

BERRY COLLEGE CAREER CENTER

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

A job search is a time-consuming endeavor. However, the time you put into the job search process will be proportional to your results. Be prepared before you start the job search. Here is a checklist of items you will need for your job search campaign:

JOB SEARCH CHECKLIST

- An organizational tool (notebook, email folder, excel spreadsheet) for your network list, copies of all correspondence (cover letters and follow-up letters) sent to prospective employers, a page for notes on each phone conversation with an employer and/or interview
- A calendar for quick reference of important dates including interviews, dates when you expect to hear back from employers, career programs, etc.
- A list of Berry alumni targeted by occupation (available through the Alumni Career Network) for networking purposes
- Directories of employment opportunities by city or occupation (visit the Career Library)
- Stationery stamps for cover letters and thank you letters
- Voicemail with a professional message
- A well-tailored suit or appropriate clothes for interviews, including a good pair of shoes

A proactive job seeker will generate many more leads and will, more likely, be able to secure a position consistent with his/her career goals.

Employers use many methods to hire for various positions. For some positions, employers may advertise in the newspaper, professional magazines, and on college campuses. Other positions are listed internally first so that current employees have the first look. Often employers will call associates and friends to request recommendations and referrals. It is imperative to understand the importance of understanding the job market and preparing a job search plan appropriate to your field. Successful searches involve careful preparation, multiple strategies, and, most important, good follow-through. The following information provides various strategies for your consideration.

Career Center

The Career Center provides you with numerous resources and contacts with employers. The Career Center offers: the on-campus interview program, career fairs, job listings, employment referrals, alumni networking lists, career directories, employer literature, plus much, much more!

It is important for you to meet with a career counselor to discuss your goals and plan and direct you to resources that would be most helpful to your specific needs. Remember: the responsibility of securing a job rests with you -- no one else can do it for you. The Career Center staff will provide support, guidance, and leads to help you with this important task.

Networking

One of the most effective means of locating a job is through networking. To begin, develop a list of people who would be willing to assist in your job search: relatives, friends, faculty, Berry alumni, former employers, high school teachers, and other professionals. Provide each of these individuals with a copy of your resume and make sure they are aware of your career goals. Ask your network for names of employers they know with possible interest in your skills and qualifications. Follow up on all leads. When contacting these prospective employers, be sure to mention the name of the person who provided you with the lead. This information may cause the employer to consider your candidacy more seriously.

In addition, you may create a network through people you meet in professional meetings, seminars, career fairs, or conferences. Following such meetings be sure to introduce yourself to the speaker and other attendees; ask for a business card before you leave. You should then follow up in writing requesting information or an interview.

Keep your network informed of your progress. Be sure to send "thank-you" notes or letters to everyone who has assisted you.

Internet

- The [Career Center](#) home page has helpful links to assist you in your job search, including employment opportunities and job banks; job listings in Georgia; employment opportunities by field; researching companies; tips on resumes and cover letters; graduate and professional school; and internships.
- Professional association sites and targeted news groups or listservs. Listservs of professional groups are a good way to network and to solicit advice from professionals in your field. However, monitor a listserv group for a couple of weeks before posting any notes. A word of caution: before submitting any personal information electronically on the Web, be sure to check out what kind of confidentiality or privacy protection is provided and who has access to the information.
- Employer home pages are a good place to find openings, and they are a great resource for gathering basic employer information.

The Internet is not a replacement for other job search methods, but it can enhance the effectiveness of your search. It can provide local, national, and international job information 24

hours a day. The Career Center staff can help guide you with "surfing the 'Net" in your job search.

Career/Job Fairs

A job fair can be a very efficient method of talking with many different employers all under one roof and for making initial contacts. While this "one shot" approach is an excellent strategy, it can be quite confusing and sometimes frustrating. When preparing for a job fair, it is helpful to have a list of employers registered for the event. Review the list and identify at least 5-10 employers that you would like to meet.

