary for the position. Although you may not have a full picture of the profession after only a few hours of observation, you may get a preview of what the work would be like and a sense of whether or not it would be a good fit for you.

Talk to anyone who has connections to your job target area about setting up a shadow experience. Professors, family members, friends, or career service professionals can help you identify individuals who might be willing to let you observe them for a short time. Try to find settings where you can truly gain a sense of what the work will be like, but remember that a professional may also have limitations on what they can show you.

Conduct Informational Interviews

An informational interview is a conversation where you ask for career or industry advice from someone with direct knowledge of that topic. The point of doing an informational interview is to gain information about specific occupations, companies, industries, or even geographic areas from individuals within those organizations. It is through this learning process that you can begin making more informed decisions about the career path that fits your ambitions best. For information on how to conduct an informational interview, please refer to page 6.

“Through this [informational interview], I was able to figure out what marketable skills I have in my major and what job field I can apply these skills to.”

- Cody, Senior

Part-time and Temporary Jobs

There are many potential benefits to working in a part-time role. Knowledge about the industry, direct experience in the field, and meeting professionals in your interest area can help you with your long-term job search. Additionally, even working at part-time jobs unrelated to your career interest can be incredibly valuable to your future job search. Whether you gain new transferable skills, build upon your experience for your resume, or develop new connections to a variety of professionals and industries, a part-time position will help enhance your overall competitiveness for a full-time position. In fact, part-time or temporary jobs can sometimes turn into full-time positions, but at minimum, you are gaining valuable experience and developing an understanding about a potential career path.

Intern

Ranging in length from a summer, a semester or an academic year, an internship will give you hands-on, practical experience in a career-related field. An internship is more than a part-time job because it involves both a working and a learning component. As an intern, you will have specific learning goals to complete during the internship and you may earn academic credit for your experience. An internship is one of the best ways you can try out a career choice, gain real life experience, build your resume and develop relationships with people who work in a field you might like to pursue. For some companies, completing a successful internship is the first step to receiving a job offer.

There are a number of resources available to help you find internship openings. A good place to start is visiting with a career coach and exploring the available options. Also, See “Job, Internship and Volunteer Boards” on page 14.

“I found the company that I now work for through the KU Career Connections website when looking for a summer internship.”

- Julia, Recent Graduate

Establish Meaningful Connections



Network

Define Your Network

Consider your various spheres of influence. From friends to colleagues to family members, chances are, you have a wealth of resources and connections at your fingertips! In addition to offering you support during the search process, these individuals can also help provide more potential job options.

Let Your Network Know About Your Job Search

The individuals in your sphere of influence will have a genuine interest in knowing your career interests. Do not be afraid to honestly share an overview of your professional goals and ambitions with them. These contacts may be able to both recommend relevant opportunities and also refer you to other people who might know something about your specialty area. If you suspect that a friend, family member, or classmate may have a connection in your interest field, inquire about it. More often than not, people are willing to

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# How To Conduct an Informational Interview

## Arranging the Informational Interview

- Start by identifying the area you are interested in learning more about, and then you can begin to create a list of all the people you know (even if they do not have direct experience in the area you want to learn more about).
- Talk to as many people on your list as possible about your interest in exploring certain fields or industries, and ask if they know of anyone that has experience in that area.
- Once you identify an individual, call or email them and briefly state who you are, why you are contacting them specifically, and what you hope to learn (see example below).
- Be clear that you are only seeking advice or information about a specific career field and not looking for an internship or a job.

### How to Make Contact by Phone (Example)

“Hello Mr. Jones, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a student at The University of Kansas, finishing this semester with a degree in \_\_\_\_\_. I received your name through our mutual friend Stephanie Brown, and your background fits perfectly with my interest area. I am very interested in the position of a \_\_\_\_\_, and I am trying to find out as much as I can about this line of work. I have read a lot about the occupation, but really feel it might help to talk to someone who currently works in the field. I would appreciate meeting with you to discuss the \_\_\_\_\_ profession, if you have the time. The interview would only take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. My schedule is flexible and I can meet with you at your convenience. Thank you for your time. Please feel free to reach me at (785) 864-3624.”

