

Job Search Strategies

The board game Risk is a game of global domination, where the object is to take over the world. Only one player gets to conquer the planet, you have to beat everyone else to it, and you need a strategy to do it.

That's kind of what a job search is like. While your goal may not be world domination, the search takes just about the same amount of energy and strategy—and only one person will get the job you're after.

There are ways to make the full-time burden of a job search more effective. It helps if you have a goal in mind, stay organized, and incorporate a variety of methods and follow-up. It's not enough to simply apply to positions listed on the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services Web site (www.rit.edu/co-op/careers). You need to actively seek out your own opportunities as well. Your job search is not complete unless you identify and contact employers on your own which can mean doing research and targeting companies that are doing the kind of work you wish to do.

Things to Keep in Mind as You Begin Planning

- Stay open and flexible.
- Consider all of your options.
- Consider the merits of each opportunity *before* you react to its location.
- Do not let concerns about housing limit your job search.
- It may be difficult to conduct a serious job search long-distance if you plan to move to a particular area after graduation. Consider a trip to the area and let potential employers know that you will be in their area and perhaps you can arrange to meet to discuss your qualifications during that time.
- You may want to work in your hometown for financial reasons, but there are not always enough jobs in any one community for everyone who wants to work there.

Making the Most of what is On Campus

- Advisement – Your program coordinator in the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services can help you prepare for a job search and work with you to develop a personal job search plan.
- On-campus interviews – Employers come on campus to recruit for co-op and full-time openings fall, winter and spring quarters. If you meet the employer's qualifications, you can submit your resume for consideration online. If you are not a perfect match, you can contact them to see if they would consider speaking with you during their visit to RIT. Sign up for co-op and full-time interviews on RIT Job Zone.
- Online job postings – You can view and apply to co-op job openings or full-time job openings on the RIT Job Zone.
- Career fairs – Our office hosts a number of campus throughout the year. Look for information about our office sponsored career fairs on RIT Job Zone.
- Employer information sessions – Employers conducting on-campus interviews often give presentations about their companies and openings. These are open to everyone and are a nice opportunity to talk with a company representative. Information can be accessed through the RIT Job Zone.
- Alumni Network – It can be very helpful to connect with RIT alumni. Alumni Relations (www.rit.edu/alumni) can provide lists of alumni upon request and seniors and alumni have access to the Alumni Online Community. The Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services also has established a network of alumni willing to be contacted on a variety of job search topics.

Company Research

In order to uncover potential openings that match up with your qualifications, it is important to do some research. Use a variety of resources when researching companies and do not fall into the trap of targeting only high profile organizations or obvious industries. Your dream job may be with a company you never heard of – until you did that valuable research.

Marketing Yourself

Now you have identified the organization you would like to approach about the possibility of a job – you need to be ready with a great resume and cover letter. You will use this documentation to convince potential employers that you are worth consideration.

Contacting a Company

We generally suggest that you send a company your resume and cover letter before telephoning or visiting. Your goal is to develop enough interest to get a personal interview. Catching the company off guard on the phone or in person may generate an impulsive “No Thanks”. If you think the employer is not familiar with RIT and/or the co-op program, get a “program marketing piece” for your major in the reception area of the Cooperative Education and Career Services Office (building #77, 1st floor). This provides a brief description of RIT and the particular academic program and can be sent with your resume. Also, suggest to the company that they call or write your program coordinator for information you cannot provide.

Follow Up

Employers who list positions with the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services are busy and usually get a significant number of students applying for each position. Therefore, it is often *simply not enough* to apply electronically or mail your resume, and wait for an employer to contact you. In order to be successful, *you must follow up with each employer* who receives your resume. This crucial step in the job search process could mean the difference between success and failure in your search!

As a rule, if you have not received a response to your letter and resume within ten business days after the deadline date, you should follow-up with a telephone call. Most managers appreciate a follow-up call as it shows a sincere and continued interest in their company. Keep in mind that the hiring process in large organizations can be lengthy. During this process, if a manager really wants you, he or she may be concerned that you have lost interest. So, it is a good idea to let the company know that you are still a candidate. Telephone follow-up will also give you an opportunity to personalize your candidacy, generate an interest in your qualifications, and get you the interview!

