Job Search Strategy Guide... a step by step approach

This guide covers comprehensive strategies for an effective job search, beginning with self-assessment through identifying and targeting employers. Carefully review the steps and online resources below to guide your search. Be persistent in your research, outreach and follow-up. Take action and seek feedback!

GETTING STARTED - KNOW YOUR VALUE:

How will YOU stand out in a crowded job market?
- Define your core competencies and skills.
- Consider what value you can bring to a position of interest, a specific organization and industry.
- The most effective candidates know what they can offer, can provide examples of skills, accomplishments and strengths, and can explain how these skills relate to the employer’s needs.

Sample Resources:
- Skills Assessment Worksheet (available in Guides/Resources)
- Transferable Skills Sets for Job Seekers

PROFESSIONAL PRESENCE:

Sharpen Your Resume and Correspondence:
Develop a winning resume that highlights the skills and experiences most relevant to the position.
- Tailor your objective and content accordingly. Include related academic projects and leadership.
- Keep the resume to ONE page. Be sure it is error free and has a professional look.

Correspondence includes cover letters, email and LinkedIn outreach to employers or contacts, thank you notes, and follow-up notes.
- A cover letter should follow a formal, business format and summarize your interests, research, and background/skills related to the position. Don’t send a generic cover letter!
- Your letter must be concise, well written and error free. Use proper grammar, capitalization and spelling. Carefully proofread and edit!
- For email, use an appropriate subject line, avoid being too informal (no Hey, LOL, BTW, etc.) and be sure your Content is error free.

Employers will reject a candidate whose correspondence has typos and grammatical errors or is not specific to the opportunity.

Sample Resources:
- Resumes and Cover Letter (available in Guides/Resources)
- Amica Center for Career Education Resource Library: books with sample resume formats, cover letters and more.
- Amica Center for Career Education 24 hour resume/cover letter critique drop-off service
- Amica Center for Career Education Cover Letter Lab: dates are posted in the Events calendar.
- The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) is also a great resource for improving your writing skills.
- Online Resources: use multiple sites including Quintcareers.com; Collegegrad.com.

Prepare for Interviews
- Know what to expect, why you are interested in the organization, position and industry, and how your skills and experiences relate to what the employer is looking for.
- Understand the various types of interview formats: screening interview, behavioral interview, case interview, group interview, 2nd interview, etc. Some employers require an online assessment or other competency based screening tools.
- Differentiate yourself by being an informed, interested and enthusiastic interviewee.
- Thoroughly research the organization by reviewing their website in detail, conduct online research to find out newsworthy information, and speak to alumni or employees.
- Be prepared to ask a few good questions that reflect your interest and research.

Sample Resources:
- Guides to Interviewing (available in Guides/Resources)
- Career Spot
Voice and Email Etiquette

- Be sure your voice mail message is brief and professional.
- An inappropriate or overly casual message projects an unprofessional image to a prospective employer.
- Use your Bryant email address (less likely to be intercepted as junk mail). If you use a personal email address, be sure the “name” is appropriate.

Online Presence

*What does your “online brand” portray to a potential employer?*

Much of what you may consider to be private -- Facebook posts, etc., may in fact be seen by employers. Your online presence includes FB, tweets, blogs, posts, LinkedIn and other sites in the public domain.

- **“Google” Yourself** – take down any photos or posts that appear “unprofessional”
- **Review/control your privacy settings** on a regular basis, but realize employers may still gain access through contacts, interns, alums, etc. *Err on the side of caution and don’t post anything that will negatively impact you as a candidate!*
- **Develop a professional online image** and market yourself to employers:
  - Create your own blog on a career topic or industry of interest
  - Participate in blogs or online discussion groups that relate to your career interests
  - Develop a strong profile on LinkedIn that promotes your accomplishments and potential value to employers.
  - Give your email signature a professional look by adding a link to your LinkedIn Profile or “professional blog” or add a tag line that summarizes key attributes/interests of potential interest to an employer and/or a leadership title if you are a club president, etc.

*Sample Resources:*
- Making Connections/Networking (available in Guides/Resources)

**Define Your Options:**

**Identify Your Top 3-5 Job Targets:**

As you consider what you want to do and where you want to do it, fully explore career options and industries that match your interests and skills. In some cases, students have very focused career goals and may wish to broaden their job targets. Others may be open to “doing anything” and may need to define their interests. While you don’t have to know what you want to do for the “rest of your life,” you do need to know your top interests and be able to articulate those interests to potential employers.

