



Job-Search Strategies

Job Hunter
Workshop Series



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Workshop overview

Welcome to job-search strategies. Finding a job is a very personal responsibility. We each have our own techniques, processes and approaches to finding work. In this workshop, you will:

- compare methods of seeking work,
- create a plan for your job search, and
- learn strategies for accessing and contacting employers.

The keys to a successful job search are to know your skills and find employers who need those skill sets. In this workshop, we'll discuss several strategies for keeping up with labor market trends, targeting employers, developing a solid career plan and much more.

Learning objectives

- Identify appropriate places to find job listings.
- Evaluate job listings to determine if there is a match between the employer's stated qualifications and your knowledge, skills and abilities.
- Determine which networking contacts to place in three distinct categories: professional, personal and acquaintance, using the "Build a Network" worksheet.
- Discover ways to find hidden job openings through networking and organizing your job-search strategy.
- Strategize how to network yourself confidently to anyone, anytime, anywhere.

Section one: Before you begin, know what you want

If you don't know what kind of work you want to do – including specific occupational titles and fields – conducting a job search can be exhausting and frustrating.

Planning your job-search strategy is very similar to deciding what vehicle to purchase. Would you buy the first car you saw for sale?

You'd probably take the time to research and decide on a type of vehicle, a brand, style, color, features, price, dealership reviews (reputation) and more. Why would you treat your job search any differently? To get what you want, you have to know exactly what it will take to be successful.

Planning and organizing your job search

Job-search strategies can vary widely in effectiveness. Using a combination of strategies can broaden your ability to look for work in several different career paths, instead of staying on a path you've already travelled without much success.

Organize your time in a calendar or planner. Keep an up-to-date journal (log, notes, etc.) that documents the efforts and progress of your job search.

Include the information below to keep your job search organized:

- Submitted applications.
- Network contact updates and maintenance.
- Target jobs and companies.
- Meetings and scheduled interviews.
- Follow-up tasks.
- Weekly accomplishments.
- Log career websites that you use frequently.



Job-Search Strategies

Ready, set, go! Start your job search with focus

The worksheet below is divided into two sections:

- The **Task** description provides information about each job-search activity.
- The **Completed** column allows you to track victories by checking off a completed task. It is important to celebrate every job-search victory (large or small); it's a step ahead of where you were previously.



Writing activity



Helpful hint

You also can obtain a computer-friendly version of a job-search log by visiting the Employment Security Department website at www.esd.wa.gov; click on "Get your job-search log."

Worksheet

Task description	Completed
Record a professional greeting on your voicemail.	
Create a professional email address and email signature.	
Write a targeted career commercial that tells an employer (or network contact) exactly what you can do for the employer — not what the employer can do for you.	
Build your networking contact lists: professional, personal and acquaintance.	
Create (or update) your LinkedIn profile. Add as much detail as possible to show up in employers' searches on the website.	
Know yourself. Take assessments to align your job search with what you know how to do and what you are capable of doing	
Research. Gain an understanding of your local labor market.	
Get organized. Keep track of your appointments, weekly goals, job-search log and more.	
List your accomplishments. List what you've done for previous employers to enhance their business, profits, processes and more.	
Create, organize and update your professional portfolio of work. Include evaluations, certifications, licenses, degrees, work samples and other items that will show the employer proof of what you can do.	
Find one or more job fairs that you can attend to expand your networking contacts	
Additional task(s):	

Understanding the changing labor market

Labor-market research simply means getting a picture of the economy and workplace. Who are the best businesses and hiring organizations to target in the region?

The following tools are essential to an effective job search.

- Research skills and wages on O*NET (onetonline.com), Go2WorkSource.com and Employment Security Department's website (esd.wa.gov/employmentdata).
- Research employers using tools such as libraries, staffing agencies, chambers of commerce, economic development councils, phone books and the Internet.
- Develop a work-search plan that includes all of the above information.

Labor market resources can provide information about occupations that are in demand or decline, current wages, and short-term and long-term projections. To find whether a profession is in demand or decline, visit Employment Security Department's website at esd.wa.gov/employmentdata.

