



This is “Overview of the Six-Step Job Search Process”, chapter 2 from the book [Job Searching in Six Steps \(index.html\)](#) (v. 1.0).

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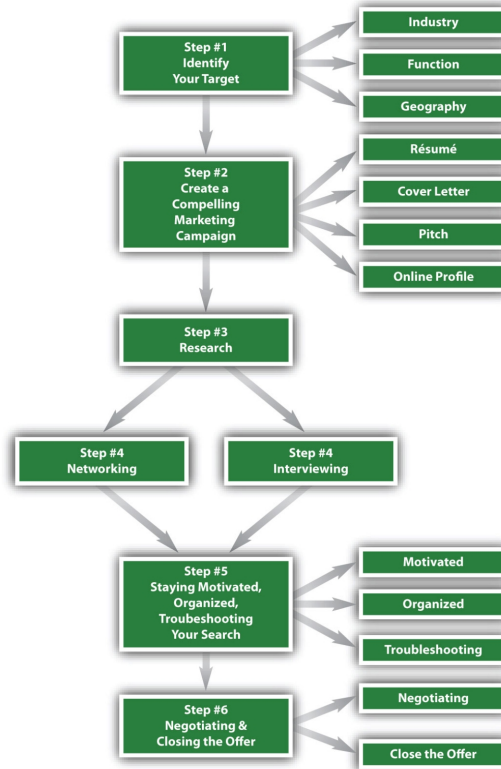
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Chapter 2

Overview of the Six-Step Job Search Process

Figure 2.1 The Six-Step Job Search Process



Overview

The What and How of Looking for a Job

In the previous chapter, we talked about the *why* of looking for a job—the reason and the life situation that cause you to search now. This is the variable component of your job search as it changes over time—your next job search may well be for different reasons.

In this chapter, we introduce the six-step job search process, or the *what* and *how* of looking for a job. This is a constant structure for your job search, regardless of the reason that may be prompting you to search.

While the specifics of the *what* and *how* you look for a job will differ based on your job search technique, personality, and the job market, all job searches share three common characteristics:

1. Job seekers want something (likely more than one thing) in their next job.
2. Job seekers meet with prospective employers who can provide these things.
3. Job seekers and employers decide to work together.

Whether it's an internship, a full-time job, or a career change, every successful search progresses through these three stages. Therefore, if you can move through this progression, taking into account your individual circumstances, then you will meet with job search success. This book breaks down the previously listed job search progression even further into *six* concrete steps you can take to get the job you want:

1. Identify your target.
2. Create a powerful marketing campaign.
3. Conduct in-depth research (of jobs, companies, and industries).
4. Network and interview.
5. Stay motivated and organized and troubleshoot your search.
6. Negotiate and close the offer.

Step 1 is where you define what you want. Step 2 is where you attract prospective employers. Step 3 is where you learn *in detail* about prospective employers so you are prepared when you meet. You likely have done some general exploration into industries, companies, or jobs over your lifetime, which gives you a sense of what you want (for step 1). The research in step 3 is about diving deep and gaining specific knowledge and expertise into your short list of targets. Step 4 gives you the technique for networking meetings and interviews. Step 5 keeps you on track. Step 6 gives you the techniques to negotiate and close an offer—that is, finalizing the deal with an employer who wants to work together.

Follow the six-step process to ensure you are doing everything you need to do to get the job you want. Having a process keeps you moving forward to your end goal.

2.1 Why You Need a Process

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Better understand how you can use the six steps.
2. Recognize the importance of flexibility in the process so you can adapt to job market conditions.
3. Lay the foundation for getting started on your job search.

The Six Steps Are Meant to Be Followed Sequentially

The six steps of the job search process are laid out in sequential order so you can follow them one at a time:

- You need to know what you want (step 1) in order to act on your job search.
- You want to have your marketing material in place (step 2) before you meet with any prospective employers.
- You want to research jobs, companies, and industries (step 3) to prepare for meeting prospective employers. This is detailed research into trends, challenges, culture, and other nuanced information. Some of this research will entail speaking to people in the areas you are targeting for your search, so you want to have your marketing ready to be shared.
- You network and interview (step 4) with prospective employers you discover from your research.
- You have to stay motivated and organized (step 5) as you juggle these meetings and absorb all the information you are learning. At this point, you may also see some problems with your search that need troubleshooting (also step 5).
- All these networking meetings and interviews culminate in a job offer that you negotiate (step 6) with your future employer.

Many job seekers are overwhelmed at the beginning of their job search. There seems to be so much to do—résumés, interviews, and **social media**¹. It is not surprising that many job seekers are afraid of networking!

1. Online communities where you can interact (or socialize) with other people. Facebook and LinkedIn are two examples of popular social media.