## Preparing for the Informational Interview

- Have a list of questions ready based on your research of the position, the industry and the person, so you do not waste time asking questions that are easily found elsewhere. Your career services office can help you investigate and research organizations.
- Dress appropriately and arrive on time, if not early. This is a professional meeting, and you only have one opportunity to make a good first impression.

## Starting the Informational Interview

First, thank them for seeing you, then provide some background on yourself and why you are exploring this particular area. Try not to write down everything; you will want this time to be a conversation. Open-ended questions will help you start building that professional relationship:

- Tell me about your career path. How did you get started doing this?
- What education and training did you need to do this? Has anything changed?
- What are critical skills that you need to have for this field?
- What is an average day like? What are your major responsibilities?
- What are some upcoming trends/challenges to the field that I should know about?
- What advice would you give someone thinking about entering this field?
- Do you know of anyone else that I could contact?

These questions are intended as a guide for you to develop more relevant questions based on your situation and your own specific goals. The interview will be much more informative if you develop your own questions.

## Concluding the Informational Interview

Thank the professional for giving you time and assistance. Inquire if you may keep in touch or follow up with additional questions. If they ask you to do anything, make sure you complete the task and follow up with them right away. Finally, find ways to connect with your contacts every few months to let them know any updates on your progress or how you can assist them. The stronger the relationship, the more useful it will be for both of you. Write and send a short thank you note within two days of each informational interview. This courtesy will help them remember you.

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share contact information or to arrange for an introduction. Be able to confidently and clearly talk about your background, abilities, and future aspirations. This is often called an “elevator speech”.

### WHAT IS AN ELEVATOR SPEECH?

Imagine you step into an elevator and a professional you have been hoping to meet is on the elevator with you! What meaningful information can you share in the short length of time you have available? Use this example for your speech:

“Hi, My name is Jay Hawk, and I will be graduating in May with a degree in Environmental Studies. I plan to look for positions in sustainability research at non-profit companies in California, but I am very open to a wide range of locations. I have been an undergraduate research assistant at KU and, through my role, I traveled to South America to research farming practices and water conservation. Do you have any advice for me, or can you suggest any employers I should be talking to?”

### Job Prospecting

Different from informational interviewing, job prospecting is a more direct way to ask about specific job openings at a specific company. Whether done through a phone call or via email, the basic message of a job prospecting inquiry includes who you are, why you are contacting the organization, what professional qualifications would make you a good fit for the organization, and a polite offer to send your resume. Persistence and perseverance are essential as you diligently pursue potential career paths.

## Career Networking Events

Career fairs and other on-campus employer recruiting events are great places to network. Each year, campus career service offices host events such as the Career Fair, Internship Fair, Volunteer Fair and industry specific fairs (e.g., Education, Business, Engineering) to help employers connect with students and alumni. Employers come to these fairs in order to recruit talented individuals for their companies or organizations. For the job searcher, it is an ideal opportunity to meet multiple professionals in target areas in a short amount of time. In brief, face-to-face visits, you can let an employer know about yourself (major, experiences, skills and job interests), and learn about opportunities within their company. Keep your eye on your career services calendar for other announcements about employer visits on campus. Some companies will set up a special presentation or tabling event that is open to the public and meant to help make connections between the employers and students.

*“The career fair opened my eyes to the variety of opportunities available to me with my degree and background.”*

*-Tyler, Senior*

## Social Networking

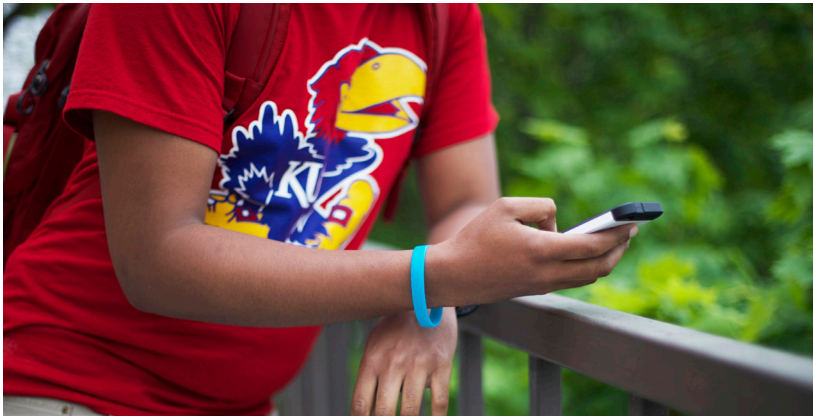
Social media has made a significant impact on the job search process. Not only can you quickly research companies, jobs, and even employees through various social media platforms, but employers may be seeking you out online as well! More than ever, employers are going online to recruit new hires and gather information on potential and current employees. Additionally, using social media platforms can be a great way to expand your professional network and enhance your job search. Sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter can help you connect with professionals at specific companies or with fellow Jayhawks in your industry, as well as identify contacts in specific geographic areas (see “Job Search Resources” on pages 14-15). By expanding your network online, you will find more opportunities within the hidden job market.

