Maximize Your Job Search
Webinar 8/27/15

Transcript

Slide 1:
Welcome alumni. This webinar will present resources and strategies to help you conduct a comprehensive, successful job search. You can ask questions at any time during the webinar, by voice with your microphone, or in the chat box. We’ll save time at the end for questions as well. I’m Kris Stehler, and I manage the career services and programs for our office.

Slide 2:
This webinar is meant to be a checklist, or series of tips, designed to help you determine whether you’re doing everything possible to be successful in a job search. So first, determine where you are with your search.

If you’ve been in a job search for a while, or even if you’re just starting a search, it’s always good to do an assessment of the search process itself, taking a look at what’s been working, and what hasn’t, in terms of return on investment for your efforts, and also where you feel most stuck in the process. If you’re just starting a search, a review of the job search process and resources you will use will help you conduct an organized, effective search. Consider these questions, and be honest with yourself about any obstacles, whether perceived or real, that might be holding you back from achieving success. After this assessment, you’ll be able to move ahead with a fresh attitude, ready to maximize your job search.

Slide 3:
A successful job search follows a plan, with specific steps and goals. Too many job seekers just throw together a resume and start applying to all the jobs they can find, thinking that if they apply to enough jobs, they are bound to get results. A better approach is to start at the beginning. Determine your goals, or what do you want to achieve now, and work through the steps that will get you there. We’ll discuss each of these in detail.

Slide 4:
Conduct an organized your job search. An organized job search contains these elements. You have to project plan and manage your search as you would any other major project you undertake. The self-assessment and research you’ve done should provide you with a focus, or a targeted goal that you’re moving towards with all your search activities. Organization is key to keeping you focused, so whatever method of organization works best for you – whether keeping paper records and logs, or using a computer database and spreadsheet – rely on this to help manage your search activities. Manage your time well, by keeping a calendar filled with your activities, including networking appointments, time for research, applying for jobs, and follow up. Giving your tasks a spot on your calendar will help keep you focused. Break tasks into manageable steps – individual action items; they will be less overwhelming. Set SMART goals, in other words make them specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. Take time to
evaluate your activity and efforts regularly. Celebrate your accomplishments, even if they seem insignificant to you, and determine if what you’ve been doing is moving you towards your targeted goals. If something is not working, why not, and how can you change things to get back on course?

Slide 5:
Here are some tips for your job search plan. Remember that a job search is a full-time job in itself, and takes constant time and effort. It helps if you take the time to create a schedule, remember we talked about putting activities into your calendar – and then sticking to it. Set specific tasks to accomplish on both a daily and weekly basis.

Take advantage of technology, and automate your tasks where you can. Things like newsfeeds and alerts, and search agents that you can set up ahead of time to notify you about jobs and news items on your targeted companies for example, can leave you more time for other activities like networking.

Focus on the task itself. You will have good and bad experiences throughout this process, and if you take things personally and focus on the fear, of going to a networking event and talking to strangers, for example, you will be more apt to avoid doing things that may help you. Don’t take anything personally and just keep going.

It can be helpful to do what you enjoy first, and save tasks you don’t like for specific times during the week. Again, plan and schedule these, so you can’t avoid them altogether. Doing what you enjoy can give you confidence to also accomplish your less palatable tasks.

Slide 6:
We talked briefly about the importance of self-assessment to your overall job search plan. If you understand your key strengths and skills you can work more effectively and productively, and enjoy what you do. You’ll be better able to identify the kind of work that will allow you to perform at your best, and have the confidence to sell yourself to your targeted companies.

So before choosing a career field, company or job, take some time for self assessment. In doing assessment, start by making an inventory of the following categories: interests, values, talents, skills, strengths, weaknesses and accomplishments. Once you’ve determined who you are and what you have to offer, you can better determine where you’ll fit in, and can better conduct a targeted job search.

There are resources available to help you do a more formal and in depth self assessment; if you’d like more information you can email me. If you’re stuck with this step, need more direction, or are thinking about changing careers and not sure how to get started, we have two career counselors in our office who can work with you on the self-assessment process. Email me if you’d like to use this service. There may be opportunities in your community for career counseling as well.

Slide 7:
Next, brand yourself. It’s important to have a consistent and solid brand that best represents what you have to offer employers, and you have to be comfortable and confident of your brand to successfully sell it to others.
In simple terms, your brand is who you are and what you have to offer. It’s the perception that other people have of you, compared with similar people.

Companies use branding to sell their products – when you think of Nike or Coke you immediately know what the attributes and qualities of those products are and why you would want to buy them.

The same holds true with you and your brand. You want to stand out as the best candidate for the job. You have to target your brand to the industry, field and even the type of position you want, so you’ll need to determine your target audience and what they’re looking for, so your brand can be a good match for their needs.

Branding then becomes building a name and reputation for yourself, showcasing what sets you apart from the competition and describing your added value.

Remember that your brand needs to be consistent throughout all aspects of your search – all your marketing materials, including your resume, cover letters, LinkedIn profile, 60 second commercial or elevator pitch, any other social media you use, like Twitter and Facebook, and then in your interviews as well. You need to be a complete, consistently branded package.