A sequential job search process means that you don't have to worry about what comes next. Focus on where you are for your search, and give yourself time on that

step. Before you worry about résumés (or other items in step 2), let yourself explore possibilities, ideals, and desires (step 1). Before you get too anxious about interviewing (step 4), know that you will have the preparation of knowing yourself (step 1), positioning yourself effectively (step 2), and learning about the people and companies you will meet through in-depth research (step 3). There will be time for the job search to progress.

The Six Steps Also Overlap and Should Be Done Concurrently

However, as you move through your job search sequentially, this doesn't mean that you never revisit what you've already done. For example, if you are at the stage where you are meeting people (step 4), you are collecting information from these meetings. You might learn that a particular skill or experience is even more important than you initially thought. You may decide to go back to your marketing (step 2) to highlight these items even more in your résumé or structure future cover letters in a different way to emphasize this new information. These marketing changes will happen while you are still interviewing. In the thick of your job search, you will be juggling the six steps *concurrently*.

You might be juggling different job search targets, each of which is at a different stage. For example, you are interested in sales positions in both the technology industry and the pharmaceutical industry. You start your search focusing on technology companies and you are now at the interview stage with several of them. You have traction in this target, so you add pharmaceutical companies to the mix. You want to research these more before approaching them for interviews, so you are at step 3 for pharmaceuticals, but at step 4 for technology.

While you want to follow the steps sequentially, recognize that there will be instances in your search that the steps are revisited and therefore taken out of sequence. This is a natural part of the search process as you interact with people and situations evolve. Be flexible. Know that you will be learning things along the way—information about jobs, companies, and industries that aren't advertised—and gaining feedback about your skills and experience. You want to adapt your job search process to these new pieces of information.

Starting on the Six Steps Requires a Solid Foundation

The six-step job search process gives you tactics for how to get from where you are to your next job. It is based on the mechanics of how the job market plays out between employers and job candidates. This is important because job seekers often don't know what to do to secure a job. They may know how to do the job—that is, they have the selling and communication skills and experience for the sales job

itself—but *getting* the job, convincing someone to hire you, is different from doing the actual job. It is the difference between being a good driver and being able to pass the road test. You want to prepare for the road test (in this case, the job search process) in order to get a chance to drive.



But these tactics of the six-step job search process assume you have some fundamentals in place. Getting your driver's license also assumes you have certain fundamentals—for example, knowledge of traffic laws and proper eyesight. Here are some key fundamentals you will need to launch your job search:

- Confidence (100 percent belief you will get a job and a positive attitude)
- Communication skills (written, verbal, presentation, and listening)
- **Poise**² (dress, manners, and body language)
- Resources (time, space, office supplies, budget for clothes, transportation, etc.)

With these fundamentals in place, you can use the process to take you through the mechanics of your search.

2. The way you carry yourself. Someone with poise walks, talks, and behaves in a dignified, self-confident manner.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The six steps of the job search are sequential because one step leads into the next.
- It is helpful to follow the sequence so you are not overwhelmed by doing everything at once and so you can build a progression.
- The six steps of the job search are concurrent because each step influences the others.
- It is helpful to allow the six steps to overlap so you can use the information and feedback from each step to strengthen and refine the others.
- The six-step process assumes you have some fundamental skills and resources in place, including confidence, communication skills, poise, and physical resources.

EXERCISES

1. Looking at the six-step job search approach, what step(s) do you feel most comfortable with? Least comfortable with? Each step will be detailed in subsequent chapters, but you may want to budget your time to focus on the ones where you are most uncertain.
2. Do you have some job targets in mind? An entire chapter describes how to specify your target even further (or to elicit targets if you can't think of any). Make a list of your interests right now. Think about how the six-step job search process would apply if you were looking for a job in your areas of interest.

2.2 Prerequisite 1: Confidence

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define confidence in the context of the job search.
2. Learn different strategies to build confidence.

You Must Be Confident Your Job Search Will Be Successful

If you are waiting until you get a job as proof that you can get one, this *prove it* attitude will kill your search. You will appear negative and unattractive to employers. You will get derailed by the inevitable obstacles and drop out along your search. You may not even get started if you believe that your efforts will be futile.

Having confidence in your job search means two things:

1. You believe you will get a job. You know with 100 percent certainty there is a job somewhere out there for you.
2. You believe you will get a job you want. You have a positive attitude about working. You are excited at the prospect of doing the job you are targeting, in the industry you are targeting, and for the companies you are targeting.

You have to know you will be successful, and you have to want that success. If you have just one of these two things, this is not sufficient to project enough confidence in your job search. If you believe you will get a job, but don't believe it will be something you want, you will appear anxious, frustrated, and full of dread. If you are excited about what you want to do, but don't believe you will get a job doing it, you will appear as if you are not good enough for your prospective employers.