How to find labor market information

There are several ways to obtain information about your local labor market. Some or all of these research points will be available in your community:

- Chamber of commerce and economic development councils
- Library materials (union and trade directories, professional magazines/journals, etc.)
- Salary.com (you can find wage information that can help you with salary negotiation)
- Government data and reporting sites, such as the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, O*Net and the Employment Security Department's website (look for employment Information).

Target employers that match your career goals

Take time to assess yourself and identify environments and occupations best suited to your knowledge, skills and abilities before you start targeting employers.

The following worksheet will help you gather important labor-market information about the targeted employer.



Helpful hint

The Job Hunter workshop Skills and Abilities can help you with these important tasks. Once you know exactly what job(s) you are looking for, access local labor-market resources to help you find potential employers.



Job-Search Strategies



Writing activity

Worksheet

Employer name

Company website:

Where does the company post its jobs?

Hint: company website, other job-search website, etc.

Contact person, title, and how to reach him or her.

Hint: Contact's email, phone, Twitter name, etc.

What does the company make, sell, provide, etc.?

Hint: Know what the company does. Are you a good fit for the environment?

How many people does the company employ?

Hint: The size of the organization will help you understand why it may hire for only one job at a time (small) or hundreds (large).

Are the company's mission, values and environment a match for your needs?

Hint: If you don't agree with the company's mission or values, why would you want to work there?

Jobs at the organization match my knowledge, skills and abilities.

Hint: If there is not a match, how can you gain skills to be a better fit for future job listings?

Is the company experiencing profit growth?

Hint: Do your research. Find out if the company is making money or might be in financial trouble.

What benefits are there for working with this company?

Hint: What perks does this employer offer? Education assistance? Bonuses?



Helpful hint

Once you know which companies you want to target for work, check their job listings several times a week. Use your job-search log or other tracking device to keep a record of when you apply for positions, what vacancies you've applied for and the deadline for applications.

Section two: Begin the hunt - look for jobs

Many job openings are listed online at go2worksource.com, the state of Washington's official site of online employment services. The site includes job boards, classified ads and links to government job sources.

You should treat the Internet as a support research/resource tool, not the only search tool for your strategy. Using a wider range of resources (networking, cold calling, etc.) to find work will uncover more job opportunities than you can locate using only the Internet. With this in mind, let's discuss how to find the right job leads by figuring out what the employer is looking for *and* if you are a match for the job listing

Locating and interpreting job listings

Job listings can contain confusing language. Understanding what the employer *really* is looking for in a solid candidate can be challenging. Your task is to figure out the specific knowledge, skills and experience the employer requires that will lead you to an interview.

An ideal job listing will clearly state what the employer needs, in a concise manner. Many times, the requirements (or qualifications) will be listed in order of importance, with the most crucial qualification first.

According to Monster, Career Builder and Quintessential Careers, **the top five to seven qualifications are the ones an employer uses to screen in (or out) potential candidates.**

Creating a match: The employer's needs and you

When reviewing a job listing, try using a qualifications comparison "t-chart" to identify the employer's top requirements for a position to ensure you are a fit.

Qualifications Comparison T-Chart.

The key to using the qualifications comparison chart is to see if you have the requirements for the job. If you don't (even with transferrable skills), move on to other job listings that are a match for your knowledge and abilities.



Job-Search Strategies



Helpful hint

Even if there are several “preferred qualifications” for a job and you have only one, this is a case where that one trait is better than none at all. Don’t let it faze you if you have one or none of the employer’s preferences; these are additional items that make up the company’s “dream list,” and it is likely that other candidates will be in the same boat as you.

How can I use the qualifications comparison chart besides determining a match with a job listing?

- **Target your résumé:** By examining a job description closely, you can create a list of knowledge, skills, abilities and accomplishments to include in a targeted résumé.
- **Create a “T-Chart” cover letter:** This type of cover letter uses a qualifications comparison chart similar to the one shown on the previous page.
- **Prepare for an interview:** By reviewing this chart before you go to an interview, you can remind yourself of what is important to that employer and how you can meet its specified needs.

