GUIDE TO
JOB SEARCHING

FIRST STEPS
- Brainstorm several different job search strategies to utilize to tap into the hidden and advertised job markets.
- Develop a system to keep track of the people and companies you have contacted and where your résumé has been posted.

STEPS IN THE SUCCESSFUL JOB SEARCH

Advertised vs. Hidden Jobs
There are many different ways to discover job openings. While employers advertise some job vacancies, a vast majority (60-80%) go unadvertised. In order to tap into these “hidden” job opportunities, job seekers need to employ less conventional methods that rely on a personal touch. Using a combination of methods for a diverse approach is highly recommended.

Plan

Select the job search methods you want to use. This handout describes the primary methods people use in their job search. There are strategies to find both hidden and advertised jobs.

Make a schedule and stick to it. Establish a routine to check your job leads regularly. Here lies one of the most important aspects of your job search—how much time you devote to your search directly influences how quickly you will see results.

Search

Search for employment opportunities. Use the job search methods you have chosen from this handout and visit www.HireMizzouTigers.com for a list of on and off campus jobs.

Change your mindset. Change your thinking from “What can I do to get hired?” to “Which job is the best match for me?”

Remember to research organizations and companies. Google companies, review employer directories, read newspapers and trade journals, and talk with others about potential employers.

Make all of your communications as personable as possible. If you have the opportunity to visit with an employer in person, take it. If you were encouraged to apply for a position or have a contact that can refer you to the hiring supervisor, mention that person’s name. Also, personalize all correspondence; don’t send generic cover letters and résumés.
Follow Up

Follow-up with employers and contacts. Tenacious job seekers will follow up with an email, letter, visit or a phone call. Personal touch is still the most effective way of marketing oneself.

Send thank you notes to whomever you speak. This really is a forgotten form of job search etiquette. It is a great way to stand out among other candidates and can be the one factor that tips the hiring decision in your favor. You can both email a thank and follow up with a handwritten note.

*For more information on how to write a thank you letter, check out our Guide to Thank You Letters.

Evaluate offers as they come. Remember that when you evaluate job offers, you need to ask yourself if you would truly be happy at this job.

Advertised Job Searching Strategies - Search Engines

Looking for advertised jobs is best for candidates who meet or exceed the stated job requirements, people in fields of high demand or turnover, and government job seekers. The downside to applying for advertised jobs is the large amount of competition for these vacant positions because it takes such little effort to find them.

HireMizzouTigers.com

Definition: A comprehensive employment website designed exclusively for MU students and alums, the site features vacancies for full-time jobs, part-time jobs, and internships. Once you create a profile and upload your résumé, you can search for positions and even apply directly for jobs through the site.

Benefits: There are an average of 1,000 job listings posted by employers at any given time. These employers are specifically seeking MU students and access résumés to identify candidates. In addition to job listings, job seekers may sign up for on-campus interviews, browse the 7,000+ employer directory, RSVP to career fairs and events, and access an online resource library.

Limitations: A select number of employers post their job announcements on the site. Since this is a small portion of advertised job listings, job seekers should seek out other search avenues too. Also, some fields traditionally do not post positions (e.g., PR, consulting, etc.) and may be underrepresented.

Meta Search Engines

Definition: Meta job search engines are websites that include thousands of frequently updated job vacancies. You can search these positions by selecting a number of criteria including geographic region, occupation, industry, educational level, and more.


Benefits: It’s easy! Bookmarking sites and logging in to access hundreds of job vacancies is convenient and streamlined for job seekers. Many sites allow candidates to post résumés and create email alerts when new positions match your saved search criteria.

Limitations: The convenience of this site means there are thousands of other job seekers applying who meet or exceed the qualifications. The high level of competition means that very few users get
interviews or offers. Also, it is important to understand that hearing back about your application process is minimal at best. Therefore, job seekers need to directly follow-up with employers whenever possible.