A confident job seeker is someone who is energized at the prospect of finding his or her dream job. A confident job seeker may not be an expert on résumés, interviews, or other job search tactics, but he or she has an innate knowledge that he or she will be able to figure those things out.

This is not arrogance. Prospective employers will shy away from arrogant job candidates who appear to be high-maintenance divas and poor team players. You

don't want to come across as someone who thinks you are better than your future boss or colleagues. Confidence is a healthy, positive attitude.

You Can Proactively Build Confidence into Your Job Search Strategy

Ideally, you have confidence before you start your job search. If confidence has been a struggle your whole life or if you feel overly depressed or anxious about your job search specifically, you should seek help from a guidance counselor, therapist, or other professional resource. You want to rule out any medical conditions, such as depression, as the root cause of your anxiety. If you have some nervousness, but not in a crippling way that keeps you from your job search, you can plan to proactively build and maintain your confidence throughout your job search by surrounding yourself with positive influences:

- Pair up with a job search buddy. Pick someone with a can-do attitude, and agree to support each other during your search. Maybe you can meet once a week or call each other right before a big event (e.g., job interview or career fair).
- Start a job search group. A larger group will have more energy than just one person. A group also has a range of personalities and perspectives that can contribute alternative points of view. A group will also have people at different stages of the search, enabling you all to see different outcomes unfolding.
- Enlist the support of a coach or **mentor**³. A more experienced person can be a great sounding board for ideas and a champion for when you need a pick-me-up.
- Read about successful people. When you see other people's achievements over adversity, you are able to see your own potential.
- Keep a journal that focuses on the positive. Write down things for which you are grateful. Write down past successes and wins. You will see that you have been successful in other areas, and this can give you the confidence that you can succeed in your job search as well.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Confident job seekers know they will get a job.
- Confident job seekers are excited at the prospect of working and getting jobs they want.
- You can build and maintain confidence by surrounding yourself with positive influences.

3. A trusted source for advice and feedback.

EXERCISES

1. Are you confident your job search will succeed? If not, why not? Which of the suggestions for building confidence will you try?
2. Make a list of people you know who have a positive attitude. Highlight people who might be a possible job search buddy, member of a job search group, coach, or mentor.
3. Make a list of past successes and wins. It might be helpful to organize by blocks of time in your life, such as elementary school, middle school, high school, college, and so forth. These don't have to be specific awards. You should include all instances where you felt proud of your accomplishment.
4. Read a biography of a person you admire or a successful person in an industry in which you are interested. You might read a biography of Wendy Kopp, founder of Teach For America, if you are interested in education. You might read a biography of Warren Buffett if you are interested in investments.

2.3 Prerequisite 2: Communication Skills

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define the different types of communication skills needed for a successful job search.
2. Learn ways to enhance overall communication skills.

A Successful Job Search Is All About Successful Communication

A successful job search is a match between what an employer wants and what a candidate wants. That match is made based on what is communicated. While an interview is structured a specific way, at its core it is a communication between job seeker and employer. While networking has its standards and rules of etiquette, at its core it is about communicating via listening, speaking, writing, and so forth.

The six-step process will give you the tactics that are particular to interviewing, networking, and other job search-specific communications, but the successful job seeker needs to have solid overall communication skills in place in the following areas:

- Written
- Verbal
- Presentation
- Listening

Communication occurs at every stage of the job search.

Table 2.1 Communication Skills Needed for Each Step of the Job Search

Job Search Step	Written	Verbal	Presentation	Listening
1. Identify Your Target	In the introspective work	In articulating your interests		To advice you are getting
2. Create A Powerful	In the creation of your material	In your networking pitch	In the design of your material and	To responses to your pitch

Job Search Step	Written	Verbal	Presentation	Listening
Marketing Campaign			sample portfolio	and other marketing
3. Conduct In-Depth Research	To keep track of your information	To gather information		To information shared
4. Network and Interview	For scheduling, note-taking during meetings, and thank-yous	Before, during, and after meetings and interviews	During specialized interviews	During meetings and interviews
5. Stay Motivated and Organized and Troubleshoot Your Search	To keep track of your data	During support group and mentor meetings		To support and feedback
6. Negotiate and Close the Offer	For offer letter revisions	To advocate for what you want	To close the deal with senior management	To employers' needs, wants, and constraints

Communication Skills Are a Proxy for Job Skills

You need communications skills for more than understanding and developing **rapport**⁴ with prospective employers. You will also need communication skills on the job, so the way you communicate in your search is a sign of the way you might communicate on the job.