On the day of the event, dress professionally and be prepared to distribute your resume. You should prepare a list of questions to ask the employers. In greeting the employer, smile, extend your hand and state your name clearly. You should be prepared for a very brief discussion so be sure you know what you want to ask or tell the employer. Ask the employer for a business card and leave a copy of your resume with him/her. After talking with all of your targeted employers, spend some time meeting other employers.

You should follow up on all job fair leads within a week; be sure to mail the employer another copy of your resume in case it was misplaced during the job fair.

Watch for updated information on Career Fairs in the Career Tribune and at the Career Opportunities Fair held in Atlanta in November and the Employer Expo Career Fair held on campus in early February.

Newspapers and Trade Magazines

The majority of job seekers utilize the newspaper and trade magazines as a source of identifying job leads. However, it has been reported that less than 10% of college graduates find career-oriented positions through these sources. There are few exceptions and there is generally a lot of competition for these positions. Reading the want ads should be only one of the many strategies you use to identify job leads. Many trade journals also list job vacancies. To increase your success rate, you should employ the following practices: respond quickly, within a few days of the listing; when possible, research the organization before applying and incorporate your findings in the cover letter; when the name of the employer is listed, follow up with a phone call a few days after the deadline or closing date to inquire about the hiring time line.

Targeted Mail Campaign

If you have identified employers for whom you would like to work, send targeted cover letters with your resume. Do not try to short cut the system by sending generic cover letters; the

employer will easily identify a form letter and will assume that your interest is not sincere. This proactive method provides you with control in reaching employers you want to reach. To increase your effectiveness, try to identify an internal contact with whom you can discuss organizational needs and goals. You will then be able to incorporate this information in your cover letter. Be sure to follow up on all letters with a phone call.

Do not be surprised if you don't hear back from employers; many do not send letters unless they have an opening and feel that you are qualified.

Internal Campaigns

A contact on the inside may be able to give you information about upcoming vacancies before they are advertised. One of the biggest obstacles that you will need to overcome is getting your foot in the door. Once you have accomplished this task, you are half way there! For this reason, the internal campaign is highly effective. Consider all previous jobs, internships, and volunteer work; for each experience you already have established a "foot in the door." Regardless of your previous position in these organizations, you will have an advantage in applying for more professional and permanent positions. Contact your previous supervisors from each experience; explain that you are now in the process of applying for full-time positions and ask for advice and assistance.

Third Party Agencies

Employment agencies may be contacted by various businesses to find part-time and full-time candidates for their vacant positions. If you decide to work with an employment agency be sure to check around. Always make sure that the fee is assumed by the employer and that you will not be charged. You are also encouraged to check with the Better Business Bureau regarding the reputation of the agency. In meeting with an employment agency representative, be sure to have a clear career goal; some job seekers feel that they have been persuaded to take a position in which they had no real interest. Also, be sure to read all contracts carefully before signing.

Additional Sources:

The above strategies highlight just a few of the common job search techniques. Additional sources include:

City and County Human Resources Offices: Local municipal and county offices have job postings available or information that will be useful to you in your search. Web sites are also readily available.

Chambers of Commerce: These organizations can be contacted to obtain information about employers in the area. There is generally a small fee that you will be asked to pay to receive information about local employers.

Directories: Located in the Career Library and Memorial Library are various directories to help you identify employers by geographical preference or by industry preference. Bookstores and public libraries also carry employment directories to help you identify possible employment leads.

Reciprocity: If you wish to relocate to an area outside of Rome, we encourage you to take advantage of the reciprocity agreement that we have with various colleges and universities throughout the U.S. This agreement allows you access to many services and resources at Career Services offices located in the area in which you plan to conduct your job search. You must be willing to physically visit the Career Services office in your chosen geographical area; they will not provide services over the phone. Some colleges and universities will charge a fee to you while others make services available at no charge. If you would like to receive reciprocity, please contact the Career Center at least two to three weeks prior to your planned visit to the area.

If you find that you have graduated and are not able to find meaningful employment, consider volunteer work or working for a temporary agency 10-20 hours per week. This will allow you to build a stronger network system and may help you develop additional skills while still providing you with time to work on your job search campaign.