

Strategies for a

SUCCESSFUL JOB SEARCH

A HELPFUL GUIDE TO ENTERING THE JOB MARKET



KU THE UNIVERSITY OF
KANSAS



Start with Focus → Prepare and Plan → Outreach and Apply

The job search process can take anywhere from 3 to 9 months, so you will need to be persistent and focused. It might seem overwhelming at first, but 15 to 20 minutes several days a week will easily get you started. 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.

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

- List out any employment or experiences — make note of anything that interested you or engaged your talents.
- Did you ever volunteer? What causes do you think are important?

It's easy to forget what you've accomplished, so take the time to dig into your past and get it all down in one place.

Turn Self-Inventory into Keywords

Looking back on your education and work history, make a list of your interests, natural talents, academic strengths, knowledge areas, skills, and values you have learned through your experiences. Ask friends and family what skills they see in you. Writing up several brief stories with highlighted keywords can help you start connecting your talents to job titles.

Self-Inventory

Strategic Job Searches Start with You

A successful job hunt means first understanding your own unique experiences, interests, and strengths. Investing the time into taking a deep-dive inventory will pay off! You'll have a clearer picture of where you should look and what you want your career to look like. Plus, it will help others to keep an eye out for you.

Job searching means finding answers to some big questions:

- What do I want to do?
- How does my experience, education, and interests translate to marketable skills?

Take Stock of Your Education & Experience

You're probably close to completing your degree, and your education can offer a wealth of information about what to look for in a job. Even if you have already decided that you don't want to look for the kinds of jobs that might be typically associated with your degree, reflecting on the experience can help point you towards resources or people that can help you identify job prospects.

- What projects, internships, or extracurricular experiences gave you the most satisfaction? Why?
- What clubs or groups did you belong to?
- Where can you find alumni with your major? (hint: check your department or the KU Alumni Association)

"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.

Shoot for 3-5 stories--the more effort you put into writing down these stories, the more information you'll have to work from! It's all about giving yourself options.

Feeling stuck? You can also use AI tools like ChatGPT to generate possible job targets. Using your self-inventory, you can ask prompts like, "Based on my _____ degree and experience with _____, what kind of jobs should I look for?" or "Generate 10 job titles based off of my interests, skills, major, and resume." This can help to open new opportunities and industries that you may not have considered before.

Convert Keywords into Job Titles

Keywords that reflect your talents, experience, and values are the building blocks of job titles. Use job search boards (see “Job, Internship and Volunteer Boards” in the “Job Search Resources” section) 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, writing, content

Job Titles: Digital Account Executive, Communication Specialist, Content Creator, Copywriter

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.

Adapt Job Titles to Industries

Job titles are not universal. In fact, many jobs that require the same skills are identified very differently depending on the industry, 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 use? 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 Environment 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 re-prioritize 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)

Prepare and Plan

Once you have a good idea of your strengths, experience, and priorities, there is still more prep work before you begin applying.

Prepare Your Professional Resume

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, and the contact information for a list of references. Some organizations may also ask you to include a personal statement or a letter of reference as well.

If you're looking for more support on building your resume, 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 SkillsFirst or make an appointment with a career advisor if you have questions or would like feedback.

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. Based on your inventory, highlight your top three unique talents, qualities, skills, 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. Try some of 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.
- Utilize other social media sites professionally such as X, Facebook, 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 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.

Social Media Management

Most employers will look up a candidate's online presence at some point in the hiring process. Before you start connecting with individuals or following their organizations, make sure your online image is consistent with how you want to be viewed.

- 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.
- 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.



Create Your Professional Pitch

Be able to confidently and clearly talk about your background, abilities, and future aspirations in about 30 seconds. This is your "professional pitch."

WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL PITCH?

Imagine you met 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?"

HOW TO CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

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. Informational interview are also an incredibly powerful tool for getting referrals and inside tips on jobs and companies that are hiring.

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, email, or message them through LinkedIn 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 Email/Phone

Once you have an introduction, reach out by email, phone, or LinkedIn. Use this template if you need a little help!

"Hello Mr. Jones, my name is (intentional blank space), and I am a student at The University of Kansas, finishing this semester with a degree in (intentional blank space). I got 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 (intentional blank space), and I am trying to find out as much as I can about this line of work. I would appreciate meeting with you to discuss the (intentional blank space) profession, if you have the time. I'd only need 20-30 minutes. 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 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.

HOW TO ATTEND A CAREER FAIR

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.

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 “Professional Pitch” on page 7).
- Attend a preparatory workshop or schedule a meeting with a member of your career services office.



During the Career Fair

- Bring copies of your resume and a portfolio to hold them, paper, pen and breath mints.
- Wear 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 professional pitch 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

- 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 PROFESSIONAL PITCH 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?
- What separates your organization from the competition?
- What opportunities does your company offer for individual professional development?
- May I contact you if I want to learn more about career postings at your organization?



