

Job Search Guide

Table of Contents

STEP 1: Self-Assessment	3-6
Career Wheel Brainstorming	4-5
The Career Wheel	6
STEP 2: Research and Explore Career Options	7
STEP 3: Select a Career Field and Target Employers	8-9
STEP 4: Prepare Job Search Materials and Develop Job Search Skills	10-12
Resume	10
Interviewing	11-12
STEP 5: Arrange Job Search Campaign	13
STEP 6: Continue to Develop Career Action Plan	14-17
Salary Negotiation	14
3 Steps to Networking	16
Networking log sheet	17

Two books I recommend for every person beginning a job search:

How to Get Any Job With Any Major by Donald Asher

What Color Is Your Parachute? by Richard Nelson Bolles

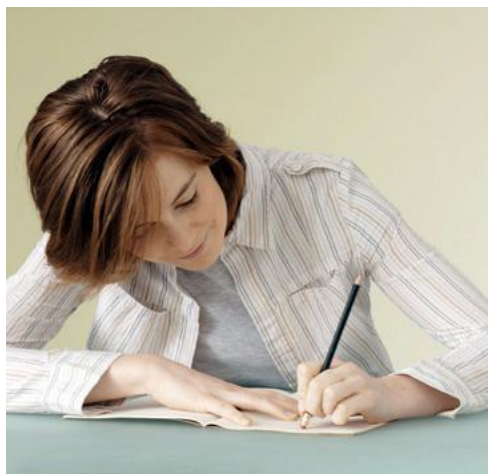
STEP 1: Self-Assessment

Self-Assessment is the most important step in the job search process.

- Understand your **strengths** and **weaknesses** and how to articulate them in your job search materials, to network contacts, and to potential employers
- Attending a liberal arts institution has made you **very marketable** and there are **many job markets** and industries **available** to you. Self-assessment is important to narrow down which markets will be the **best fit**.
- You must also consider **what factors are most important** in your job search. If you have no idea where to start, visit Career Development right away to take a free assessment.

The Career Wheel

This tool is designed as a wheel because each section will have an influence in your career decisions. Do not exclude anything that you think of because you do not think it is practical or you do not see how it applies to a career. Wait until you have the entire wheel done and you can see a complete picture of your career personality. If you have any problems answering any questions or want to review your completed wheel, make an appointment with the career counselor in the Office of Career Development.



Career Wheel Brainstorming

Note your thoughts for each category within the wheel.

1. **Skills:** What are you good at? What do you enjoy doing? What have you done in previous jobs that you enjoyed?

2. **Values:** What is most important for people to remember about you? If someone could only say one thing about you, how would you want him or her to describe you? Is it important to you that your job allows you to enact change? Do you need a job with a lot of prestige? Do you need a job with a high salary?

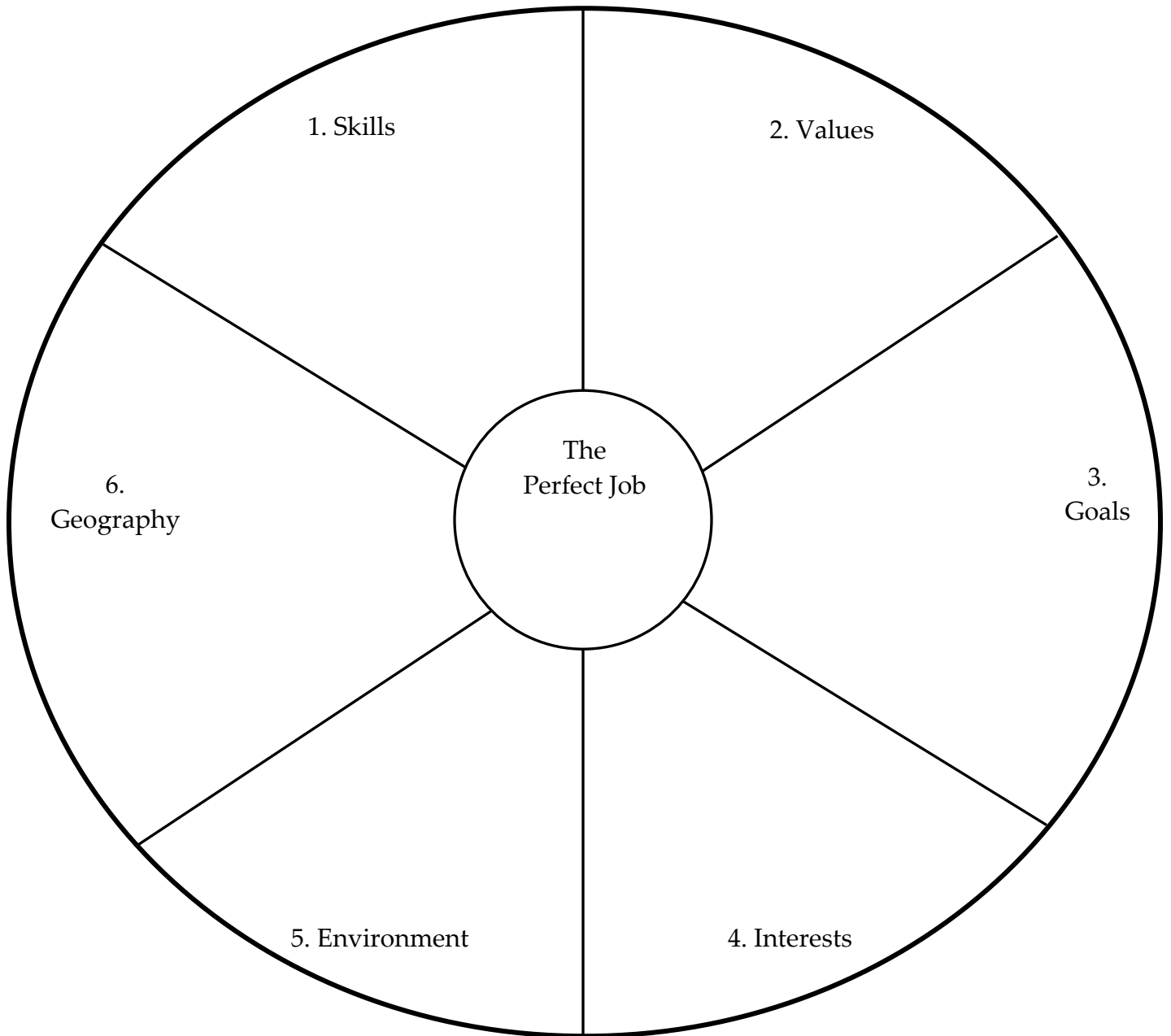
3. **Goals:** What is your motivation for work? What will bring you satisfaction at the end of a day/week/month/year?