How often you should call is a two-sided coin. If you call too many times, you can be labeled a pest, and this will work against you. If you do not call back often enough, another more aggressive candidate may beat you. If you really want the job, and you think you have a chance, call up to two or three times. If the manager does not seem interested, then do not waste your time.

Follow-Up Call

Your goal – to obtain an interview!

Two keys to successful follow-up calls:

1. Planning what you want to discuss.
2. Organizing a strategy to steer the conversation toward those topics.

To prepare for a follow-up call, you should:

1. Prepare the opening statement you will use to introduce yourself.
2. List the key topics you want to discuss, such as highlights of your background.
3. List the information you have learned about the company through your research and contacts.
4. Have a copy of your resume in front of you for reference purposes.
5. Anticipate the employer's possible responses and prepare specific replies for each.

Make your call to the person to whom you sent your resume.

After making follow-up calls, write down the results you obtained and your reactions to the conversation. (*Refer to sample follow up script at the end of this handout*)

Telephone Anxiety

The idea of calling employers that you do not know probably sounds like a good idea in theory, but few people are comfortable picking up the phone and calling strangers. You must prepare and be persistent. Business people are busy, and even your father's best friend may not respond to repeated phone calls. Stay with it!

Accept that you will start out a little shaky, with a degree of uncertainty, on your initial calls. That is normal! As you progress, you will begin to develop your own technique. After each call, analyze what you said and what the reply was – what worked and what did not work.

Telephone Technique Tips

- Never be anything but extra nice to office staff. They have incredible power over the information and the people who get through to decision-makers. You want them as allies, not enemies.
- Do not take a lack of a return call personally, and do not mistake it for a lack of interest.
- Leave a detailed message with the secretary or voice mail if you do not get through.
- If after several calls you have not gotten a return call, ask the secretary for advice. (Example: “I have been calling Ms. Jones for several days, and I have not been able to get her attention. Do you have any suggestions for me about how I might be more effective in trying to reach her?”)
- Try calling early in the morning and late in the day when managers may pick up incoming calls themselves.
- Be direct. Put a smile in your voice, and speak as if you expect to be put through. (“Good morning. Is Ms. Jones in? This is Ed Smith calling.”)
- If you have mailed a letter stating that you will contact Ms. Jones, you can say in all honesty, “Yes, she is expecting my call.”
- If the secretary asks you what your call is regarding...say, “I sent her a letter earlier in the week, and I am calling to follow-up.”
- You will not succeed on every attempt and you should not expect to!

Sample Follow Up Call Script

After you send an employer your resume, it is very important to follow up with each of them. You may learn your status and perhaps nudge the process along.

Job Seeker: Hello, this is Nila Jensen calling for Susan McKain.
Secretary: Will Mrs. McKain know what your call is about?
Job Seeker: I am following up on some correspondence. I believe she is expecting my call.
Secretary: All right. I will see if she is here.
Susan McKain: Hello. This is Susan McKain.
Job Seeker: Hello Mrs. McKain. My name is Nila Jensen. I applied to the spring co-op position that you listed at the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services at RIT. I am studying Hotel Management and have two years of restaurant experience.
Susan McKain: Oh yes, I remember. I looked over your resume yesterday.
Job Seeker: I am seeking a co-op position with a hotel that has a quality customer service philosophy and reputation. From the literature I have read on the Johnson Hotels, it appears that my experience relates well to the kind of employees you look for. I am very good at dealing with people and, while working evenings, have still maintained a 3.5 GPA.
Susan McKain: That sounds good. We have not started interviews yet, but we will be soon. When exactly are you available to begin working?
Job Seeker: Classes end the first week in March so I can begin work as soon as March 9. I would like to meet with you to further discuss my qualifications for the position. Do you have a few minutes later in the week?
Susan McKain: Sure. How is Thursday at ten?
Job Seeker: That is fine with me. I will see you then. Thank you!

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