Many employers also look at communication skills in general as a proxy for attention to detail. If you are sloppy with your job search communication—leaving rambling voice mails, sending e-mails with typos or grammatical mistakes—then you likely do this on the job. Why should employers assume you will be more careful after you get the job? If you don't double-check your communication now, you probably won't start once you are hired.

Finally, your communication skills underscore your logic and reasoning. If your interview responses are scattered or unrelated, that could be a sign your thought process isn't logical or structured. If you can't get to the point in regular conversation, maybe you bring this disorganized reasoning to your work.

4. Camaraderie, ease, familiarity. You have developed rapport with someone when they feel comfortable around you.

Your Job Search Can Be Tailored to Showcase Your Communication Strengths and Support Your Weaknesses

Look at your history to see your current communication strengths and weaknesses, so you know where you need to focus as you prepare for a job search. If you know that you are better at written over verbal communication, you might choose e-mail over phone calls in situations that call for either approach (e.g., when you try to get a networking meeting). But you can't avoid a method of communication entirely, so the verbally challenged should allot extra time to practice interviewing and perhaps take the time away from drafting cover letters, which play to their writing strength. For someone with more verbal than written strengths, they will structure their search differently—practicing different areas and budgeting more time in weak areas that may take longer to strengthen.

If you have already selected job targets, incorporate the communication requirements for your target as you plan your job search process. Some fields, such as education, law, sales, consulting, and public relations, heavily emphasize communication, so each and every correspondence has extra weight. Your job search communication becomes a proxy for your potential communication on the job.

The communication requirements may influence the structure of the process. For communication-focused fields, a presentation as part of the interview process may be required. For other fields that are not communication heavy, such as accounting or IT, you likely will not do a presentation (you may for senior roles, but not generally). Start brushing up on presentation skills now if your job search may specifically require this.

Improve Communication Skills with Deliberate Focus and Practice

Now you know the general ways communication skills enter the job search equation, as well as specific ways that different fields may use communication skills to evaluate potential job candidates. With the importance of communication skills in mind, you can deliberately focus and practice to improve your communication skills:

- Start the habit of editing all of your written communication, including e-mails, for correct spelling and grammar. Learn to use the spell check, dictionary, and other helpful functions in your word-processing and e-mail programs.

- Review proper business letter formats. We will review cover letters and thank-you letters later in this book, but general e-mails back and forth also need to be handled with proper care.
- Do an audit of your verbal communication style. Do you talk too fast? Do you enunciate? Are you able to get to the point concisely, or do you ramble? Do you stutter or sound nervous? Tape yourself or have a friend give you an objective critique of your verbal skills now, so you know what needs work.
- Practice delivering presentations. If you can take a class that has a presentation opportunity, that is a good option. You might also join a club or professional group where you have a chance to present.
- Practice **active listening**⁵. In your daily conversations, become aware of how well you listen. Are you jumping to what you want to say? Could you paraphrase what the other person is saying?
- Practice listening in different scenarios. Do you listen well over the phone? Can you focus in a group and one on one? The job search involves many different situations, so your listening skills will be tested in many different ways.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Communication skills, including written, verbal, presentation, and listening skills, are required throughout the job search.
- All employers consider communication skills when they evaluate candidates.
- Some fields are communication focused, so the general communication during the job search serves as a proxy for your job skills.
- Some fields build different communication hurdles, such as presentations, directly into the job search process.
- You can improve your communication skills by focusing on them now and practicing good communication habits.

5. Paying attention and absorbing what the other person is saying.

EXERCISES

1. What are your communication strengths and weaknesses? Force yourself to rank your verbal, written, presentation, and listening skills from one to four, in order of proficiency.
2. How will you modify your search to take advantage of your individual communication strengths? Do you have any job interests where communication skills play a particularly important role? Start saving writing samples and looking for opportunities to make presentations.
3. Go back to the list of activities to try in the previous section on improving your communication skills. Schedule in your calendar at least three, if not all, activities suggested.
4. What resources do you need to improve your problem communication areas?

2.4 Prerequisite 3: Poise

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the importance of physical appearance and nonverbal communication in the job search.
2. Learn ways to enhance your poise.

Your Poise Communicates Volumes without You Saying a Word

The way you dress, carry yourself, and physically behave also communicate your job potential. Your nonverbal communication either supports the things you say and how you say them, or it undermines you. If you are an articulate, well-spoken person but dress in a sloppy manner, slouch, and fidget, then your actions belie your verbal communication. Therefore, poise goes hand in hand with communication as a fundamental prerequisite for your search.