You can also use social media platforms to search directly for jobs. Many companies have profiles on LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter, and they will consistently post job openings on these sites. By “following” or “liking” these companies, you gain access to their current postings along with information on the company, the employees, and the culture of that organization.

### Social Media Management

Most employers have stated that they will look up a candidate’s online presence at some point in the hiring process. This means, before you start connecting with individuals or following their organizations, you will want to ensure your online image is consistent with how you want to be viewed.

- Delete inactive accounts that you no longer use and remove any potentially damaging content (photos, videos, text, etc.) that may offend employers.
- Ask your online connections to remove (or “hide”) any inappropriate content about you from their sites; request that they refrain from posting similar content in the future.
- Use common sense: if an employer printed off the content of your profile and laid it out before you, would you feel comfortable discussing what they found? Once you have cleared out all your “junk”, revisit your account and privacy settings; limit who can find you and what others can see.





Create and Maintain Your Professional Image

Begin adding professional content to your online presence. You can supplement information to existing accounts or create new ones to be used strictly for professional purposes. Before you do anything else, take some time to do some “personal branding.” Brainstorm the unique talents, qualities, knowledge, and accomplishments that will make you an asset to potential employers. Then, as if you were marketing a commercial product, develop a strategy to promote your brand to your professional audience. Consider the following techniques:

- Establish a presence on websites where you know professionals in your field tend to “hang out.” Create profiles on these sites and interact with other members on discussion boards, wiki spaces, and blogs.
- Complete a profile on LinkedIn, highlighting your interests, experiences, education and accomplishments.
- Create a professional blog of your own where you can share professional aspirations, track your job search process, and highlight special accomplishments or projects.
- Utilize other social media sites professionally such as Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and Instagram to further develop and promote your brand.
- Include any professional profiles or blogs in your email signatures, on your resume, on business cards, or other relevant materials.

To maintain your professional image:

- Update your professional accounts regularly (at least 1-2 times weekly) so that content is constantly evolving and interesting for readers to follow.
- Conduct a Google search for your name regularly (at least twice monthly) and set up Google alerts for your name, email address, and phone number; this will help you stay up to date on what employers might find when they search for you online.

Find Job Openings

Know Your Industry

The Hidden Job Market

The job market has two components: the open job market and the hidden job market. The open job market is comprised of public job openings, generally announced through company or institution websites or large internet job boards. The hidden job market refers to job openings that are known to those working inside the industry, but that are not advertised widely. Estimates vary, but

most agree that a significant number of job openings are never posted online. An employer may anticipate a hiring need, but choose not to announce it immediately or may only announce it to those already working in the organization. These jobs are difficult to find out about, but may represent the greatest employment potential!

The hidden job market is accessed through networking, attendance at recruiting events such as career fairs, use of social media, and word of mouth. Your career services office can help you research the job market for your specific industry.

*“Improving my networking skills was huge in finding my internship, which led to a full-time job offer.”*  
-Josephine, Senior

Hiring Cycles and Recruitment Methods

Depending upon your field of interest, there may be peak seasons for recruitment. For example, individuals interested in working in education will typically have the most success applying for positions in the late winter/spring. In the sports industry, hiring cycles are usually in full swing when a team is in its off season. Your prior company research can also help you have realistic expectations regarding potential openings. If you have read or heard about a recent increase in revenue for a company of interest, it is likely they will be hiring more talent. Conversely, if you have seen news of recent layoffs or financial difficulties it is unlikely that your target organization will be hiring in the near future.