4. **Interests:** Do you want to work with people, things, data, ideas? Do you like math, literature, psychology, athletics? If you could only talk about one thing all day, what would it be? What are the subjects of the books you read for leisure? Consider your hobbies and extracurricular activities and how those may translate into job opportunities.

5. **Environment:** This area includes your actual work environment. Do you want to work inside or outside? How do you feel about sitting at a desk most of the day? Can you follow someone else's schedule or do you need to make your own? Do you want to work for a small, medium, or large organization? Again, note things you liked and disliked about previous jobs.

6. **Geography:** This area is focused on your ability to move and desired living location. Where would you like to live? Think about the places you have lived in the past and ideas you have had for the future. Consider the factors you liked and disliked about previous locations. Are you willing to move? If so, how far? (*The factor of geography might not be applicable for you immediately but may be something to consider for the future.*)

The Career Wheel



STEP 2: Research and Explore Career Options

Gather information on the industry

- Find out the current situation in the industry you are considering
- Find out the future situation for the industry (growing, declining, outsourcing)

Gather a list of job titles within the industry

- Research the qualifications for each job title
- Identify the salary expectations for each job
- Explore the professional organizations and other methods of entry for each job title.

Many professional organizations have job postings within their organization's website.

Sources of information for this step:

Office of Career Development: The Office of Career Development has a full resources library with information on various industries and the top-rated entry-level positions. You can also make an appointment with a career counselor, who can help direct you in your job search.

The Occupational Outlook Handbook: The Handbook is available in the Career Development resource library or online at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>. It covers job descriptions, forecasts, requirements, and salary expectations. It also lists professional organizations and sources of additional information.

Occupational Information Network: Found at <http://online.onetcenter.org>, this resource can help you sort occupations by job families, interests, and key words. You can search by job families, industries, and key words.

*** Steps 3 and 4 below will likely occur simultaneously – as you target employers you will need to be prepared with your job search materials ***

STEP 3: Select a Career Field and Target Employers

Once you have narrowed down your career interests to a few fields, you will need to figure out how to target employers within those fields. Most jobs fall into the following three categories:

1. **Anticipated:** These jobs are typically **filled very quickly**. They are typically well-advertised and available through campus interviews, job fairs, or other similar events. The anticipated job market covers about **5% of all jobs**.
2. **Published:** The published job market includes positions that are found through employment agencies and advertisements. This job market only covers about **10% of available jobs**.
3. **Hidden:** The hidden job market contains the positions that are not advertised and are usually acquired through networking and contacts. This market covers **80-90% of the overall job market**.



To have the most success in your job search, you should **focus** your efforts on **the hidden job market**. There are several strategies and resources available to you. The most successful method is a combination of strategies. Listed below are a few of the most common.