Professional Dress Signals Your Professional Maturity

What you wear to different job search functions signals neatness, professionalism, and understanding of general business protocol. A business suit in a dark neutral color is the standard. Black, blue, brown, and gray are neutral colors. Some industries and specific companies within industries dress more casually, so it's important to consult an experienced person in the specific industries and companies that interest you for the most relevant guidelines. For example, in media and fashion, your dress is a signal of how much you know and can fit into that field. A dark suit would be too bland and look out of place at a fashion-forward company.

For general functions, such as career fairs or professional mixers, stick to proper business attire. Even if there are a range of dress options in attendance, it's best to be more formally dressed. In addition, most job seekers look more professional and put together with a business suit. You probably will carry yourself more professionally, have better posture, and be more alert in a business suit than in casual attire.

If you are attending an event or an interview where business casual is stipulated, this is still neater and more formal than casual attire. Khakis rather than jeans, dress slacks and a sport coat for men, and a sweater set for women are some examples of business casual.

Here is a checklist of things to remember about dressing professionally:

- Dark, neutral colors and a matching suit jacket and slacks or skirt are the standard.
- Shoes should be comfortable and polished. No open-toed styles or very high heels; even in dressy styles, shoes with open toes or very high heels look unprofessional.
- What you wear beneath the jacket will also be seen. For men, blue or white dress shirts are standard, though some other colors are acceptable. For women, stick to blouses with sleeves in case you take your jacket off (sleeveless is too casual). Women should also stay away from frilly camisoles—they can be seen under your jacket and still look like lingerie.
- Cover yourself. No body hair for men or cleavage for women should be visible. Women should make sure skirt lengths are not too short.
- Avoid overly printed ties, lots of jewelry, accessories, or too much makeup, all of which detract from a professional appearance.
- Have a professional briefcase or bag. A backpack or other casual bag diminishes the professional image.

- Fragrance is not recommended because some people are allergic.
- Keep hair neat and off your face so interviewers can see you.
- Don't wait until you start your job search to make sure you have the appropriate clothes. It takes time to ensure the fit and length is right, and you may need tailoring or other services.

The Way You Carry Yourself Also Signals Professionalism

If you have a great suit but you slouch, that is an incomplete package. Good posture, steady eye contact, and a firm handshake are additional fundamentals to the job search process. Even if you think this is common sense, don't assume that you will be 100 percent put together once your search starts. If you are not used to dressing professionally and interacting with people in a formal business context, then you may have a weak handshake or poor eye contact and not realize it. Before you get busy with interviews, see if you can attend a business event just as a practice run.

Here is a checklist of things to remember about carrying yourself professionally:

- Maintain good posture. You don't want to be stiff, but you want to stand and sit straight, as it keeps you looking and feeling alert. Practice maintaining good posture over time (interviews can last thirty minutes or longer).
- Maintain steady eye contact, but not 100 percent of the time. It's preferable to look away from time to time, as glaring or staring at someone makes them uncomfortable.
- Have a firm handshake. Don't break the person's hand, but don't be hesitant or limp, either.
- Develop a habit of turning off and not checking your cell phone when you are talking to someone.
- Practice eating and speaking formally. There will be situations where you are networking or even interviewing over a meal. You don't want a real interview to be the first time you experience formal dining and conversation.

Body Language and Nonverbal Communication Support or Undermine Your Words

You might look great, carry yourself well, and speak eloquently, but you also communicate with physical gestures and other nonverbal cues. Pay attention to how you use your body during conversations and meetings. You might find that you can't sit still for long periods of time or that you use a lot of distracting hand

gestures. You might be too still and miss opportunities to accentuate points with a nod of the head or finger movement.

Some recruiter pet peeves include the following:

- Looking over the recruiter's shoulder. What are you staring at?
- Fidgeting constantly. How are you going to appear to clients if you can't sit still?
- Gesticulating in an overly dramatic way. Don't slam your hands down emphatically on the recruiter's desk. It looks threatening, not forceful.
- Lack of common courtesy, for example, not covering your mouth when you yawn, cough, or sneeze. How could an employer put you in front of a client with that unmannerly behavior?
- Checking cell phones during meetings or interviews. Is this job less important to you than your cell phone calls?

Start practicing good manners now so these habits are ingrained behaviors before your job search.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Poise refers to professional dress, carriage, appropriate body language, and nonverbal communication skills. Poise is critical to the job search.
- Good poise complements and supports the other good job search fundamentals, while lack of poise detracts from them.
- Prepare and practice now to incorporate poise into your regular behavior.

EXERCISES

1. Review your interview clothes. Practice meeting with a friendly contact to check your handshake, eye contact, and posture. Practice interviewing with a friendly contact and ask him or her to watch for your nonverbal communication. What area of poise is your strongest and weakest in the job search?
2. What will you do now to work on problem areas? If your interview clothes need tailoring or additions, where can you shop or find a tailor? If your carriage or body language is lacking, do you have additional friendly contacts, even family, with whom you can practice getting through a conversation with upright posture, good eye contact, and appropriate gestures?
3. Check for resources in your school or community library, such as opportunities to practice or books specifically dedicated to professional image or style.

