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Recommended Reading List for Career Success

By [Thomas J. Denham](#)

Learning from career resources is an essential component of becoming occupationally literate. Your research will prove useful in finding the right career. During the summer, develop a systematic program of reading career books.

First, start by reading at least one book a month in each of the three stages of the career development process: self-assessment, career exploration, and job/graduate school search. In addition, read a book that focuses on one or two career fields that interest you. Although there are dozens of books on the market, here is my list of the key categories you should seek for career survival:

1. Self-Assessment

If you only have the opportunity to own one book, my recommendation is [What Color Is Your Parachute](#) by Richard Nelson Bolles.

Considered the bible of career development by most practitioners, this book has sold over 6 million copies since 1970. Updated annually, it covers such areas as choosing or changing a career, identifying your skills and interests, finding your mission in life and choosing a new

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career quickly.

My other favorite is a shorter book by Joe Allegretti entitled **Loving Your Job, Finding Your Passion: Work and the Spiritual Life**.

After each chapter you will find exercises and questions that will help you define your true calling.

2. Career Exploration

After you have determined your skills, values, and interests in the self-assessment stage, try **The College Majors Handbook** by Fogg, Harrington, and Harrington. This resource will help you explore the wide range of opportunities available to specific majors and relates each of them to salaries, on-the-job training, and employment outlook.

Another excellent resource is **Do What You Are** by Paul D. Tiegger and Barbara Barron-Tiegger, which uncovers the secrets of personality type and connects your type to careers.

3. Job/Internship Search

After you have narrowed your options down to a few top choices, you will need a guide to help you with the actual mechanics of a job search. Check out **The Complete Job Search Handbook** by Howard Figler, Ph.D. This revised and expanded book deals with the important topics of networking, library research and self-marketing. If your goal is landing an internship, use **The Internship Bible** by Mark Oldman and Samer Hamadeh. Here you will find tips for obtaining your dream internship and a directory of 100,000 opportunities.

4. Graduate School

If you plan on going to graduate school you will need assistance navigating the steps of the application process, acceptance, and survival. Get **Peterson's Guide to Graduate School**. This multi-volume resource can be found at your campus career center or library and has complete information on all graduate programs and degrees at more than 1,600 institutions. It can prepare you for graduate school with ideas on applying, financing, and test requirements. Also on my list is the **Yale Daily News Guide to Fellowships and Grants** published by Kaplan. If you are wondering how you will pay for grad school, this is an outstanding place to begin locating funding sources and financial aid.

5. Resume Writing

Everyone who wants to work at some point needs a resume. My choices is **Resumes that Knock 'em Dead** by Martin Yate. This book gets you started with the basic ingredients of a resume and then lists dozens of samples for specific jobs, situations and careers. I also like

Resumes in Cyberspace by Pat Criscito. Inside you will find information on developing scannable, e-mailable, and web resumes along with Internet resources, wired employers and e-networking tools.

6. Cover Letter Writing

Cover letters are essential to any serious search. Use **Cover Letters, Cover Letters, Cover Letters** by Richard Fein as your source for samples. It includes ideas for opening sentences, thank you notes, and follow up correspondence. **Cover Letters for Dummies** by Joyce Lain Kennedy is good for tackling action letters, myths, salary requirements, language and phrases.

7. Interviewing

Since interviewing is the most neglected part of the job search, it is important that you find a resource that can help you best prepare. **Sweaty Palms: The Neglected Art of Being Interviewed** by H. Anthony Medley is my favorite. It covers all types of situations including interviews, dress, salary negotiation, and sample questions and appropriate responses. Also recommended is **Best Answers to the 201 Most Frequently Asked Interview Questions** by Matthew J. DeLuca. He covers appropriate comebacks to typical behavior, stress, open ended, and illegal questions.

8. Career Field Book

General resources are a great place to start, but at some point you will need a book that specializes in your chosen career field. This is why getting focused in the self-assessment and career exploration stages is so important to an efficient search. For example, if you are pursuing jobs in the communications field, I suggest **Careers in Communications and Entertainment** by L. Mogel, which covers 250 detailed job descriptions and expert advice. **Exploring Health Care Careers** by David Hayes is another example of a resource that specializes in a particular field.

Begin with your campus career center since they will have a library with resources categorized by area. Ask your career counselor for help in selecting a book that will work for you.

9. Internet Job Searching

No job search is complete without using the Internet in some way to support your efforts. **The Guide to Internet Job Searching** by Margaret Riley Dikel & Frances E. Roehm is my pick for Internet job applications, great job lead banks, and web resources arranged by career field. In its 4th edition, **CareerXroads** by Gerry Crispin & Mark Mehler is a wonderful directory of more than 500 of the best job, resume, and career management sites on the Internet.

10. Job Bank Book/Directory

If you have narrowed your job search to a specific city or cities, a directory or resource for that particular area is a smart idea. My preferred choice is *The Job Bank Book* series from Adams, Inc. Many students from Siena College, where I am director of the career center, pursue opportunities in Boston and New York City. We frequently refer them to **The Boston Job Bank Book** and **The Metro New York Job Bank Book** as reference tools. These resources are outstanding in developing your prospect list of places to send resumes and cover letters. I suggest **The Adams Job Almanac** also published by Adams, Inc. You will find useful tips for the job search, resumes, cover letters, and offers as well as profiles of more than 7,000 employers in growing industries to contact for jobs.

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