Slide 8:
Your brand is comprised of the following elements.

- Vision - Before clearly defining your brand, look externally at the bigger picture of your vision for the world. What is your ideal vision of what the world could be?

- Purpose - Now that you have an external goal, look internally: how can you help the world realize your vision?

- Values and passions - You have to know yourself and what you want and need before you can move forward. Your belief system and operating principles determine whether an opportunity in front of you will be a good fit. If your passions aren’t met, you probably won’t be happy.

- Goals - Project what you want to accomplish so you can create a strategic action plan to get there. - Brand attributes - What three adjectives best describe the value you offer? What words do you use to define your personality? For example: collaborative, resourceful, flexible, forward-thinking, risk-taking, connected, visionary, diplomatic, intuitive, precise, enterprising, ethical, genuine, accessible.

- Strengths - In what functions and responsibilities do you excel? What things are you the designated “go-to” person for? What would your company have a hard time replacing if you left suddenly? Examples: identifying problems, seeing the details, leading, delegating, performing analysis, fact finding, crunching numbers, anticipating risk, motivating, mentoring, innovating, managing conflict, writing, listening, communicating.

- Weaknesses - Don’t dwell on your weak points, but keep them in mind so that you don’t move into a position where that function is the main thrust of the job.
- Target audience - Determine where you want to fit in (industry and niche area of expertise). Learn what decision makers in that field are looking for when they’re vetting candidates. Find out where those decision makers hang out and what key words will attract them, and then position yourself in front of them to capture their attention.

- Differentiation - Determine why decision makers should choose whatever you’re offering over the others offering similar value. What makes you the best choice? What makes you a good investment? What value will you bring that no one else will?

Slide 9:
Check your marketing materials. Be sure they are consistent to your brand, and are the best representation of your qualifications as they relate to your targeted industry, field and the companies you apply to. We won’t go into details on each specific material, but can discuss any questions you have, and have more in depth information on our website and through other webinars on these topics.

In general terms though, you want your resume to be targeted to each specific company you apply to, especially at the experienced level. Start with a profile or summary of qualifications section, and focus on your accomplishments; you want to demonstrate a record of success. Cover letters should be targeted as well, and match your qualifications to the job, so that the company can see you in that position. Your LinkedIn profile, and your profile on any other social media you use, including Facebook and Twitter, should be branded, using the headline and summary areas to emphasize your strengths as they relate to your targeted field, and differentiate yourself from others. Fill your profile with relevant keywords that ensure you’ll be found by recruiters. Find and develop the appropriate supporting materials for your field, and be sure enhance your brand and qualifications. Develop a powerful elevator speech that introduces you and your brand, tells where you’ve been, why you’ve been successful, and where you want to go. You’ll use a form of this in networking situations and sometimes during an interview, when the recruiter asks you to “tell me about yourself.” Be sure your interview skills are polished; if you’ve been out of the job search for a while it’s important to practice so that you sound confident, and again, able to sell your brand. We can do a mock interview with you if you’d like.

Slide 10:
The last job search tool we’re going to talk about is a marketing plan. This is comparable to a business plan for a company; it’s a plan for selling a product, which in this case is you. A marketing plan addresses the key points of marketing yourself, product and placement, and is your strategy to get from thought to action. It combines your qualities, skills, and competencies with some targeted industries and companies from your research.

Slide 11:
Your marketing plan offers your unique selling proposition – what’s in it for the employer, what can you do for them, what are they buying, what challenges can you provide a solution for. It’s your clear value proposition. Here are the components of a marketing plan. It’s not a resume, though it has some of the same elements, but a strategic document. In addition to these components, you also should have a
clear idea of compensation – based on research, your bottom line, desired compensation, market average for area, job type and your level of skills, abilities, experience and knowledge.

Slide 12:
Use your marketing plan in several ways. First, to help promote brand: to connect with the right people in your industry, and targeted companies

As part of your strategic networking plan, you will determine who, what, where, when, how will you connect strategically, both face to face and online

In networking, you can use your marketing plan when you meet with contacts for informational interviews

Eg: past co-worker – ask for additional job titles for what you want, any potential contacts
Neighbor/friend/family/social contacts – any people they know in your targeted companies
Employees in targeted companies (alumni?) – review your summary of qualifications; does your background fit company?

Potential Hiring manager – is your background of value

Be strategic in what you share (may share all but targeted companies with a hiring manager, for example)

Slide 13:
You’ll want to secure at least 3-5 references; some people recommend up to 10, so that you can choose the most appropriate for each job you apply to. They should be a mix of supervisors (past or current), and co-workers, and maybe faculty, if you’re a recent graduate. Be sure you always check first, to make sure people are willing to provide a positive reference for you – if you don’t ask, you may find people have a different opinion of you than you thought, and may give negative information to employers. In fact, it’s good to ask references what they would tell a prospective employer about you so that you’ll know in advance. Manage your references by keeping them up to date on your skills and accomplishments, letting them know what jobs you’re applying to and that they may get contacted by employers, and grooming them to determine exactly what they’ll say about you to each employer. People have lost jobs through negative references, so keep control of this important aspect to your search.