2.5 Prerequisite 4: Resources

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand what things you need and can put in place now to support your job search.
2. Identify support systems for your job search.

Physical Resources and Supplies to Launch a Productive Job Search

In a way, the resources you need for your job search can be broken down into three categories:

1. Time
2. Space
3. Money

Time includes not just the time for the six steps of the process (and to work on the fundamentals discussed in this chapter) but also the time away from your current activities. As you add the job search to your calendar, what will you take away?

Space includes the place where you will be doing the work of your job search—computer, phone, desk, a quiet area to focus. Your space must be outfitted with the right equipment but also include fast Internet access, paper, pens, postage and mailing supplies, and other office essentials.

Money is required to outfit your space and for your supplies. In the discussion on professional dress, there may be items listed that you need to purchase. Your job search will require travel to interviews. Networking might entail paying a membership fee to a group or an event fee for a professional mixer. Part of your research strategy might involve taking people to lunch in exchange for information. Many areas of the job search will require a financial investment.

Ideas and Support Systems to Help You Find and Manage Your Time

Finding and managing your time will require trade-offs. A proactive job search takes ten to fifteen hours per week. You will need to take this time from other activities. Before your job search starts, take an inventory of everything that is taking up your time. Create a comprehensive calendar that includes the following:

- Major trips or vacations when you will physically be away
- Critical projects, papers due, or exam weeks when you will be busier than usual
- Regular daily, weekly, or monthly appointments, such as classes, club meetings, or gym workouts
- Job search events that you know about in advance (for many students, include specific deadlines set by your school, such as when you should submit your résumé to the employers coming to campus)

Create a comprehensive activity list that includes necessary but non-time-specific activities:

- Homework
- Laundry and housework
- Exercise and self-care
- Volunteer work
- Hobbies
- Ten to fifteen hours of job search activity, some of which must be done during normal business hours

Look at the unscheduled times and your list of activities. Block out where things might go. Be realistic about when you do your best work. If you have more energy in the morning, reserve that time for your job search activity. If you know you can't concentrate by end of day, use that time for nonthinking activities, such as housework or exercise.

Well before you start your job search, start moving activities around and make arrangements for your replacement if you need to drop activities. You want to have a schedule in place that supports your job search, not crowds it out.

Ideas and Support Systems to Help You Set Up Your Work Space

Your job search is a project, so you need a comprehensive work space. Stocking up supplies in advance of your search enables you to stay focused and not get derailed by a surprise trip to the store. You also want to prepare in advance for services you may need, such as printing, copying, mailing, and faxing. Know the hours of the closest post office and office supply and service store. Know where you can send and receive faxes and where you can do special copying, binding, or printing.

Here is a checklist of ideas for a comprehensive work space:

- Build a surplus of office essentials, such as paper, pens, mail supplies, staples, and so forth.
- Have a pen and paper by all phones if you share your workspace with others. This way, your cohabitants can easily take messages for you.
- Audit your computer, phone, and Internet access to ensure that your equipment and communication lines are in order. If you have a slow Internet connection, research public access places, such as libraries, and list their availability.
- Create a professional voice mail message for all phones, including your cell phone.
- List post office, office supply, and service store addresses and hours.
- Figure out how to back up computer files, change printer ink, unblock paper jams, and any other minor but critical support services for your equipment. You do not want to be late for a meeting because you were printing a résumé at the last minute and it got stuck in the printer.
- Check for privacy. If your work space is part of your bedroom and you will be making video calls, invest in a folding screen or figure out how to position the webcam to keep your environment looking professional.
- Check for quiet. Your job search will involve a lot of phone calls, including interviews. Plan now for a space where you can be heard, hear well, and concentrate.
- Make it a space that energizes and inspires you. Add pictures, fresh flowers, and so forth.

If you have a very organized friend, enlist his or her help in setting up and decorating your space.

Ideas and Support Systems to Help Manage Your Money

Know your budget for your job search essentials in advance. You can price out the work space items listed previously and the professional dress requirements listed earlier. For job search events you already know about, budget for registration fees and transportation costs. If you want to work with a career coach, factor that into your budget.

Another financial consideration is the opportunity cost of the time spent on your search, as opposed to working. If you have to drop a part-time job to launch your search, there is the cost of lost wages. If you are a student and your job search extends past graduation, there is the cost of supporting yourself while you look. How will you pay for your living expenses? How long can you sustain yourself without a job?