- Review postings in BCC to explore potential opportunities and employers, many of which are open to all majors. You may uncover an opportunity/career path that you never considered yet might be an excellent fit to your interests and skills.

- Speak with professionals in fields of interest to further explore your fit to career fields. Faculty, career staff, alumni and others can also provide feedback and advice.

*Sample Resources:*
- What Can I Do With this Major?
  - Identify career options, industries and job search strategies by your concentration or a field of interest. Includes links to resources and job boards by majors.
- Spotlight on Careers
  - Terrific collection of career sites developed by leading college career centers featuring career information and job search links by field. Careers include event planning, public relations, public health, banking, government and many more. (Username: lacn Password: 20Lacn13)
- Candid Career
  - Check out “You Tube” style video interviews with real professionals in a variety wide variety of career fields. Explore your options and get the inside scoop on careers of possible interest.
- Amica Center for Career Education Library – a wide selection of books on specific career fields. See us for suggestions!
Geographic Preferences, Industries, Employers:
- Identify your top 3-5 geographic preferences. The current job market may require you to be flexible with your location and willingness to relocate and travel.

- Develop a target list of employers (small, medium and large size) within industries or locations of interest. Research key employers, visit their websites and career page; register and apply for positions on a regular basis.

- Set-up “Google” and “job alerts” to receive updates of news and opportunities from targeted employers.

- Become a “FAN” of companies and organizations on Facebook, “follow” companies and organizations on LinkedIn and identify alumni and professionals for outreach and networking.

Sample Resources:
- Career Shift
  Search for jobs, companies, contacts, alumni, more. Includes detailed contact information for follow-up.

- Going Global
  *Helpful for both international and domestic students*
  Online database of country career guides, corporate profiles and 100,000+ international internships and jobs.
  **Major US Cities**: includes guides to major US cities and employers, professional associations and more.

- H1B Database: search for companies that have sponsored candidates for H1B visas.

- American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries; Foreign Firms Operating in the U.S.
  Search on firms with overseas and domestic operations - by industry, country and more.

- College Grad.com
  Provides lists of top employers of college grads, interns and masters students with links to employer websites.

- Fortune – Top 100 Employers
  Profiles the best companies to work for, who are hiring, top paying companies and more.

- Sports Marketplace Directory

- Online Guides and Resources - links by career field and industry

- Amica Center for Career Education Library – specialized job search resources including
  *The Book of Lists*: directories of employers by major city and industry
  Atlanta; Austin; Baltimore; Boston; Chicago; Charlotte/Wilmington; Fairfield/Westchester County; Los Angeles; New York; Providence; San Diego; San Francisco; Washington, D.C.; more.

OPTIMIZE YOUR SEARCH... GO BEYOND JOB BOARDS
- Most students use popular job boards (like Monster) or rely only on offerings through their career center (BCC).
- To be most effective, use search engines, job boards, the job posting section of LinkedIn, professional associations, and niche sites specific to your career interests.

Use Search Engines / Alerts:
Job boards such as Monster.com; HotJobs; Yahoo; Experience and others are sites where employers post opportunities. While you may find some great opportunities (and should apply to those of interest) also use search engines that search across job boards, employer websites, staffing agencies, etc., and yield job results based on location, job title, and other criteria.

Sample Resources: Search engines and social media applications
- www.Indeed.com
- www.simplyHired.com
- www.linkedup.com
- www.Twitjobsearch.com; www.TweetMyJob.com
  Use job search engines on Twitter to follow job tweets.
- Google Alerts:
  Get email updates of the latest relevant on companies or topics of interest.
Use Niche Sites:
Most professions and career fields have job sites targeted toward their industry or field. Niche sites are helpful in identifying opportunities in specific fields, e.g., media; HR; supply chain; government; non-profits; marketing; finance; higher education; sports; event management, MBA careers and virtually every field.
Start with the resources below, search the Web for sites, and search on professional associations for job boards in your field.

Sample Resources:
- [What Can I Do With this Major?](#) Includes links to job boards by major or career field
- [Spotlight on Careers](#) Include links to job boards for over 30 fields of interest to both A&S and Business areas.
- [Online Guides and Resources](#) - links to jobs boards/sites by industry and career field (LINK)

**NETWORK, MAKE CONNECTIONS! – the #1 Strategy**
Career networking is the process of building relationships with employers, alumni, family contacts and other professionals through outreach, referrals and informational interviews. The art of networking is often confusing and misunderstood. It does not mean calling everyone you know and asking for a job. It’s about reaching out to new and existing contacts to share information, seek advice and learn about potential opportunities and career fields.