Additionally, you will want to consider the multitude of methods recruiters use to locate potential employees:

- Professional Organizations / Publications / Industry Specific Job Boards / Conferences
- Job & Career Fairs / College Campus Recruiting / Internships
- Networking / Meet-ups / Referrals From Current Employees / Industry Trade Shows
- Company Websites / Company’s Social Media Presence
- Staffing Agencies / State Employment Agencies

Government Jobs

The United States government posts numerous jobs in many specialty areas across the country. Whether you would like to work for a local, state, or federal employer, there are limitless career possibilities for individuals from every academic discipline and interest area. Careers in the public sector are rewarding on many levels: the work you will do impacts the lives of others, there are numerous

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How to Attend a Career Fair

Before the Career Fair

- Refine your list of potential job targets by reviewing the career fair participants, available on KU Career Connections.
- Research employers who are attending the fair. From the participants list you can visit company websites, gather information on products and services and learn about their opportunities.
- Prepare a brief speech focused on your skills. Consider your strengths and how you can use them to succeed (see “What is an elevator speech?” on page 7).
- Attend a preparatory workshop or schedule a meeting with a member of your career services office who can assist you.



During the Career Fair

- Bring copies of your resume and a portfolio to hold them, paper, pen and breath mints.
- Wear conservative, business professional attire.
- Review the list of employers and make an action plan. Approach your targeted employers when you are ready.

- Smile, make eye contact and shake hands.
- Use your elevator speech and ask questions that show you have done your research.
- Ask for business cards and informational materials. Make notes to follow up with employers.

After the Career Fair

- Reflect on your experience by writing down your impressions or verbally processing with a friend or mentor.
- Send thank you notes to the employers you spoke with at the fair. Remind them of where you met and express your interest in the position and/or their organization. Include any other information you promised to send.
- Check for on-campus interview opportunities and information sessions through KU Career Connections.

FOLLOW YOUR ELEVATOR SPEECH WITH QUESTIONS

- What job opportunities are available at your organization?
- What new company initiatives are you excited about?
- Do you have a formal training or mentoring program for new employees?
- Are any KU alumni employed by your organization?
- What separates your organization from the competition?
- Do you have any advice for a new, aspiring professional?
- From your experience, what makes an applicant stand out as a stellar candidate in an interview process?
- What opportunities does your company offer for individual professional development?
- How do you see the job market in this field changing over the next five years?
- What can I do to prepare myself for such changes?
- May I contact you if I need more information?

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opportunities for professional growth and advancement, and the pay and benefits are competitive with those found in the private sector. Since government professional documents have a unique look and feel, it is essential to utilize government websites to get application tips and tricks.

**USE CAUTION**

As you search job postings, research the potential employer and their opportunity. If you encounter anything that seems suspicious, such as a request for money, personal information (social security numbers, bank account numbers), or you are offered a job without interacting with the employer, contact your career services office for advice.

Long Distance Job Search

Looking for a job outside of your state is not much different than conducting a job search locally. However, there are a couple of important points that may help you cross those state lines. Employers generally will have questions about what you know about the company and its surrounding area as well as why you are willing to move to this new environment. From their perspective, why should they hire an ‘outsider’ if there are plenty of similar ‘local’ applicants? Your goal is to demonstrate to an employer that you are invested in the area and their company with your application materials and interview. For instance, in your cover letter you can state that you will be moving to the area in the future, and you are also willing to travel for interviews at your own expense prior to the move if needed. This will help alleviate concerns an out-of-state employer may have about your commitment and potential cost to the organization.

Start your search by investigating the main industries and employers in the area. Explore employment trends and connect with friends, family, or alumni in the area to get a more personal perspective on the local environment. Conduct informational interviews (ideally in person) with individuals connected to your job target. Review cost-of-living and salary calculators to see how feasible a move for that job will be given your current situation. You will also want to consider how much flexibility you have to make this move. Is your lease ending soon? Can you afford to fly or drive out for interviews at your own expense and on short notice if needed? How quickly can you leave your current job/home if they need you to start right away?