Create a qualifications t-chart, try a few on your own using job listings you are considering – either from the newspaper or the Internet. Here is a t-chart to get you started.

Qualifications T-chart

Title of job:	Company name:
Posting location (website, etc.):	Last day to apply:
Employer requirements	My qualifications

Online job-search strategies

There are numerous Internet resources at your disposal – social media, job boards, news outlets, subject-specific blogs, trade-specific e-zines (online magazines), company websites, job-search support websites and much, much more.

Before you start your online job search, think about specific pieces of information you are targeting for your research, and tackle them one at a time. When you find a great website that has exactly what you’re looking for, save it to your Favorites list. Ask friends, former colleagues and fellow job seekers what websites they’ve found useful, factual and reliable.

Section two: Begin the hunt - look for jobs



Writing activity

Website name	URL (address)	Reason(s) to use this website	Login name	Password	Notes



Helpful hint

Try out “did you know?” statements on Twitter to talk about how you saved companies money, improved processes, increased morale, made a better product, etc., or give a “work tip of the day” from your years of experience in a given occupation or field.



Helpful hint

Take time to understand and carefully manage privacy settings for each social-media network you use. Get in the habit of browsing for information about you through social-media tools, Google, Bing and other search engines to manage how you appear online to others.

Social media and your job search

Job-search strategies in today’s labor market rely on using the Internet. If you don’t use social media, you are limiting the amount of contacts, leads and opportunities that are part of the hidden job market. These are jobs that aren’t yet posted or advertised.

Putting your best foot forward in virtual reality is key to your success. Here are some hints to help you build a positive and professional online presence that will get you noticed:

- In all online content, be appropriate, positive and consistent.
- If you participate in several networking sites, make sure all your online profile information regarding your work and education history is consistent with your résumé.
- Show not only what you can do, but how you get it done.
- Demonstrate how you are staying current in your field.
- Showing off your soft skills is a chance to show a potential employer that you’re someone he or she would enjoy getting to know.

Protecting your online identity

Whether you are a Facebook fanatic, a tweeter on Twitter, or brand new to social media – it’s important during your job search to think about your online presence. Instead of using social-media tools to communicate with friends and family, you now have to think about employers reading your posts, tweets, status updates and more online. What impression are they gathering about you? Let’s go over some of the finer points to protecting your online identity and how to clean it up if your past behaviors could eliminate your chances for future employment.

Set your privacy level at “high,” select friends and followers wisely, and watch out for tags or check-ins. If you want to have a public image as part of your brand, consider making separate professional job-search accounts not linked to your personal accounts.

Choose friends and followers wisely for your professional brand accounts – ones that won’t tarnish your reputation or cause any other kind of unwanted intrusion through inappropriate posts or tweets. If you are tagged in pictures involving alcohol or another non-work-related activity, consider removing the tags and setting your privacy on Facebook to request your permission to accept future tags or check-ins at local gatherings.

Section two: Begin the hunt - look for jobs

Give considerable pause before you post anything online; stop and think about whether you'd want a current or future boss to see it – because he or she might be able to. Third-party companies are now in the mix, conducting online “scrapes” for online information about you and selling it to employers making hiring decisions.

To tidy up your past online activities, check each social-media provider's procedures for deleting or hiding content. Then, conduct a thorough cleanup. You can start by eliminating the following six things employers should never see you doing online.

1. **Digital dirt:** Posting photos or stories about yourself doing things that are illegal, unethical or irresponsible.
2. **Being an e-pest:** Leaving a trail of inappropriate, irrelevant and damaging comments on others' blogs, personal websites or posts.
3. **Badmouthing:** Posting negative comments or revealing confidential information about past employers, co-workers or friends will come back to haunt you and keep you from future career opportunities.
4. **Focusing on quantity, ignoring quality:** You'll be judged by the company you keep. You also are producing online writing samples (through posts, tweets, etc.) that employers will judge for spelling and grammar.
5. **Constantly negative:** Posting complaints or put-downs about your own or others' situations, achievements, work history or life circumstances. Negativity does not enhance your online presence or win over potential employers.
6. **Screen out answers to illegal interview questions:** If an employer can't ask it, don't show it online. This includes family pictures as icon images, disclosure of severe illness, medical disability, religion and more.



