

THE JOB IN FINDING WORK

Job search, like most other things you do, has a better chance of success if you use planning, preparation and strategy along the way. It is important to remember that finding a job that is right for you will be full-time work. To be successful you will have to plan your actions and keep records of the employers you've contacted.

Before you start to plan the actual search, it is a good idea to know **exactly** what skills you can offer an employer; what jobs you can do; and what your expectations are about your new career.

KEEP TRACK OF YOUR PROGRESS

Whenever you apply for a job, it is a good idea to write down the name and title of the person you applied to, the company's name, whether you sent a resumé or filled out an application, and what the results of the interview were, etc. Use your tracking sheets to chart the progress of your job search; places you've applied to, interviews you've had and which companies seemed more interested in you than others.

Keep track of the telephone calls you make. Write down your questions and what you want to say beforehand, especially if you tend to be nervous on the phone.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

The job search starts with self-assessment, the process through which you evaluate yourself and your skills and identify those qualities which help to find and maintain a career. Your self-assessment will assist you in marketing yourself to prospective employers. You will be able to communicate positively about yourself in a resumé or covering letter, during an interview and on the job.

To learn more about yourself you may use self-inventories, formal tests, input from others and self observation. You may think you know yourself well. However, are you aware of how others perceive you? Whether you use one or more methods, you will benefit from an objective and current self-analysis. The results will be a new "whole-self" image.

A thorough self-assessment:

- identifies patterns of strengths and weaknesses
- highlights achievements and capabilities
- develops self-confidence
- transforms negatives into positives
- identifies areas to improve
- provides a basis for judging degree of improvement
- increases willingness to accept new challenges
- enables you to communicate your qualifications to employers
- assists in selecting a career which will be rewarding

Personal Characteristics

Your personality affects your career choices. Different personality characteristics are suited to different occupations. Do you like to work as part of a team or do you like to work alone? Do you like to work under pressure or does the idea of working close to deadlines cause you to panic? If your job complements your personality, then you are likely to be happy with your job.

Many employers are interested in your personal qualities. They will be investing time, money and effort in your training and will want to know what type of person you are. Some personality traits are just as important to employers as related work experience and academic qualifications.

Interests and Skills

Your best skills are probably the ones that interest you and that you enjoy doing the most. These should form the foundation of any career or job that you choose. How would you describe your skills to an employer?

- **Personal Skills**: These are personality traits that you've developed and may include: ability to work alone or in a group, acceptance of authority, enjoy pressure, creative, etc. Avoid the job where you cannot be yourself.
- **Work Skills**: Specific work skills are often thought of as technical skills. They involve distinct job conditions, terminology, tools and equipment. Specific work content skills are related to performing tasks in a particular occupation, according to the specifications and conditions of a particular employer.
- **Transferable Skills**: These skills are ones you take with you from one environment to another. You have developed useful, transferable skills through interests, hobbies, education, and other work experiences. These skills include: problem solving, researching, organizing, writing, selling, teaching others, etc.

WORK VALUES

Work values are aspects of work that people consider important. Your level of job satisfaction is frequently determined by how you view the importance and suitability of your work. You will be happy in a job where your work activities and benefits relate to your interests and needs.

Some values will be very important to you but not to others. Review the

following list and determine the importance of each for your satisfaction and success:

- **job security**
- **interesting work**
- **working conditions**
- **supervision**
- **ease of job**
- **training packages**
- **fringe benefits**
- **hours of work**
- **opportunity to learn or use new ideas**
- **opportunity for advancement/**
- **recognition**

WORKSHEET: ANALYZE YOURSELF

SKILLS

- what you do well
- technical skills and knowledge

INTERESTS

- what you enjoy doing
- likes and dislikes, from past experience
- hobbies and pastimes

NEEDS - PERSONAL NEEDS

- money
- security
- location
- status/recognition
- career development
- working alone versus in a team

STYLE - CHARACTERISTIC APPROACH TO WORK

- "thinker" versus "do-er"
- risk taker
- at what pace do you prefer to work?

WORKSHEET: JOB EXPECTATIONS

To make sure your career takes you where you want to go, you need to know your values and the working conditions you're prepared to accept. Answer the following questions. The answers should help you see what to expect, personally and professionally, from your participation in the workforce.

1. Is location of employment important to you?
Do you prefer a city, town or rural environment?
Would you be willing to move to a different area?
2. Are you free to travel?
3. How much responsibility do you want in your job?
Do you want to work independently or do you want direction?
Do you want to supervise others?
4. How much time are you willing to give?
Do you want to work full time or part time?
Could you work nights and / or weekends?
5. Do you prefer to work indoors or outdoors?
Is it important that your workplace be neat and clean?
Are there other factors about your environment that are important to you?
6. Are you willing to do work that requires physical strength?
7. Do you prefer to work for a large or small company or department?
8. Do you prefer working on your own or as a member of a team?
9. Do you have long-term career goals?
Are you looking for opportunities to gain new skills on the job?
Are promotion opportunities important to you? Explain.
10. What salary do you expect?
Take into account your family needs, the cost of working, personal needs,
and your long-term career plans.

While you are a student, if you need assistance to answer these questions, remember that Student Employment Services can help you identify your skills, attitudes, and values through discussions and self-directed exercises. Visit the Student Employment Services Office on campus for advice.

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