Considerations in the Job Search

Each step outlined in this resource booklet is applicable to any individual. There may, however, be additional considerations related to your work status or affiliation within a particular group. Visit [career.ku.edu/kucommunities](http://career.ku.edu/kucommunities) for job search information that may be helpful for international students, student veterans, students with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ community.

Manage Your Job Search



Prepare Your Professional Documents

Make sure your professional documents are sharp, relevant and ready to send to potential employers. For most job applications, you will be asked to upload a resume (or curriculum vitae), cover letter, and list of references. Some organizations may also ask you to include a personal statement or a letter of reference as well.

Whether you are updating old professional documents or starting from square one, check out KU’s “Resumes, References, and Cover Letters” guide for a comprehensive overview of how to craft these materials. You can also use resume-building tools on KU Career Connections or make an appointment with a career coach if you have questions or would like feedback.

Apply for Positions

When you are ready to apply for positions, take time to compare your professional documents with each job description. What keywords, phrases, and qualifications does the employer list? Feel free to mimic the language found under “required” and “preferred” qualifications. Ask yourself, “Based upon this job description, am I the person this employer is looking for?” If so, in your cover letter, confidently connect your experiences with the listed characteristics. Your application materials should be customized for each position you apply for.

Make a note of any other special materials that are required, like a portfolio or a letter of reference, and as you submit your documents, be sure to follow the employer’s application instructions exactly! Consider keeping track of your various applications on a spreadsheet so that you have a record of deadlines, submission dates and notifications from the various companies. See page 15 for an example. This list is also helpful for withdrawing your other applications once you have formally accepted a position at a company.

Follow a Plan

Conducting a job search is more than just one activity – it is a series of different activities going on at the same time. While researching employers and identifying contacts for informational interviews, you may also be developing your social media presence through a personal website. As you wait to hear back from a job application, attend a networking event and ask to job shadow a professional you meet there.

Finding a job can take anywhere from 3 to 9 months, so you will need to be persistent and focused. Plan to spend time each week on your job search and as your job search progresses, remember to be flexible with both your approach and your targets. Assess how your strategies are working and adjust them if necessary.

My Job Search Plan – Week of xxx

Digital Account Executive for an environmental non-profit organization (Plan A)

- Re-connect (invite her to coffee?) with former supervisor from my internship last summer – make sure to update her on my career plans
- Look for and join local chapter of Public Relations Society of America
- Apply for the two jobs found through KU Career Connections
- Make appointment at career center to have resume and cover letters reviewed
- Bookmark Denver Business Journal for possible relocation

Naturalist for state agency (Plan B)

- Research state agencies and look for job descriptions on their website and in job postings
- Generate a list of contacts of anyone I know who works for the State
- Conduct informational interview with neighbor who works for State Department of Natural Resources
- Volunteer this weekend to help with safety training at nearby park

Brand Manager for outdoor clothing line (Plan C)

- Generate list of outdoor clothing lines and look at their careers/job opportunities
- Revise resume to promote experience I gained from part-time job in retail
- Connect with alum I found through LinkedIn that works in this field

Interview

When you are invited to interview for a position, it is an indication that your materials have served their purpose. An employer has identified you as a potential good fit for the position and wants to learn more about your skills, experiences and personality. The research you have done on the employer, combined with knowledge of your own strengths and skills, will help you in your preparation. See the “Preparing for Job Interviews” guide for tips and sample questions. Consider scheduling a mock interview with your campus career services office to help you polish your interviewing techniques.

Ideally, a successful interview results in a job offer. For tips and suggestions on researching companies, salary negotiation and evaluating and accepting a job offer, see the “Preparing for Job Interviews” guide. If your interview does not result in a job offer, it is normal to feel some disappointment. Try to remember that getting an interview is a sign that you are on the right track in your job search. Assess what you might be able to improve upon and take steps to further develop your interviewing skills.

Finish with Grace

Once you have accepted an offer, withdraw from any other job searches. If you would like to remain in consideration for another position or continue interviewing with other companies or organizations, ask for a deadline extension from the employer that has offered you the job. It is a small world; do not burn any bridges by remaining in a search after you have made a commitment to an employer!

Many people have been involved in your search in a variety of supportive roles; be sure to let them know about your success! Notify your references and anyone else who helped you and thank them for their assistance. Update any social media profiles to reflect your new title or position.