GoinGlobal.com

Definition: GoinGlobal is a great resource for students seeking jobs abroad because it includes 39 Country Career Guides and cultural advice. The site is also features 47 USA City Career Guides and is ideal for students planning to relocate within the U.S. In addition to these guides are corporate profiles and more than 16 million internship and job listings in the U.S. and around the world.

Benefits: The Country Career Guides and the USA City Career Guides provide professional advice and insider tips on such topics as job search tools, employment trends in major industries, work permit regulations, salary ranges, cost of living data and much more. You can also subscribe to Podcasts and newsletter for up-to-date information.

Limitations: There is an abundance of information and you need to devote time to thoroughly review all the pages and links on the site. Remember that online resources cannot replace the value of face-to-face networking and other hidden job search strategies.

Company/Professional Organization Websites

Definition: If you have a specific employer or industry in mind that you wish to work for, you can go online to search for job vacancies posted on the website of the company or professional organization. Simply Google the employer name or professional group and click on the Employment or Careers section of the website.

Examples of Professional Organizations*: Society of Human Resource Management
Real Estate Association
Professional Association of Custom Clothiers
National Association of Environmental Professionals

*For a list of professional associations please go to http://www.weddles.com/associations/index.cfm

Benefits: Many employers post position announcements exclusively on professional association websites intended for candidates with some experience or they are committed professionals that belong to the association. There are fewer candidates logging in to see these job announcements than on Meta Engines.

Limitations: Often these websites are not updated frequently resulting in a potential delay between the time a vacancy occurs and the time it is posted online. Likewise, a job seeker may see an open position posted online that has already been filled. Be aware that many companies will ask candidates to submit a résumé or application online and communication only occurs if they want an interview.

HELPFUL HINT: When applying to an advertised job, make sure you directly follow up with the employer. It is one way to stand out in a crowd of hundreds and show your genuine interest in the position.
Job Search Series Handouts

**Definition:** There are 18 print and online handouts that identify reputable job search engines in several different industries and Missouri cities. The Job Search Series handouts include web addresses as well as professional associations and recommended print resources in the Career Center resource library and in Ellis Library.

**Examples:**

- Advertising/Marketing/PR
- Healthcare/Medicine
- Management and Business
- Full-Time Service Opportunities
- St. Louis Jobs
- ESL/Teaching Abroad

**Benefits:** The MU Career Center has done all the internet research to highlight resourceful sites. Most job seekers go to meta engines so there should be a little less traffic and job announcements tailored to professionals in their chosen field.

**Limitations:** Advertised positions still receive many responses so make sure to follow up with employers. A number of job vacancies will be targeted to more experienced professionals, so specify you are looking for an entry-level positions.

Want Ads & Professional Publications

**Definition:** Vacant positions are often found in the Classified or Employment pages of newspapers and trade journals, but can also be found scattered throughout the publications. Trade journals are publications for professionals in a particular occupation, locale, or industry. Many trade journals include articles about news and trends in the field as well as career information and employment listings. Many publications offer websites but may offer limited access without payment for a subscription.

**Examples:**

- St. Louis Dispatch
- Chicago Sun Times
- The Washington Post
- Advertising Age
- Chronicle of Higher Education
- Wall Street Journal

**Benefits:** These are great tools for any job seeker who is willing to relocate to another city or state. Employers are more inclined to use local advertisements and many of these publications are the premier resource for employment postings in varying regions.

**Limitations:** College students and grads will have to sort through many hourly positions and unrelated jobs to get to professional, salaried positions and internships. Besides the tremendous amount of competition for these advertised jobs, many times the positions go unfilled.

HELPFUL HINT: When applying to an advertised job, make sure you directly follow up with the employer via an email or phone call. It is one way to stand out in a crowd of hundreds and show your genuine interest in the position.
On-Campus Interviews

Definition: Companies from all over the state, region, and country come to the Mizzou campus each semester to recruit full-time hires and summer interns. These interviews are arranged through one of the several Career Services offices on campus. You can search for upcoming on-campus interviews on www.HireMizzouTigers.com or contact the appropriate career office linked from the HireMizzouTigers homepage.