Your financial situation affects the execution and timing of your job search, so you need to decide on these issues prior to your search. If you are relying on family or friends to help with your living expenses, have a candid conversation about both of your expectations before you start your search.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Your job search requires time, space, and money resources.
- You need to allocate these resources to your search and decide on the trade-offs necessary to spend your time, space, and money on your search, as opposed to other objectives.
- Line up your resources before your job search so that you create an environment that supports your job search.

EXERCISES

1. Do you have time, space, and money set aside for your job search? Review the sections with suggested activities and actually set up your schedule, audit your workspace, and create a budget.
2. In what areas are you underresourced or lacking? Do you need to talk to family members about financial support? Do you need to find the closest office supply and services store? Do you have an unrealistic amount of activities in your current schedule and need to make cuts?
3. What specific next steps will you take to line up your resources prior to your job search? Schedule a specific date and time for the conversation with family. Schedule a specific date and time to visit office supply stores. Pick activities to drop and make arrangements to delegate these or get out of any commitments.

2.6 State of the Market: Launching Your Job Search at This Time

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the current job market and how it impacts your overall job search.
2. Learn strategies to tailor your job search to this market.

Three Trends in the Twenty-First-Century Job Search

Today's job search can be characterized by three emerging trends:

1. 24/7 activity
2. An entrepreneurial approach
3. A multigenerational workforce

24/7 Job Search

With mobile devices and broadband Internet access, it is very easy to connect to people at all times of the day and on weekends. While formal job search activity still centers on normal business hours, it is easier and therefore more acceptable for job search activity to take place at all hours. It can be the middle of the night, and therefore you can still do the following:

- Draft cover letters and other marketing material using your word-processing software.
- Research companies over the Internet.
- Connect with people via social media.

Other job candidates will be working hard on their search, so you might feel obligated to compete with this extra time, hence the 24/7 job search. Even if you want to set time boundaries, jobs are increasingly global, so there is a significant chance that you might have to network and interview with people in time zones across the world. Finally, with job insecurity high after the recent recession, it is less likely that you will quit your job outright to devote time to your search. Students don't have the option to opt out of classes during their job search, so the job search activity is on top of everything else, extending your typical day.

Entrepreneurial Approach

With the tight labor market (more available job candidates than employers ready to hire), the competition is intense. The rise of social media gives job seekers the ability to brand themselves in a way formerly associated only with companies. Job seekers are marketing their job potential the way companies market goods and services. This requires job seekers to develop branding, marketing, and sales skills normally associated with entrepreneurs.

Many job seekers are turning to consulting and freelancing during a protracted job search, thus becoming entrepreneurs by default. Even recent graduates are starting businesses, piecing together several smaller projects rather than a single internship, and consulting or interning after graduating in lieu of full-time employment. Your ability to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to your job search will be necessary as your competition increasingly does the same.

Multigenerational Workforce

There are four generations currently in the workforce:

1. Generation Y, born between 1980 and 1995
2. Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980
3. Baby boomers, born between 1945 and 1964
4. Traditionalists, born before 1945

Each generation grew up with different work expectations, technology, and communication styles. There is a culture clash as four generations work closely together. Much has been made in the media of the generational clash. As a job seeker, you will likely interview with someone from a different generation who has specific preconceptions of you. You may not change your job search tactics in anticipation of a clash that may not arise, but you want to be sensitive to some of the anxiety in the market.

What the Emerging Trends Mean for Your Job Search

You can use the 24/7 job search trend to your advantage by using the connectivity as extra time and resources for your job search. If you are comfortable with online research and online social networks, these are helpful tools to add to your job search.

You can incorporate the entrepreneurial techniques of branding, marketing, and sales into the way you brand, market, and sell yourself, thus enhancing your job search skills. If you can get consulting or freelance work while you search, that is a bonus for your finances and your experience base.

The multigenerational workforce is ripe for conflict, but there are also additional opportunities to add value as a collaborative team player. Be aware that communication styles, work styles, and expectations are different among the generations. Make a concerted effort to build rapport when you are dealing with everyone, but especially people in different generations from yourself. Do not assume that they share your same preferences.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The current job market is characterized by 24/7 activity, increased entrepreneurship, and a multigenerational workforce.
- Savvy job seekers can incorporate these trends into their job search to increase their value over the competition.

EXERCISES

1. Do you hear about these trends for the areas that you are targeting for your job search?
2. How are you going to set boundaries for yourself so you don't fall into the trap of looking for a job 24/7?
3. If the notion of acting entrepreneurially appeals to you, add books about branding, marketing, and sales to your job search reading list.
4. Write down assumptions you have about the different generations, including your generation. Actually seek out people in those generations and ask them to share their assumptions. Compare your results to increase your awareness and open the lines of communication.