Job-Search Strategies

Social-media tools: definitions and uses

Tool	What is it?	Do	Don't
Facebook	<p>Interactive website that allows you to connect with friends, family, businesses, networking contacts and common-interest user groups.</p> <p>Facebook allows you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post status updates concerning what is happening in your life, world of work, or other events. • “Like” businesses, organizations or other entities so you can view their status updates and watch for job listings and other valuable updates that increase your knowledge of their operations. • Attend “events” posted by companies or “friends,” such as job fairs and open application sessions. • Join or create non-public groups that focus on your occupation, alumni association and more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are concerned about your privacy, set the “account settings” to custom levels so that individuals, groups, etc., that you don’t want to view your daily activities see only your basic profile information. • Use applications like “Branch Out” to post your résumé to the site and to network with others through “friend” contacts that are in common. • Look at businesses’ friends (if they list any). These could be organizations they partner with, subsidiaries, employees, and human resources staff. • Emphasize the “Education and Work” section of your personal “Info” (information) page. Employers will want to learn about what you’ve studied and where you’ve worked. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave your profile open to the public. • Accept friend requests from anyone you don’t know. It could be a recruiter looking into whether you are an appropriate individual for his/her firm to hire. • Make a mess of your “Info” page. Don’t post details that are personal, such as your year of birth, age, likes and interests and family relationship status. • Allow others to “tag” you in photos that could harm your professional image. Hint: Change your privacy setting to “only me” and “none of my networks” so you can eliminate tags that place unwanted pictures on your profile.
LinkedIn	<p>Interactive website used for professional and job-search networking. You can request and build “connections” with other professionals, previous employers, former co-workers, customers and others to increase the size and power of your job-search networking circles.</p> <p>Other features of LinkedIn include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations from those with whom you’ve worked (akin to references and letters of recommendation). • Direct connections (people you know) can “introduce” you to their connections (second-degree). • Employers list jobs through posts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research companies and find contacts who work at the organization. Build rapport with individuals you select to increase your professional network. Learn about their companies and/or line of work, and ask for their feedback on your LinkedIn profile to see how you can draw views from potential employers. • Update your information frequently. If you’ve learned newer versions of software, remove the outdated versions. • Check your “profile completeness” chart on the right-hand side of your profile to see what information you should add to make your page more attractive to potential employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add personal information, such as birthday or marital status. These are illegal for an employer to ask you during an interview. • Share presentations, projects or other documents through one of LinkedIn’s many applications that could harm a previous employer. • Create an update without checking it for grammar and spelling errors. • Connect with all your friends and family. Others on LinkedIn can view your connections. Use Facebook to keep in touch with those in your personal/support networks.

Section two: Begin the hunt - look for jobs

Social-media tools: definitions and uses con't.

