

## *HOW TO FIND THAT PERFECT JOB* *(or, how to be methodical in developing your job search plan)*

### **#1- GET A FOCUS**

**Before you even begin your job search, make sure you can confidently answer these questions:**

- Have you investigated potential career options that are both related and unrelated to your major?
- Can you clearly identify your skills, interests, and values?
- Have you carefully considered and made decisions about the following:
  - the environment you would like to work in?
  - the activities you would like to do on a daily basis?
  - the specific skills you would use whether you currently possess them or not?
  - who you would report to?
  - what part of the country you would be located in?
- Are you limiting yourself by assuming certain things about the world of work (i.e. only people with business degrees get jobs in the business world)?
- **Do you know where to find answers to your questions about career options?**

**If you cannot confidently answer, “yes” to these questions, take the time develop your focus. Your Career Consultant can be a good resource to assist you with this important step.**

### **#2 - OBTAIN THE NECESSARY INFORMATION**

**Become more informed about potential employers and the job market.**

- Develop a realistic understanding about the specific careers you are considering.
- Set up informational interviews (see the Success Guide on Informational Interviews) with employers of interest to gain insight into career opportunities within their organizations.

- **Survey career opportunities in the job market.**
- Network, network, network!
- Familiarize yourself with career resources
- Use your local library: books, magazines and directories.
- Search the Internet.
- Focus on possible employers listed geographically.
- Identify professional organizations/associations related to your field of interest.
- Attend national conventions of professional organizations to utilize their placement services and other personal contact

**# 3 - COMPILE YOUR ACTION LIST**

**Based on the information you obtain above, generate a list of ten career choices that include some or all the characteristics you identified. Prioritize these career choices by assigning a number from 1 to 10. For each career choice, identify a minimum of four employers and their contact information.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

- a. \_\_\_\_\_

- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

6.

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- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

7.

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- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

8.

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- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

9.

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- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

10.

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- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

**You have now completed your initial contact list!**

## #4 - DEVELOP THE RIGHT TOOLS

***After you have focused your job search goals, and obtained a good understanding of the employment market, is the right time to fine tune your job-seeking tools: resume, cover letters, informational and formal interview skills. Consider these questions:***

- Do you have an effective resume that targets the type of position(s) you are seeking?
- Is your cover letter creative and concise?
- Do you know how to use these job-seeking tools?

**If you did not answer a confident “yes” to these questions there are plenty of resources to assist you.**

For resume and cover letter resources:

- Research current resources concerning job-seeking tools available in the Career and Professional Development Center’s Library and also from your Career Consultant. You will also find resources at your local library, and at bookstores.
- Obtain the Career and Professional Development Center’s *Career Guide* and the *Success Guide on Resumes*. Collect examples of resumes, cover letters and interviewing information.
- You can never proof read enough. Have several individuals review the rough drafts of your resume and cover letters.
- Also, come to walk-in advising or schedule an appointment to have your resume and cover letter critiqued. Call 412-268-2064 to find out available times.

**To sharpen your interviewing and networking skills, attend:**

- A mock interview (schedule through TartanTRAK with a real employer at the beginning of each semester)
- Job Fairs
- Job search workshops
- ***Meetings at a professional organization related to your field of interest***

## #5 - TAKE ACTION

With your list of potential employers and the necessary job-seeking tools you are now ready to contact potential employers. Your Career Consultant is a good resource to help you finalize your plan.

- Contact potential employers according to your plan of action.
- Maintain a record of when you sent your information to each employer, when you followed-up, who you spoke with, and other relevant notes.
- **Continue to investigate new job resources through networking contacts and professional organizations.**

- Frequently check the position vacancies posted on TartanTrak at <http://www.studentaffairs.cmu.edu/career/tartantrak/>
- **Become familiar with the job-hunting sites available through the Internet. Career opportunities are also found listed in professional journals, employment agencies and newspapers.**

## #6 - REASSESS YOUR PLAN

It is important to continually re-evaluate and refocus your plan of action.

- Schedule time *each day* to commit to your job search.
- Understand that it is not unusual for the job search to take 4-6 months.
- Follow-up with the places that you have sent cover letters and resumes.
- **If you have interviewed for a position, be sure to follow up with a thank you letter.**
- Put energy into maintaining the confidence that you will land a job of your choice. It is not uncommon for confidence to lag if you are not getting the kind of response you desire. What are some of the ways that you can boost your confidence?

### What will I do if my strategies are not yielding the desired results?

- Initially, you want to assess if you are putting the needed amount of time and energy into developing your job search.
- Re-evaluate your total job seeking strategy and if necessary, revisit the steps above if you think your strategies may need some strengthening.
- Consider alternative careers that are a good fit for you.
- Your Career Consultant is a good resource you if need assistance with identifying possible alternatives or help he or she can help you evaluate the effectiveness of your current strategies.
- Assess your interviews for areas of improvement. Have you sent thank you letters to the interviewers afterward? Discuss your interviewing experiences with your Career Consultant if you think there may be a need to sharpen your skills.
- Continue to network, network, and network!