**Why Network?**
- Gain a competitive edge by being an informed candidate.
- Many jobs are never posted and are filled through referrals and networking.
- Uncovering opportunities before they are posted greatly reduces the competition.
- Industries that are highly competitive (advertising, communications, investment banking, etc.) frequently source candidates through internal referrals.
- Gain insight and feedback on career options, industry trends, target organizations, job search strategy, interview advice and more.
- Professionals can refer you to other contacts and organizations in order to grow your network and expand potential opportunities.
- Growing and maintaining your professional network through your career is a key career management strategy.

**Begin networking now:**
- *Don’t wait for jobs to be posted!*
- Reach out to existing contacts, seek referrals and reach out to contacts in organizations or industries of interest.
- *Remember, you are NOT ASKING FOR A JOB;* rather you are seeking advice and feedback on your options and job search strategy!
- *Use the resources below to learn how to develop a network, conduct informational interviews, consider questions to ask, determine strategies for outreach and more.*

**Grow Your Network:**
*Everyone has a network.* Begin by making a list of friends, friends of friends, friends of parents, high school friends’ parents, relatives, neighbors, present and former faculty and teachers, professionals in your field of interest, other professionals (e.g., lawyers know many people!), employers/former employers/customers, religious affiliations, professional associations, alumni, etc.

*Use the Alumni Career Link,* a resource of Bryant alumni who volunteer to provide career information and advice. Be sure to review samples of correspondence and outreach techniques. And while you may not always get a prompt response (alums and other professionals may be busy, have changed jobs, etc.), be polite, informed, ask good questions, send a thank you note, and if appropriate stay in touch!

*Join professional organizations* in your field and gain access to online membership directories for outreach and networking. To maximize your contacts, plan to attend a membership meeting or function (locally; during winter break, etc.).
On Campus: Attend employer presentations, career panels, career fairs, site visits, networking events and other programs, using every opportunity to meet alumni and professionals. Ask for business cards and follow-up to arrange an information meeting, phone appointment or correspond by email.

Sample Resources:
- Guide to Making Connections/Networking (available in Guides/Resources)
- Job Search Networking
- Networking Timetable for College Students (strategies; informational interview tutorial)
- Bryant Alumni-Student Career Link

Use Social Media:
Social media is increasingly a key resource for identifying contacts in “virtually” any organization, industry or career field. Add value and get noticed by contributing to (or developing) blogs on professional topics in your field; “follow” professionals and companies on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter and connect via email, “in-messages”, tweets, tweet-ups and more.

LinkedIn, the fastest growing online professional network with 200 million + members, is a key resource for outreach and contacts. Recruiters heavily use LinkedIn to source candidates.

**TO GET THE MOST OUT OF LINKEDIN, YOU MUST LEARN HOW TO USE ALL OF THE FEATURES!**

LinkedIn functionality is frequently updated! Carefully review the LinkedIn Online tutorials and resources below.

- Create an accomplishment-oriented LinkedIn profile, including a great “tag line” and professional looking photo. Review profiles of recent college grads and other in your profession of interest for examples.
- Learn how to add contact and build your network through invitations to link, messaging, referrals and joining groups.
- Search for and join alumni and professional groups for outreach and networking purposes. As a member of a group you can search for other members by location, industry, key word, company and more. Join in on discussions on professional topics (get noticed!) and view group job postings.
- In addition to joining the Bryant alumni group, also use the alumni search feature (below) to search on all Bryant alumni who are on LinkedIn (not just those that are members of Bryant groups).
- Before contacting a professional, review their profile, career path, groups, etc. to gain insight, consider questions to ask and groups to join.
- Use LinkedIn before an interview to learn more about a contact or organization.
- Use the Skills section (located under “More” tab) to identify skills by job title and career field (helpful for career exploration, your resume, cover letter, e-pitch, or LinkedIn tagline). Discover the skills that are most important. This section will also recommend jobs, contacts, groups and organizations based on your skills.
- Use the Jobs section specifically geared to internships and full time postings for college students/recent grads.

Beyond LinkedIn, there are many helpful social media tools for your networking and job search strategy. Check out Amica Center resource on Twitter, Blogging and more.