Job Prospecting

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. Job prospecting requires a lot of patience and persistence, as you're more likely to hear "no" than "yes" – but you never know unless you ask!

Career Networking Events

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 to recruit talented individuals for their companies or organizations.

Social Networking

More than ever, employers are going online to recruit new hires and gather information on potential and current employees. Sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, and X 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 page 11). By expanding your network online, you will find more opportunities within the hidden job market.

Many companies will post job openings on social media. "Follow" or "Like" these companies for their current postings along with information on the company, employees, and culture.

Finding Job Openings

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.

Skill Certifications and Training

The jobs you're wanting to apply for may require training that you don't yet have. For example, you may have noticed that social media manager jobs often prefer candidates with Google Analytics certification or experience with Excel. Fortunately, there are many resources (and often free) that can help to patch up the holes in your resume. You may also check out Jayhawk Flex, which offers competency-based learning.

Outreach and Apply

With your resume and professional pitch set (though always likely to change), you're ready for the third stage of job searching. This is where you begin to tell others what you're looking for, do some in-depth research and relationship building through informational interviews, and apply for positions.

Network

Rekindle Your Network

From friends to colleagues to family members, you already 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.

Think about people you've met in your classes, volunteering, internships, part-time or summer jobs, and extracurricular or professional organizations. Don't forget about your family, friends, and other social connections! You never know who is connected to a particular industry or company, so don't worry about eliminating anyone from your list. Just list as many people as possible that you have a connection to and can ask about your job search (don't forget, you can offer to help other people with their job search, too!).

Tell Your Network About Your Job Search

Spread the word! The individuals in your network 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. It can be as easy as sharing a one sentence version of your professional pitch:

"I'm looking for jobs that deal with sustainability research at non-profits – know anyone who works at an environmental non-profit?"

These contacts may be able to both recommend relevant opportunities and 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, ask about it. Don't be shy! People are often willing to share contact information or to arrange an introduction.

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

Hiring Cycles and Recruitment Methods

Some industries tend to only hire during specific times. For example, education will typically post jobs in the late winter/spring. In the sports industry, hiring cycles are usually in full swing when a team is in its off season.

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 soon.

There are other outlets where you can uncover job opportunities – visit with a member of the career center to learn more about how they may apply to your job search:

- 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

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 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, use 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

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 take on the local environment. Conduct informational interviews 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.

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?

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.



Manage Your Job Search

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? Pay attention to 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. Keep track of your various applications on a spreadsheet so that you have a record of deadlines, submission dates and notifications from the various companies.



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. Develop a plan for each week to guide your work and to stay on task during your dedicated work time.



My Job Search Plan - Week of _____

Digital Account Executive for an environment 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

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]

Company	Position	Location	Source	Date	Notes/Reminders
Apex Systems	Sale Trainee	Wichita	Indeed.com	9/10	Recruiter is Tara Jones. Sent follow-up email on 9/18.
Federal Agency Q	Examiner	Kansas City	Career Panel (at KU)	9/15	Learned about agency at on-campus career panel. Talked to Agent Nelson after the panel.
XYZ Consulting	Analyst	Chicago	Handshake	9/22	Met at career fair. Talked with Matt Smith & applied for on-campus interview.
Empower Non-Profit	Development Coordinator	Topeka	LinkedIn & Idealist.org	9/25	Identified three alumni on LinkedIn & sent connection requests to learn more about the organization.
Reality Advisors	Management Development Program	Kansas City	Handshake	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.

Interview

When you are invited to interview for a position, 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 prepare. 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

NOT SURE WHERE TO START

Issue

- I'm not sure what jobs to search for?
- I just realized I don't want the career I have been planning to do...now what?
- I just started at KU, and I'm not sure what I should do next for my future?
- I can't seem to find any other job titles that interest me.

Possible Causes

- Lack of insight into your own strengths/interests
- Limited understanding of possible career choices
- Limited work experience to draw from
- Wide interests with skills and abilities to do a variety of jobs well
- Limited knowledge of industry or career path
- Lack of exploration into your field(s)

Possible Solutions

- Meet with career coach and discuss taking a career-related assessment to help generate ideas of where to start exploring
- Intern, volunteer or join a student organization to gain insight into your own skills, abilities, values, and work preferences
- Conduct informational interviews with friends, alumni, or other professionals to understand career options more effectively
- Explore areas of current interest and know that you always have the freedom to add/or change your career as you gain more experience
- Speak with faculty that are experts in that field
- Search alumni/professionals on LinkedIn for alternative job titles

LIMITED RESPONSES FROM APPLICATIONS

Issue

- I posted my resume on a job board, but I've only received responses from jobs that do not interest me.
- I have sent my resume out for different types of jobs, but I haven't heard anything back yet.
- I have been applying to jobs for almost a year, but I still haven't been called for an interview.