Benefits: It’s often difficult to have personal contact with an employer, so take advantage of a one-on-one interaction. They are traveling to campus so there is no cost to you and it is the easiest way to land an interview!

Limitations: Most employers pre-screen candidates by having students first submit a résumé and cover letter. Students must know how to navigate HireMizzouTigers.com and be very conscious of schedule timelines.

Career Fairs

Definition: There are several fairs sponsored by campus career offices throughout the semester that bring in employers and recruiters from various companies and organizations to meet with students and find potential candidates. Many students make the mistake of going to a career fair without the necessary preparation, so make sure you avoid this by dressing professionally, doing your research ahead of time on companies attending, and having plenty of copies of your résumé with you.

*For more information on preparing for a Career Fair, check out our Guide to Career Fairs.

Benefits: Career Fairs can be a great opportunity to connect with employers, gather current information about a company, discover job opportunities, and practice networking skills. Sometimes companies will be hiring for interns, so you don’t need to wait until you’re a junior or senior to go. Most importantly, the one-on-one interaction you have with employers can help differentiate yourself from other candidates applying for the same position.

Limitations: Many students find career fairs overwhelming and chaotic. Because first impressions are so important, students might find career fairs to be quite stressful. Career fairs require a lot of work beforehand, but this preparation is the key to feeling confident and assured on the big day. Lastly, even though you might hand your résumé directly to a recruiter, you’ll likely still have to go through the online application process.

HELPFUL HINT: When interacting with employers, make sure you look and act the part of a professional. Dress in business attire (suit), smile, and offer a firm handshake. Arrive early, and don’t forget to ask for a business card when you leave so you can follow up with your new contact in the future!
Hidden Job Search Strategies - Contacting Individuals

To tap the hidden job market, you have to move beyond the traditional methods of job searching and incorporate some new strategies. While they require more work and effort, hidden job search strategies can have very successful outcomes! The following are some techniques to get you started.

**Informational Interviewing**

**Definition:** Informational interviewing involves directly contacting a professional in your field or a company of interest and requesting time to ask questions regarding the position and industry.

**Benefits:** This is a great way to gain insight from an insider's perspective on a position or company to help you determine if it is a good fit. Informational interviews will also expand your list of contacts, help you become more connected in your field, and build your confidence in approaching others.

**Limitations:** The most important thing to remember is that you should not use this approach to ask someone for a job. Some people find it difficult to approach a stranger and ask them questions about their job, but the truth is most people like to talk about their work and are willing to help.

**Directly Contacting Employers**

**Definition:** This is a far more personalized version of sending your application to employers. This strategy entails you calling, emailing, or visiting employers in person. One way of doing this would be using the yellow pages (or other online directories) to find organizations that interest you and contacting those places regardless of whether or not you know they have an opening. Again, this is taking advantage of the fact that most jobs go unadvertised.

**How to Search for Employers:**

- HireMizzouTigers.com: Employer Directory
- Chambers of Commerce
- Ellis Library: Corporate Directories

**Benefits:** This can be surprisingly effective because it is an active job search strategy. You are taking control of your job search and you do not have to wait for an employer to get back to you. By taking initiative, you appear assertive and committed to the job search. Because this method is infrequently used by the average job seeker, you will likely stand out.

**Limitations:** Direct contact takes far more energy than more passive, conventional strategies. It also will probably be a little awkward at first when you start introducing yourself to potential employers. Many times, you are greeted with silence or a lot of rejection.