**PAY IT FORWARD**

You will likely be contacted through email asking that you complete a survey about your professional status post-graduation from KU. The information collected is very important to the university and future students. Please take time to let us know where you are employed!

Troubleshoot the Job Search

The following pages address common concerns in the job search, and suggest possible causes and solutions. Schedule an appointment with your campus career service office to further discuss how you can improve your strategy.



NOT SURE WHERE TO START

Issue	Possible Causes	Possible Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I'm not sure what jobs to search for?</li> <li>I just realized I don't want the career I have been planning to do...now what?</li> <li>I just started at KU, and I'm not sure what I should do next for my future?</li> <li>I can't seem to find any other job titles that interest me.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of insight into your own strengths/ interests</li> <li>Limited understanding of possible career choices</li> <li>Limited work experience to draw from</li> <li>Wide interests with skills and abilities to do a variety of jobs well</li> <li>Limited knowledge of industry or career path</li> <li>Lack of exploration into your field(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with career coach and discuss taking a career-related assessment to help generate ideas of where to start exploring</li> <li>Intern, volunteer or join a student organization to gain insight into your own skills, abilities, values, and work preferences</li> <li>Conduct informational interviews with friends, alumni, or other professionals to understand career options more effectively</li> <li>Explore areas of current interest and know that you always have the freedom to add/ or change your career as you gain more experience</li> <li>Speak with faculty that are experts in that field</li> <li>Search alumni/professionals on LinkedIn for alternative job titles</li> </ul>

LIMITED RESPONSE FROM APPLICATIONS

Issue	Possible Causes	Possible Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I posted my resume on a job board, but I've only received responses from jobs that do not interest me.</li> <li>I have sent my resume out for different types of jobs, but I haven't heard anything back yet.</li> <li>I have been applying to jobs for almost a year, but I still haven't been called for an interview.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most jobs (around 80%) are found through one's network</li> <li>Not tailoring your application materials (resume/cover letter) to fit the needs of each individual job you apply to</li> <li>Forgetting or not following the directions explicitly</li> <li>Significantly lacking skills/background to stand out from competition</li> <li>Applying to jobs outside of their typical hiring season</li> <li>Only applying to posted jobs (many jobs are NEVER posted)</li> <li>Most positions are very competitive and having limited relevant experience or contacts in the field could result in fewer interview invitations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spend majority of your job searching time networking and speaking with or developing your contacts</li> <li>Tailor all of your job materials to each individual job</li> <li>Make sure you are sending a cover letter for each job you apply to even if they do not ask for it</li> <li>Note your 'transferable skills' when changing from one area of experience into a brand new area</li> <li>Follow all instructions and fill in every required blank space when informed to do so</li> <li>Gain additional skills/experience by working or volunteering in relevant areas to become more competitive</li> <li>Find opportunities to gain more skills in areas of your interest through volunteer work or by taking on leadership roles in organizations</li> <li>Review your online image to make sure you are presenting yourself as a professional</li> </ul>

NO JOB OFFER AFTER INTERVIEW

Issue	Possible Causes	Possible Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have had lots of interviews, but I'm not getting any offers.</li> <li>I made it through a phone interview, but was not invited back for the second round.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited research of the company, position, or industry</li> <li>Limited preparation and practice of the possible questions/answers that may occur in the interview</li> <li>Poor first impression based on appearance, or appropriate business etiquette</li> <li>Poor non-verbal communication or providing inadequate or damaging answers during the interview</li> <li>Failure to follow up after interviews with professional thank you notes for all interviewers</li> <li>Job target is extremely competitive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perform a practice interview with staff or with volunteer employers within your school's career center</li> <li>Research the organization, position, and staff thoroughly prior to the interview</li> <li>Review your online image to make sure you are presenting as a professional</li> <li>Reflect on your previous accomplishments and challenges and practice speaking about them in relation to the specific skills needed for the job.</li> <li>Provide answers with examples (A+I or S.T.A.R. techniques) to demonstrate skills effectively</li> <li>Send thank you notes within 24 hours to all individuals who spent time at the interview</li> </ul>