Possible Causes

- Most jobs (around 80%) are found through one's network
- Not tailoring your application materials (resume/cover letter) to fit the needs of each individual job you apply to
- Forgetting or not following the directions explicitly
- Significantly lacking skills/background to stand out from competition
- Applying to jobs outside of their typical hiring season
- Only applying to posted jobs (many jobs are NEVER posted)
- Most positions are very competitive and having limited relevant experience or contacts in the field could result in fewer interview invitations

Possible Solutions

- Spend majority of your job searching time networking and speaking with or developing your contacts
- Tailor all of your job materials to each individual job
- Make sure you are sending a cover letter for each job you apply to even if they do not ask for it
- Note your 'transferable skills' when changing from one area of experience into a brand new area
- Follow all instructions and fill in every required blank space when informed to do so
- Gain additional skills/experience by working or volunteering in relevant areas to become more competitive
- Find opportunities to gain more skills in areas of your interest through volunteer work or by taking on leadership roles in organizations
- Review your online image to make sure you are presenting yourself as a professional

TROUBLESHOOT THE JOB SEARCH

NO JOB OFFER AFTER INTERVIEW

Issue

- I have had lots of interviews, but I'm not getting any offers.
- I made it through a phone interview, but was not invited back for the second round.

Possible Causes

- Limited research of the company, position or industry
- Limited preparation and practice of the possible questions/answers that may occur in the interview
- Poor first impression based on appearance, or appropriate business etiquette
- Poor non-verbal communication or providing inadequate or damaging answers during the interview
- Failure to follow up after interviews, with professional thank you notes for all interviewers
- Job target is extremely competitive

Possible Solutions

- Perform a practice interview with staff or with volunteer employers within school's career center
- Research the organization, position, and staff thoroughly prior to the interview
- Review your online image to make sure you are presenting as a professional
- Reflect on our previous accomplishments and challenges and practice speaking about them in relation to the specific skills needed for the job
- Provide answers with examples (A+I or S.T.A.R. techniques) to demonstrate skills effectively
- Send thank you notes within 24 hours to all individuals who spent time at the interview

CHALLENGES WITH CONTACTS/NETWORK

Issue

- I don't know anyone that works at the company I'm interested in.
- I have reached out to my network but nobody is helping me.

Possible Causes

- Small network of contacts
- Company is located in a different state/country
- Just changed majors and do not have a network around new career goal
- Not building mutual relationships (i.e. just using people)
- 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)
- Poor reputation (from class or online)

Possible Solutions

- Speak with faculty that are experts in the field
- Search alumni/professionals on LinkedIn for alternative job titles
- Utilize social media to find connections through other avenues
- Attend KU's various career fairs or employer information sessions
- Volunteer or join organizations where you can connect with people from that company
- Create professional relationships by giving back to the other party in some way
- Clean up the negative and create a more positive, professional online image
- Attend or join a new organizations/groups to expand current network

LONG-TERM CHALLENGES

Issue

- I think I have been doing everything right, but I still haven't been offered a job

Possible Causes

- Unknowingly skipping one or more elements recommended in the job search manual
- Job target is extremely competitive

Possible Solutions

- Review each section of the Strategies for a Successful Job Search booklet to ensure full participation
- Expand network and research into alternative job targets or alternative locations
- Contact your career services office to discuss further with a career coach
- Continue to build experience through part-time jobs or volunteer activities

Job Search Resources

Below are additional resources for your job search. See your career service's website for more resources.

Job, Internship, and Volunteer Boards

HANDSHAKE

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 Handshake and have it available for referral to employers.

- 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.
- NPConnect.org - Nonprofit jobs and internships in the Kansas City area.

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.
- O*Net, onetonline.org - 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.

Long Distance Job Search

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

Networking Through Social Media

LinkedIn - cultivate and engage with your professional network and establish new relationships within your field of interest.

KU Mentoring+ - the University's home for connecting with KU Alumni from around the world for developing mentoring connections for career exploration, job shadowing, networking, and more!

NEGOTIATE AN OFFER

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

Resume, Cover Letter and mock Interview Prep

SkillsFirst - AI tool for generating and reviewing resumes, cover letters, pitches and mock interviews.

Top Job Resources

- ☐ Handshake
- ☐ SkillsFirst
- ☐ Mentoring+
- ☐ Indeed.com
- ☐ LinkedIn.com
- ☐ Idealist
- ☐ USAjobs.gov
- ☐ NPconnect
- ☐ Chambers of Commerce
- ☐ O*Net
- ☐ Careers + KU majors
- ☐ Indeed Job Search Academy



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.

University Career Center

Phone 785-864-3624

Email ucc@ku.edu

career.ku.edu

Business Professional Development Program

Email professionalism@ku.edu

business.ku.edu

Engineering Career Center

Phone 785-864-3891

Email ecc@ku.edu

ecc.ku.edu

Journalism Career Center

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