2.7 Chapter Review and Exercises

The six-step job search process provides a constant structure that works for a variety of life situations, including students looking for an internship or full-time job, career changers, people relocating for work, or people coming back to work after unemployment or a leave of absence. The steps are designed to give you a framework to follow and keep the job search process from becoming overwhelming. But the framework is not fixed, so you should expect to revisit the steps as needed to refine and adjust your search along the way.

In addition to the six steps of the job search, you need to have a foundation in place for job search success, including confidence you can get a job, strong communication skills, poise and professional presence, and the physical resources to support your search. You also should be aware of trends in the job market, including 24/7 communication capability that encourages people to overwork, an entrepreneurial approach to the job search that translates the business techniques of branding, marketing, and sales to the individual, and the multigenerational workplace. We have four generations active in the workplace, so the probability of dealing with someone much older or younger than you is significant. Do not assume that people have the same expectations and behaviors as you, and focus instead on building rapport individual by individual.

Chapter Takeaways

- The six steps of the job search are sequential because one step leads into the next.
- It is helpful to follow the sequence so you are not overwhelmed by doing everything at once and so you can build a progression.
- The six steps of the job search are concurrent because each step influences the others.
- It is helpful to allow the six steps to overlap so you can use the information and feedback from each step to strengthen and refine the others.
- The six-step process assumes you have some fundamental skills and resources in place, including confidence, communication skills, poise, and physical resources.
- A confident job seeker knows he or she will get a job.
- A confident job seeker is excited at the prospect of working and getting a job he or she wants.
- You can build and maintain confidence by surrounding yourself with positive influences.
- Communication skills, including written, verbal, presentation, and listening skills, are required throughout the job search.
- All employers consider communication skills when they evaluate candidates.
- Some fields are communication focused, so the general communication during the job search serves as a proxy for your job skills.
- Some fields build in different communication hurdles, such as presentations, directly into the job search process.
- You can improve your communication skills by focusing on them now and practicing good communication habits.
- Poise refers to professional dress, carriage, appropriate body language, and nonverbal communication skills. Poise is critical to the job search.
- Good poise complements and supports the other good job search fundamentals, while lack of poise detracts from them.
- Prepare and practice now to incorporate poise into your regular behavior.
- Your job search requires time, space, and money resources.
- You need to allocate these resources to your search and decide on the trade-offs necessary to spend your time, space, and money on your search, as opposed to other objectives.

- Line up your resources before your job search so that you create an environment that supports your job search.
- The current job market is characterized by 24/7 activity, increased entrepreneurship, and a multigenerational workforce.
- Savvy job seekers can incorporate these trends into their job search to increase their value over the competition.

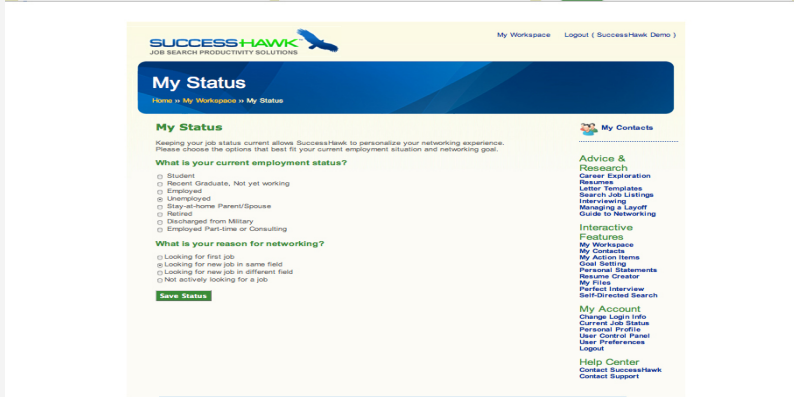
Chapter Review

1. What are the six steps to the job search, and why are they sequenced in that order?
2. When should the six steps of the job search overlap or be taken out of the original order?
3. What are the four fundamental prerequisites to your job search?
4. Why is confidence required in the job search?
5. What communication skills are important to the job search? In what cases might communication skills be more important to some job seekers than others?
6. What is poise, and why does it matter in the job search?
7. What resources should you line up before you start your job search?
8. What are three emerging trends of today's job search? Why are they important to your search?

SuccessHawk: Getting Started

Go to <http://www.successhawk.com> and click on “Log In.” You will then be asked to sign up.

After enrolling, your first step is to complete “My Account: Current Job Status.” This action sets algorithms that activate the updating feature in SuccessHawk’s Contact Manager.



Take a moment to see the resources SuccessHawk provides and how to navigate the site. As with any new software, SuccessHawk may seem complicated at first, but with a little practice, you will find it easy to use.