CHALLENGES WITH CONTACTS / NETWORK

Issue	Possible Causes	Possible Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I don't know anyone that works at the company I'm interested in.</li> <li>I have reached out to my network but nobody is helping me.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small network of contacts</li> <li>Company is located in a different state/ country</li> <li>Just changed majors and do not have a network around new career goal</li> <li>Not building mutual relationships (i.e. just using people)</li> <li>Lack of professionalism when contacting network (i.e. not giving them enough time, asking for a 'job,' forgetting to assist them or say thanks after previous searches)</li> <li>Poor reputation (from class or online)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speak with faculty that are experts in that field</li> <li>Search alumni/professionals on LinkedIn for alternative job titles</li> <li>Utilize social media to find connections through other avenues</li> <li>Attend KU's various career fairs or employer information sessions</li> <li>Volunteer or join organizations where you can connect with people from that company</li> <li>Create professional relationships by giving back to the other party in some way</li> <li>Clean up the negative and create a more positive, professional online image</li> <li>Attend or join new organizations/groups to expand current network</li> </ul>

LONG-TERM CHALLENGES

Issue	Possible Causes	Possible Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think I have been doing everything right, but I still haven't been offered a job.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unknowingly skipping one or more elements recommended in the job search manual</li> <li>Job target is extremely competitive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review each section of the Strategies for a Successful Job Search booklet to ensure full participation</li> <li>Expand network and research into alternate job targets or alternate locations</li> <li>Contact your career services office to discuss further with a career coach</li> <li>Continue to build experiences through part-time jobs or volunteer activities</li> </ul>

# Job Search Resources

View popular online resources to assist you in your job search. See your career service’s website for more resources.

## Job, Internship and Volunteer Boards

**KU CAREER CONNECTIONS**

A searchable database of full-time, part-time, limited term, internship and volunteer position announcements targeted to KU students. Employers from across the country and the world post announcements. In addition to searching for jobs, you can upload your resume to KU Career Connections and have it available for referral to employers. You also have access to campus interview schedules where you can submit your resume and sign up for interviews online. Interviews take place in several career service offices on campus.

Indeed.com - web crawler job database for thousands of jobs based on geographical location. Millions of jobs are posted from a variety of sources.

USAjobs.gov - the Federal government’s official job list and search board with additional information for veterans and for individuals with disabilities.

Idealist.org - the world’s largest search engine for non-profit, government, volunteer, internship and social positions.

Simplyhired.com – Job posting board for millions of positions in 900+ unique occupations.

## Career and Major Exploration

Career.ku.edu/careersandmajors - explore career-related information for all KU undergraduate majors including common career paths, potential employers, job titles, and targeted job and internship search links.

GoGovernment.org - a guide to all aspects of obtaining federal government work including application process tips and finding the right fit.

O\*Net - extensive career exploration tool and job analysis guide for students interested in learning more about various careers. Assess current job trends and salary information, or filter jobs by skills, interests, and abilities.

## Researching Companies

Glassdoor.com - online resource that helps find you a job that you would enjoy with the inclusion of potential salaries, company reviews, candidate interview questions and more.

Vault.com - provides students with helpful career guides and articles, ranks top companies, and provides insider tips to career-related questions.

## Long Distance Job Search

Buzzfile.com - search employers by major, companies by state, and find demographic information for thousands of companies based on geographical location.

Business Journal - weekly business journal for 40 metropolitan areas with links to the popular Book of Lists which contains names and contact information for hundreds of rank-ordered area businesses.

Chambers of Commerce - provides an extensive list of all businesses within a specific geographic area.

## Networking through Social Media

LinkedIn - a personalized and interactive portfolio to interact and engage with your professional network and establish new relationships within your field of interest.

Facebook – use the “Friends of Friends” feature to extend your personal network and look for potential job opportunities. “Like” the companies that you want to be involved with and stay active on their professional pages.

Twitter - tweet “my jobs”, industry thought leaders, and people who you aspire to work with. Retweet articles and posts that you feel are relevant to your field of interest or to your companies’ mission.

Instagram - a visual platform to demonstrate your creativity, accomplishments, where you have been, where you are going, and who you have met along the way. Follow companies you are interested in and comment on their photos in a professional manner.