Tool	What is it?	Do	Don't
LinkedIn con't.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers can search your profile and send you direct recruiting emails when you are a match for positions. Receive emails directly through your LinkedIn account from employers and contacts. Import your résumé. Build specific sections into your main profile to highlight your knowledge, experience, skills, education and more. Use applications such as Slide Share, Box.net and Portfolio Display to show proof that what you say you can do, you've already done. "Follow" industries and top resources that will affect your ability to find work in and stay on top of changes to your career field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for recommendations from former customers, colleagues, bosses, partners and others for specific jobs that you have listed under the experience section of your profile. Share an update with your network that is appropriate and professional. Comment on others' updates when you can add value to the conversation. Check the "People You May Know" column once a week on your home page to expand your professional network. Review the "Jobs You May Be Interested In" section of your homepage. Review the "Groups You May Like" section of your homepage. Sign up for groups that match your professional and educational goals. This further expands your network to include others subscribed to the same group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join groups that are not related to your career goals. List your phone number as part of your contact information, unless you want unsolicited calls from a variety of individuals who may view your profile. Add contacts to have quantity instead of quality. Choose individuals who can have a positive effect on your job search. Use emoticons; they're not appropriate for professional communications. Create your LinkedIn profile directly on the site. Write your profile and other sections in a word-processing tool first to check for grammar and spelling issues. Limit the Education section to traditional post-secondary institutions. Be sure to list certifications, licenses or other training that will help you stand out from the crowd.
Twitter	<p>In 140 characters or less, "tweet" (write) tips, news, updates, Web links and more. Best used by individuals who can communicate in brief, powerful statements.</p> <p>Group tweets (posts) by topic using a hashtag (#). This allows you to provide information under specific topic areas where you have valuable insights or tips to share with others who share your same interests.</p> <p>You can respond to others' tweets or tweet directly to another user by using the "at" (@) symbol followed by the other person's username.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use your real name as your username so that employers notice you. Balance the quality and the quantity of your tweets. Make sure all the tweets you send have a specific purpose and aren't negative. Start your bio with information about your chosen career and areas of expertise. If you've developed a personal motto or vision statement, include it at the end, if appropriate. Choose an image that is appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an unprofessional username. Tweet a post that takes up several messages. Twitter posts tweets in real time, and your message could be split up by so many other posts that the intent of your writing is lost or looks disjointed. Include information on hobbies, family, religious preferences or other information that would be illegal to ask in an interview. Tweet right before an interview.



Job-Search Strategies

Social-media tools: definitions and uses con't.

Tool	What is it?	Do	Don't
Twitter con't.	<p>During your job search, Twitter can be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Follow” employers for whom you are interested in working.• “Retweet” (RT, or repost) others’ insights that can be useful to your followers.• “Tweet” (post) original information that adds value to your followers’ job search or profession.• “Follow” other job seekers in your field and offer insights, support and job leads.• Direct message (DM) targeted users for informational interviews and to build network contacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tweet from your smart phone when appropriate.• Check what’s trending (popular) through the discover tab.• “Follow back” others who opt to follow you, when it is appropriate to do so.• Try real-time tweeting for conferences, industry meetings, or asking questions live to subject-matter experts. Events typically are posted by a follower with date and time to chat live.• Follow employees (especially human resources staff) of the company for which you want to work. They provide valuable insights to daily operations, upcoming projects and job opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share deeply personal statements or thoughts that could be offensive to a wide variety of readers.• Post confidential information or negative statements about a company, former employer, relationship or co-workers.

Section two: Begin the hunt - look for jobs

There is no better time than now to determine whether social media is a tool you will feel comfortable using frequently (and appropriately) as part of your job-search strategy. Use the list of questions below to explore your social-media options.

1. *What social-media tool would I like to try?*

2. *How do I want to use this social-media tool?*

3. *What do I expect to gain by using this social-media tool?*

4. *How will I find and interact with targeted employers?*

5. *Can I use this account at least once a week? How will I update my profile to encourage more views?*

6. *Do I have a professional image to upload for my icon? If not, what other picture can I use that is professional and appropriate?*

7. *What professional screen name will I use?*

8. *What is my plan to get noticed by employers using this social-media tool?*

9. *If I am considering a marketing strategy for my overall job-search image, how will I make a social-media tool consistent with my in-person presentation?*



Section three: Standing out from the crowd

Networking

Networking involves contacting people you know to help you get the job you want. Over the years, you've worked with/for dynamic individuals. If you're not still connected with these former colleagues, bosses or business partners, now is the time to rebuild your connections.

Networking requires tact and business etiquette; be professional and appropriate in all communications with those whom you wish to put on your contact list. There are three types of networking contacts for you to consider:

1. **Professional contacts** know how you operate on the job and what your best qualities are when challenges arise. These individuals must feel confident about referring you to a job based on your knowledge, skills, attitude and abilities, as the recommendation puts their reputation on the line.
2. **Personal contacts** know you outside of work. These may be a combination of family and friends. Personal contacts may know others outside your networks who are linked to companies with available jobs. These individuals typically will promote you to their connections based on soft skills instead of daily work habits.
3. **Acquaintances** do not have intricate knowledge of you professionally, but may have built a connection with you through social media, a former co-worker, family member, friend or other associate. You may need to devote more time and communications to these individuals to help them understand what you have to offer an employer.