**HELPFUL HINT:** When interacting with employers, make sure you act the part of a professional. You’re contacting people to find jobs that haven’t necessarily been advertised. With that being said, be open to rejection, non-response, and other stumbling blocks.
**In-Person Networking**

**Definition:** Networking is simply connecting with others on a professional, personal, or social level. This method can help you obtain advice about industries, how to find positions within your area of interest, and gain knowledge about particular employers. A majority of vacant positions are filled without employer advertising. Networking puts you into contact with people who can help you pursue job leads while improving your communication skills.

You may develop leads from: Professional Organizations  Alumni Chapters/Groups  Past Employers  Community Organizations  Family/Friends  Professors and Advisors

**What to say:** Develop a brief introduction of who you are, your career interests, and how the contact can help you. This communication should be polite, concise, and appreciative. In addition, you should have some questions prepared to ask a contact.

**Benefits:** This is undoubtedly the most effective job hunting strategy. In fact, most people use this method without even knowing it. It is how promotions and job changes happen within organizations. Many people report that they hear about jobs or get referrals from friends and family.

**Limitations:** This is another active strategy, so it has some of the same limitations as directly contacting employers. If you have difficulty identifying possible contacts, seek help from a Career Specialist or Career Counselor at the MU Career Center.

**“Virtual” Networking**

**Definition:** “Virtual” Networking is connecting electronically with others using social and career networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, as well as other tools like online professional associations, alumni organizations, message boards, and blogs.

**Benefits:** For students uncomfortable with face-to-face networking, this might be a good place to start. When connecting with employers online, you have more time to construct your responses. Virtual networking also allows you to interact with hundreds of people from all over the world that you might not otherwise have been able to.

**Limitations:** When you are only networking virtually, it can be hard to convey tone in email so remember to keep correspondence professional, not casual. It is also sometimes difficult to make introductions online to strangers. If you use social networking websites like Facebook or Twitter, carefully review how these pages represent you.

**HELPFUL HINT:** Do a Google search on yourself and note what you see. Your online identity can make a positive or negative impression on an employer, so it is vital that you maintain a professional online image.
**WHAT IF I’M STILL UNEMPLOYED?**

If you are still having a difficult time finding employment, don’t lose hope. While you continue your job search, consider the following options:

- Contact local **staffing agencies** about temporary work
- Seek out **volunteer work, internships, or part-time jobs** in your field/industry to develop contacts and uncover job leads for full-time work
- Consider a “**stepping stone**” position which would help you enter an intended industry or company, but at an entry-level position (e.g., taking an administrative role)
- Get **feedback on your résumé and interviewing skills** to make improvements
- Seek additional **education/training** to make yourself a more attractive candidate

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

Finding a job takes time and, unfortunately, there is no one method that leads to immediate success. Keep the following in mind as you approach your job search:

**Change it up**: If you find yourself only using one job search strategy that is not yielding any results, try a different one. Taking a diversified approach to the job search leads to the most success.

**Do your homework**: Learn the trends of your intended field or industry and consult with those who have been through this process before to gain the “insider perspective” on how to go about your job search.

**Get support**: A support system can keep you motivated and positive, so find an encouraging friend or family member who know you are on the job search. If you’re dealing with a lot of stress and anxiety associated with the job search, career counseling is available at the MU Career Center at no charge to MU students.

**Stay positive**: It can be tough to face rejection, but remember to stay confident and positive about your candidacy. If you don’t believe in yourself, it will be hard to convince others!

**Visit your career center**: Utilize career services on a regular basis to get additional feedback and tips on your job search.

**Be enthusiastic**: Employers are looking for motivated, energetic, and eager people to join their team. The energy and enthusiasm you bring to your cover letter, employer communications, and interview can make up for any deficits you feel you may have on your résumé and help you land the job!

**NEXT STEPS**

- ✓ Come to the MU Career Center to talk with someone about your job search and have your résumé or cover letter reviewed.
- ✓ Visit [http://career.missouri.edu/resources](http://career.missouri.edu/resources) to find other helpful information in our Job Search series.