- **Networking:** Expanding the list of people who know about you and your knowledge and skills will give you a better chance of hearing about unpublished job opportunities.
- **Informational Interviews:** An informational interview is basically a short interview with someone currently in the field you are exploring. This is not a job interview and you should never ask for/about a job during an informational interview. Informational interviewing can also help you develop your list of network contacts. For more information on informational interviewing, check out the Informational Interview Guide, available on myPBA and in the Office of Career Development.
- **Career Development:** The Office of Career Development coordinates all campus job fairs. It is also a great resource for general career counseling, resume critique, mock interviews, and other related job search assistance. The office also maintains listings for part-time and full-time jobs in the area.
- **Classifieds:** While the classifieds and other job postings in print are actually a small percentage of the actual jobs available, they can be helpful in your job search. You can use advertisements to gauge the qualifications and experience necessary in a certain field. You can also learn more about companies by what they advertise.
- **Direct Visits/Cold Calling/Public Job Fairs:** This strategy involves most of your face-to-face contacts. It is very time-consuming, but it is a valuable way to expand your list of network contacts.
- **Internet:** Similar to classified advertisements, it may be hard to find most available positions online. Use the internet to research companies and find their contact information. Most professional organizations also maintain websites with up-to-date information for the field and specialized job boards. The internet can be used successfully if you know where to look.
- **Employment Agencies:** NEVER USE AN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY THAT MAKES YOU PAY A FEE! Employment agencies are most helpful if you are planning to move out of state or to an area where you are unfamiliar with local businesses. Be sure to get recommendations and ask the agency about their success rate.

STEP 4: Prepare Job Search Materials and Develop Job Search Skills

The two main factors that influence your job search success are the resume and the interview.

Resume

Without a good resume, a job search is pointless. You will not be able even to get your foot in the door. Your resume is not a job history; you will typically have a place for that on the actual job application. Your resume is your opportunity to sell yourself to the employer and demonstrate that your specific education, skills, and experience make you the best fit for the position. The average employer spends about 30 seconds - 1 minute reviewing your resume so you have a very limited amount of time and space to convince them that you are the best fit for the position. Some basic do's and don'ts include:

Do

- Include your name, address, phone numbers, and e-mail
- List objective, education, and experience
- Use bullet points and action words
- Feature 3-5 jobs most closely related to position
- Focus on the skills and accomplishments most closely related to those in the potential position
- Type clearly and error free
- Maintain consistency in layout
- Proofread
- Use white space effectively

Don't

- Write in paragraphs
- Include a complete work history
- LIE!!!!!!
- Use photographs
- Include information unrelated to the position
- Include salary information
- List personal information
- Use Xerox copies or thin paper
- Mail without a cover letter

For more information about resume and cover letter writing, pick up a copy of the Resume Writing Guide, available on myPBA and in the Office of Career Development.

Interviewing

A well-written resume will get you in the door, but unless you can back it up with a successful interview, your job search will stall there. An interview is your opportunity to convince the employer that **you** (*with your unique set of education, skills, and experience*) are the perfect fit for the organization.

A few important tips:

- **Use the Four R's**
 - **REFLECT** – on what you can offer the employer from your education and experiences
 - **RESEARCH** – about the company and your potential position
 - **REHEARSE** – your answers to typical interview questions and questions that you will ask the employer
 - **REMEMBER** – that each interview will teach you something new about the process. Learn from each experience and apply it to the next interview.
- **Hard Skills vs. Soft Skills**
 - Hard Skills are the skills that are usually listed first on a job posting/description. 'Two years experience', 'knowledge of C++ programming' are examples of hard skills. Most people who apply for the position will have the same hard skills to offer the employer. **What will set you apart are your soft skills.**
 - Soft skills are the skills you have likely picked up throughout your education and previous experiences. They are also called *transferable skills* because you can use them in a variety of different situations.

Soft skills include

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| ▪ Communication skills | ▪ Interdependence |
| ▪ Interpersonal skills | ▪ Honesty/integrity |
| ▪ Ability to read and follow directions | ▪ Analytical skills |
| | ▪ Adaptability |

- **Non-verbal communication**
 - Smile
 - Offer a firm handshake
 - Dress neatly and professionally
- **Send a thank-you note ASAP after your interview**
- **Top mistakes made in the interview process**
 - A Lack of Enthusiasm
 - Unprofessional Behavior
 - Poor Research Prior to Interviews
 - Lying to Employers
 - A Lack of Direction
 - Weak Communication Skills
 - Failure to Sell Yourself

For more information on the interview process including typical questions asked by employers, pick up a copy of the interviewing guide, available on myPBA and in the Office of Career Development.



STEP 5: Arrange Job Search Campaign

An average job search can last from 3-6 months. This includes the time it takes you to build your list of contacts, polish your resume, apply for several positions, and complete the interviewing process. You should start the job search process ***at least*** by your last semester before graduation. Consider the job search process at least a part-time job and dedicate that amount of time and resources to your search.