Sample Resources:
- Guides to Social Media (available in Guides/Resources)
- Guide to LinkedIn (available in Guides/Resources)
- LinkedIn Tutorials and Help Tools
- Linked In Job Search for Colleges Students
- LinkedIn Search by Alumni Feature

**MANAGE YOUR OUTREACH:**

For a well-managed job search, diversify your outreach, carefully organize and track your job search activity and follow-up assertively! Consider these tips:
• **Get out from behind the computer!** While it is tempting to rely only on BCC, major job boards, online application on employer websites and email/online outreach, personal contact and follow-up. ALL play a key role in landing a position, especially in competitive industries.

• **Get personal!** *Pick up the phone* to reach out to contacts, recruiters, and key managers in departments or organizations of interest. While most employers require online application, don’t stop there! Always follow-up on your online application or resume, or initiate contact with a hiring manager before or after applying.

  *For example, if you are interested in being an assistant account executive in an advertising agency, research the specific agency, their clients, recent news, related contacts on LinkedIn, alumni, etc., and identify the Manager of Account Services for your outreach. Remember, the role of HR is often to screen you out (they receive thousands of online resumes), so reach out to the person who has the power to refer you or hire you.*

• **Develop a Business Card:** Creating a business card for use at career fairs, networking receptions and sharing with contacts will portray you as a prepared, polished candidate. There are many online samples and options for printing a card with a professional look.

• **Develop Your Career pitch:** You’ve participated in Bryant’s e-pitch competition, now you must be ready to pitch your most important product -- YOU! Think about how you would portray yourself in 30 seconds to an employer or contact in person or by phone. Be confident in how to introduce yourself and provide a brief summary of your key interests, skills/accomplishments and your goals for connecting with the potential contact.

• **Track Your Outreach & Follow-up:** Set goals for your outreach (take a few steps every day!) and track all of your job search activity. *Use Excel worksheets (or another tool) to track:*
  - **All Online Applications and Resume Submissions:** Date, company, title of position, method of application, referral source, date of follow-up and method (phone, email, etc.).
  - **Interviews, Interview Contact Info, Thank You Notes, Follow-up:** Carefully track this information to be sure you are on time for interviews, phone interviews, etc. Always ask for a business card after an interview – send a well written, typo-free thank you note, and follow-up to affirm your enthusiasm and inquire about the status of the hiring process.
  - **Networking Contacts:** track potential contacts, referral source (LinkedIn, alums, family, etc.), outreach activity, thank you notes, follow-up timeline etc.
  - **Companies/Organizations:** List/track organizations you are following or want to research develop a list of affiliated contacts, etc. This will help you to be focused in your outreach and target organizations you want to work for.

*Sample Resources:*
  - Business Cards for Students
  - Career/Elevator Pitch Examples for College Students
  - Tools for Managing Your Job Search

**EXPECTATIONS AND OFFERS:**

Salary offers for college graduates vary by field of study (some are in high demand), industry, size of company, location and more.

• To be prepared and to know what to expect, conduct preliminary research on starting salaries and ranges for your intended job target. This information is available online and by speaking with professionals in the field of interest, as well as consulting with staff in the Amica Center for Career Education.

• While some companies and organizations may be open to negotiation, many have firm starting salaries and may not be flexible. When considering offers, evaluate whether the company, industry (and/or location) truly interests you and positions you for learning and career development. Is the work culture at the organization a fit? Sometimes the highest paid position isn’t always the best all-around option, depending on your goals.

• Analyze your entire compensation package (i.e., benefits, vacation/sick time, pension/saving plans, tuition remission, etc.) compared to cost of living and other factors. *If the position is commission-based, be sure you understand the structure and*
expectations so there are no surprises! Get your offer in writing and thoroughly review before accepting or rejecting the positions or asking for additional time for consideration of the offer. There are many facets to discussing salary expectations and negotiating offers. Use the resources below and attend an Amica Center workshop on salary negotiation.

- See individual feedback from a career staff member in the Amica Center on your specific situation!

**Sample Resources:**

- www.glassdoor.com
- www.salary.com
- www.indeed.com
- www.payscale.com
- www.quintcareers.com (salary negotiations, tutorials, etc.)
- Managing Offers & Salary Negotiation (from Swathmore College)

**Your Job Search Will Be An Ongoing Process Throughout Your Senior Year And Beyond.**

**Get Started Early, Be Persistent And Seek Advice Along The Way.**

**We’re Here To Help!**

**The Amica Center for Career Education | Bryant University**