Make copies of the worksheet on the next page to log your networking contacts, categorizing them as professional, personal or acquaintance.

Section three: Standing out from the crowd

Network contacts	
Contact 1	Full name _____
Date of contact: ____/____/____	Occupation _____
	Company _____
Type of contact:	Email address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional	Mailing address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal	Title _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Acquaintance	Phone number(s) _____
Contact 2	Full name _____
Date of contact: ____/____/____	Occupation _____
	Company _____
Type of contact:	Email address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional	Mailing address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal	Title _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Acquaintance	Phone number(s) _____
Contact 3	Full name _____
Date of contact: ____/____/____	Occupation _____
	Company _____
Type of contact:	Email address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional	Mailing address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal	Title _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Acquaintance	Phone number(s) _____
Contact 4	Full name _____
Date of contact: ____/____/____	Occupation _____
	Company _____
Type of contact:	Email address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional	Mailing address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal	Title _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Acquaintance	Phone number(s) _____



Writing activity



Helpful hint

On your contact list, circle or put an asterisk by each contact's preferred method of communication. Be sure to ask each person what time of day is best to reach him or her – and make note of it in your records.



Helpful hint

Add individuals from the lists below to the appropriate networking contact worksheet on page 19.

Building and maintaining networking relationships

Networking can happen anywhere; it's hard to know where the next good lead will appear. Below are types of individual and association contacts to consider when building your network.

Individual contacts			
• Bank teller	• Classmate (past or present)	• Clergy	• Co-worker (past or present)
• Friend	• Hair stylist	• Mail carrier	• Neighbor
• Parents of your children's friends	• School staff (past or present)	• Service clerk or cashier	• Teammate
Associations and other groups			
• Chamber of commerce	• Civic associations	• Job clubs	• Professional associations

Networking is about building relationships, try some of the following:

- Be a good resource. Send out new information involving trends, issues and innovations that your contacts can use at work.
- If you can provide sound subject-matter expertise to a contact, do so.
- Introduce people in your networks who can benefit from each others' knowledge and experience.

Informational interviewing

An informational interview is an interview that you initiate with people who are working in the field in which you are interested. The purpose of the interview is to get information, not a job.

Setting up the meeting

It can be challenging to find a contact that has time for an informational interview. Don't give up; continue to broaden your circle of networking contacts until you find the right match. Try alumni associations, civic organizations or professional organizations where you (or a close networking contact) are a member.

Preparing your questions for the informational interview

Research is important for an informational interview, just as it is for all other aspects of your job-hunt strategy. Gather information about your targeted profession from websites like O*Net Online (www.onetonline.org) and Career One Stop (www.careeronestop.org).

Create four questions that you would like to use in an informational interview and write them out in the space below.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



Writing activity



Helpful hint

Before you launch into your introduction over the phone or face-to-face, ask the individual if this is a good time to discuss setting up an informational interview. For emails (or social media messages), thank individuals up front for their time and consideration of your request.

Conducting the informational interview

Regard each appointment as a professional meeting, and dress the part. Know the pronunciation of your contact's name, professional title and address for the location of the meeting.

Once the interview begins, refer to your list of questions and stay on track. Stick to the agreed-upon time limit for the appointment. This will show the employer that you respect his or her time and availability.

After the interview

Record the information you gather from every interview you conduct. Be sure to send a thank-you card or email to each person you interview. Don't burn bridges with contacts, even if you can't immediately see the value they provide.



Section four: Dodge the job-search rut

Don't get stuck in a single routine. Sharing ideas with other job seekers you meet can lead to fantastic job leads, as well as finding a new support to help when you are feeling stuck in a job-search rut.

Change your public - and private - images by *not* referring to yourself as unemployed. Let go of the negativity that surrounds that particular word and change the way you view and talk about your current situation. You are seeking a new position in your field. Keep your focus on the fact that job searching is a full-time job. Find your own phrases or words that eliminate "unemployed" from your daily language.