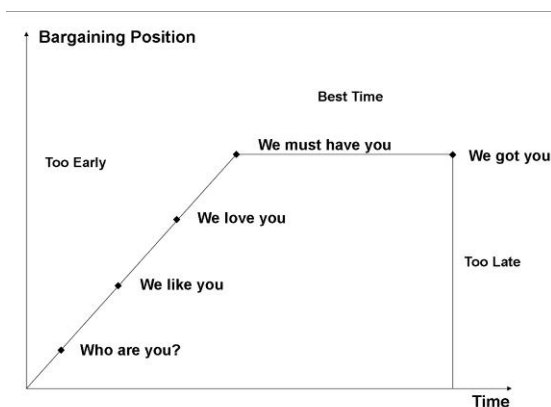
Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Start by building your list of contacts** and begin to meet with them (*see the networking guide at the end of this packet*).
- **Use a calendar and maintain a schedule.** You should be dedicating a specific amount of time each day to your job search – whether calling a contact, researching an industry, or searching job listings.
- **Take a second look** at your resume and cover letter, especially if you have been looking for a while with little success.
- **To whom it may concern.** Addressing an application/resume in this way will almost guarantee it ends up in the trash – it is the same for ‘Director of Human Resources’ or ‘Hiring Manager’. Find out who is actually responsible for hiring and address your materials to them.
- **Don’t wait for the phone to ring.** About a week after you submit an application, make sure to call the contact person to make sure they have all your materials. It will also help to bring your name back to the top of the pile.

STEP 6: Continue to Develop Career Action Plan

Once you are offered a job, your job search is not over. For most positions, there will be some flexibility in salary. The key is to negotiate at the appropriate time.

- Never discuss salary until the end of the interviewing process, when they have definitely said they want you
- The purpose of salary negotiation is to uncover the most that an employer is willing to pay to get you
- Try never to be the first one to mention a salary figure
- Before you go to the interview, do some careful homework on how much you will need, if you are offered this job
- Before you go to the interview, do some careful research on typical salaries for your field and/or that organization
- Define a range that the employer has in mind, and then define an inter-related range for yourself
- Know how to bring the salary negotiation to a close, don't leave it hanging



More information on this topic can be found in

Negotiating Your Salary: How to Make \$1000 a Minute by Jack Chapman (available in the Career Development resource library)

Other tips:

- Remember to **keep your resume updated**. It is easier to remember what you do in each job while you are doing it, not a few years later when you start your next search.
- **Don't neglect your contacts**. No one likes to feel used; don't ignore your contacts after you get the job. Having some form of contact (phone call, e-mail, greeting card) with them every 3-6 months is sufficient.
- **Career development**. Take every opportunity to continue your professional development. Read scholarly journals in your field, make presentations about current research or accomplishments, and attend professional conferences. The more often you can 'get your name out there' the more success you will have in your next search.



3 Steps to Networking

Networking is one of the best ways to find the job you want. Some of the best positions are not publicly advertised, so the only way to find out about them are through other people.

Networking should be viewed as building relationships with your contacts – be careful of ‘schmoozing’ them or ignoring them after you have what you want. You will ‘burn bridges’ and end up with a bad reputation in the field that you will regret. The basic purpose of networking is to ensure that the relationship you have with your contact means that you will be the first person they think of when an opportunity in the field emerges.

Step 1: Who Do You Know?

Make a list of potential contacts. Most can be grouped into four categories: family, friends, alumni, and faculty. Talk to your parents; they may have friends who will be able to help you in your search.

Step 2: Practice Your Pitch

The first contact with the people in your network is the most important. It is often called an ‘elevator pitch’ because you should be able to describe who you are and what you are looking for within 1-2 minutes (or an elevator ride). A sample speech may be as follows:

- ❖ I am _____, and I am looking for a job in _____. Do you have a few minutes to talk to me about your experiences in that field?
- ❖ I am trying to find a job in _____. Do you know anyone in that field whom I may be able to contact?
- ❖ I (have just/am about to) graduate(d) with my degree in _____. Do you have any advice for me as I enter the professional world?

Step 3: Follow Through

Continue to follow up with your contact while you are looking and even after you have a job. Ask them how they are doing and update them on your job search. Consider building a chart to keep track of your conversations with contacts so you do not repeat yourself and so you can maintain consistent contact with them (*sample chart included on the next page*).

Contact Name	Relationship	Phone #	E-mail	Contact History:
John Smith	PBA Alumni	561-123-4567	John_Smith@pba.edu	2/12 – given his name by business professor 2/27 – left message at work number and sent e-mail 3/3 – received e-mail reply, busy during tax season but set lunch appt 3/15 – met for lunch to talk about working as an accountant – gave me phone number of hiring manager at his firm