## International Resources

My World Abroad - comprehensive guide to all aspects of studying or working abroad including job boards for volunteering, teaching, or interning abroad, essentials to take with you, skills to building global career success, and links to many more resources.

MyVisaJobs.com - helpful website for international students seeking opportunities in the United States. Information is provided regarding international visas, necessary paperwork & forms, and top international employers.

GoinGlobal - up-to-date country specific career and employment information, career news, job search tools, work permit regulations, and interviewing and cultural advice. This site also connects students with recruiters, staffing agency contacts and professional and social networking groups.

Lean In for Graduates – web community with job, career and professional development advice for women and men plus links to lean-in circles and recorded lectures on a variety of professional development topics.

## Application Tracking Example

Company	Position	Location	Source	Date of Application	Notes/Reminders
Apex Systems	Sales Trainee	Wichita	Indeed.com	9/10	Recruiter is Tara Jones. Sent follow-up email on 9/18.
Federal Agency Q	Examiner	Kansas City	StudentJobs.gov	9/15	Learned about agency at on-campus career panel. Talked to Agent Nelson after the panel.
XYZ Consulting	Analyst	Chicago	KU Career Connections	9/22	Met at career fair. Talked with Matt Smith & applied for on-campus interview.
Empower Non-Profit	Development Coordinator	Topeka	Idealist.org	9/25	Identified three alumni on LinkedIn & sent connection requests to learn more about the organization.
Realty Advisors	Management Development Program	Kansas City	KU Career Connections	9/25	Information session on 10/5, 6 PM, Kansas Union. Business casual attire.
ABC Insurance	Brand Ambassador	Kansas City	Personal Lead	TBD	Check with Uncle Tim for possible introduction for an informational interview.

## Salary and Cost of Living Resources

CareerOneStop.org – Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, this site can be used to research salary information on over 800 occupations.

Money.cnn.com – Personal Finance Calculators – Cost of living calculators provide comparisons between geographic locations and ability to research average salaries by job title and location.

Payscale.com – a database of millions of individual salary profiles that will help you research careers and access salary information by job title and location, or by company.

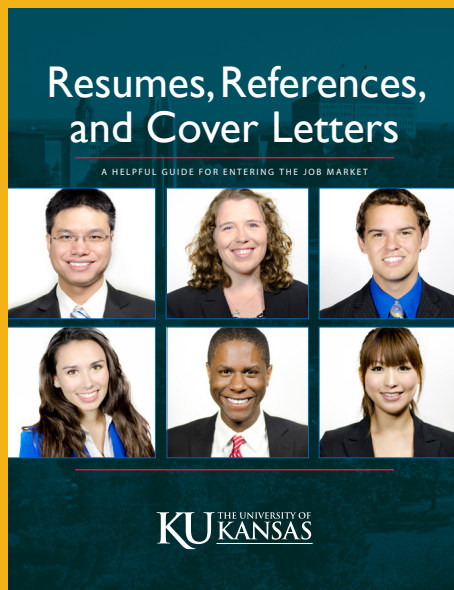
Sperling’s Best Places– helpful resource that offers cost of living comparisons between U.S. cities, including information on food, housing, utilities and transportation.

**NEGOTIATE AN OFFER**

If you need help negotiating an offer, contact your career services office for assistance.



*The “Strategies for a Successful Job Search” guide is part of a series.  
Get a copy of the “Resumes, References and Cover Letters” and  
“Preparing for Job Interviews” guides at your career services office.*



**Business Career Services**

Phone 785-864-5591

Email [kubuscareer@ku.edu](mailto:kubuscareer@ku.edu)  
[business.ku.edu/kubuscareer](http://business.ku.edu/kubuscareer)

**Journalism Career Center**

Phone 785-864-7630

Email [steve\\_rottinghaus@ku.edu](mailto:steve_rottinghaus@ku.edu)  
[journalism.ku.edu](http://journalism.ku.edu)

**Engineering Career Center**

Phone 785-864-3891

Email [ecc@ku.edu](mailto:ecc@ku.edu)  
[ecc.ku.edu](http://ecc.ku.edu)

**University Career Center**

Phone 785-864-3624

Email [ucc@ku.edu](mailto:ucc@ku.edu)  
[career.ku.edu](http://career.ku.edu)