According to Hannah Morgan, Miriam Salpeter and Jacqui Barrett-Poindexter (2011), there are 25 bad habits to break to successfully get a job. Below is an overview of the bad habits that you need to change to secure your career:

- **Bad habit #1:** Send a generic résumé to every job you apply for; maybe add a cover letter.
- **Bad habit #2:** Refuse to meet new people or attempt to network.
- **Bad habit #3:** Apply for everything you see whether or not you are qualified for the job.
- **Bad habit #4:** Continue to think that social media won't do anything for your job search.
- **Bad habit #5:** Post your résumé on a job board and wait for the calls to start pouring in.
- **Bad habit #6:** Wing your job search and don't take the time to assess your strengths, transferrable skills and ideal work environment.

When to rework your job-search strategy

Use the *Week-in-review worksheet* at the end of this handbook to evaluate the week you've had (good or bad) and set your goals for the next part of your journey. Look back over the weeks you've been keeping records to see what changes you've wanted to make; if you haven't tried out those new strategies yet, there is no better time than now.

Section four: Dodge the job-search rut

As Richard Bolles (*What Color is Your Parachute*, 2012) states, employers and job hunters search for each other in entirely different and opposite ways, depending on the condition of the labor market. See the chart to compare preferences for finding the perfect candidate versus finding the right job vacancy.

Employers prefer to fill a vacancy (highest to lowest)	Job seeker's preference for finding a vacancy (highest to lowest)
1. From within: promotion, temporary or voluntary help. The reason: I've already seen their work.	1. Sending a résumé, cover letter and/or application.
2. Using proof: unknown job seeker who proves he or she matches the skills needed.	2. Replying to an advertisement from a job board, company website or newspaper.
3. Networking: recommended by a trusted colleague or friend.	3. Using a staffing agency to get a foot in the door for an interview.
4. Staffing agency: You've already been screened and selected as a candidate by a trusted source.	4. Networking through professional, personal and acquaintance contacts to learn about job openings.
5. Placing an advertisement: online, in the paper, on the company's website, etc.	5. Developing a portfolio or work samples that show what you can do for the employer.
6. Screening résumés: last-ditch effort from unsolicited sources. Extremely time consuming.	6. Get hired at the company by first taking on the role of a temp, volunteer, contract worker or consultant.

During times when the number of job seekers drastically outweighs the number of positions available, employers use their hiring preferences. When there are more positions available than job seekers looking for opportunities, employers change their hiring preferences to match the job seeker's methodologies.

*Is there a specific way that you will be changing your method of looking for work?
Write out your thoughts below.*



Job-Search Strategies

To determine ways to switch up your job-search strategy, log how many hours you spend doing the following activities. Try using the timecard below to track the investment of your efforts.

Activity	Time spent	Notes to change strategy
Search job listings on job boards		
Talk with friends or relatives for support		
Fill out and send résumés, cover letters and applications		
Prepare for and complete interviews		
Research companies, career fields, specific jobs, contacts		
Create and update work samples for your portfolio		
Cold-call potential contacts or employers		
Attend professional association events		
Use the local WorkSource center for guidance or assistance		
Brainstorm with another job seeker or network contact to improve your search strategy		
Volunteer		
Ensure that a targeted company's job listings are a match with your qualifications		
Update social-media status, create a blog post, or find new companies to research/follow online		
Update résumés online via job-search boards to remain at the top of employers' search results		
Network, build relationships and follow up with past activities		
TOTAL HOURS INVESTED EACH WEEK		

Week-in-review worksheet

Week of:



Writing Activity

1. *What activities (or tasks) did I complete this week that have enhanced my job search?*

2. *What new contacts did I make this week that will help with my job-search strategy?*

3. *What were the most valuable pieces of new information I gained that will improve my job search?*

4. *What new resources (websites, blogs, career journals, etc.) did I discover this week that will boost my job search?*

5. *What positions did I apply for (include date, job title, company and types of materials submitted)?*

6. *What did I do for myself this week to keep my attitude positive and focused?
What do I want to try next week?*

7. *Is there anything I would change about my job search to improve my chances of securing an interview?*

8. *What new steps or tasks do I need to complete next week to keep my job search on track?*



This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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