Slide 14:
Instead of randomly applying to every job you see, be strategic and target those companies that best match your goals, skills and qualifications; this goes back to the self-assessment you did. Once you have your list of targeted companies, you’ll want to do intensive research before you apply. You want to find out everything you can about the company – their products and services, the company culture and environment, recent news items, their outlook and future plans, and what type of employee they
typically hire. This will enable you to determine where and how you will best fit in, and how you’ll be able to help contribute to the company’s success.

Use every available resource to conduct your research; it’s best of course to begin with the company website. Dig deep to find out all you can, including reviewing all posted positions, as this will give you the best idea of their preferred type of employee. Also use industry reports, to gain a sense of how the company fits into their industry. Professional associations will give you information on the company and employees that are part of the association. Research sites like GlassDoor and Hoovers have great information, and don’t forget the RIT library, at library.rit.edu. They have a wealth of company research resources available for alumni, many that you can access remotely. LinkedIn is another great resource for research; companies have pages, and you can search for RIT alumni at the company, with whom you can do informational interviews. Once you are confident that a company fits your overall goals, you can add it to your marketing plan, and strategize about how you will connections that will lead to a job.

Slide 15:
Another tip – be sure to follow up appropriately. You want to control your follow up, instead of passively waiting for a response. Here are some key follow up activities. Call or email after you send your resume if you have a contact name; this allows you to further promote yourself, to make a personal connection, and to inquire about opportunities for an interview. This doesn’t always work, but taking the initiative can often make the difference. Be sure to send a thank you note after all interviews, and to all people who interview you. This should be done within 48 hours of the interview, and can be through email, or sent through regular mail. This allows you to not only express appreciation for the interview, but to reiterate your top strengths and why you’re the best candidate for the position. You should send thank you notes to your informational interview contacts as well. You also want to keep in contact with your informational interview contacts; update them on your progress, especially let them know if you’ve done something they suggested, and also see how you can help them – remember, networking is a two-way street.

Slide 16:
Make sure you are using all available resources for your job search. Many people just apply to posted positions and wait to be contacted. A job search should be a proactive process, involving many varied resources, some of which are shown here, and which we’ll discuss in more detail. First of course, the importance of networking can’t be overemphasized. Everyone you know, or knew at some point, should be considered a potential contact. Social networking has become a very important resource; some recruiters source all their candidates from LinkedIn and other social media, so you need to be conversant with the top sites and know what they offer for job seekers. Don’t forget recruiters as well; third party or headhunters, contract and consulting agencies, even temporary agencies for your industry can be a source of opportunities. Online job listing sites can be a resource, just not your only one. Career or job fairs are a good opportunity to connect and network with companies. Company websites often list available positions, and you can do other research that may lead you to connections within the company to pursue for potential opportunities. Don’t forget newspapers – not just the want ads but the business section to learn more about companies who may be moving into the area or expanding, and
trade magazines. Professional associations often list jobs just for their members, and also allow you to connect with other members for networking, that can lead to opportunities.

Slide 17:
May think career fairs are just for kids (at RIT), or too much competition (local fairs)

- You have to do everything when job searching, and fairs are another resource
- It’s how you approach them that will make the difference to your success

In addition to RIT Career Fairs, take advantage of other appropriate career and job fair options. Most communities hold job fairs regularly that are open to the public; this is a good way to expand your network, get information on companies, and talk with recruiters about openings relevant to your skills and experience. The Rochester colleges hold a consortium fair each year – RACE, which is open to students and alumni from member colleges.

Professional associations often offer career or job fairs for their members, which is another good reason for joining industry associations. In Rochester, for example, Digital Rochester (an association for people interested in computing and technology), regularly holds networking and job fair events for their members.

Companies sometimes hold job fairs at their location, generally open to the public. You can find out about these through Job Zone, advertisements in business publications, and by following companies in whom you’re interested, on LinkedIn and Facebook.

Organizations, associations, and companies will also sometimes hold virtual career fairs, in which you’ll go to a specified website and submit resumes to participating companies.

And for those who qualify, AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) holds job fairs for their membership, in different locations across the country.

You may find other career and job fairs in your community - keep your eyes opened!

Slide 18:
It’s a good idea to work with at least one professional recruiter, even though this is more of a passive resource. Many companies use a recruiter to source their jobs, so connecting with a recruiter will give you access to these opportunities. There are recruiters for each industry and/or field, so once you decide on your targeted area, you can find a recruiter. You can find them using online directories, through LinkedIn - by doing an advanced people search using the keyword box, and also by looking at online job listing sites, as many of the jobs are posted by recruiters. For example, if you’re looking for computer jobs, you can go to Dice.com and view the jobs posted by recruiters. If you see jobs you’re interested in, you can contact the recruiter and begin the relationship. Remember that recruiters work for the companies, not the individual job seekers – these are the people who pay them. So they are only interested in you when you match one of the jobs they’re hiring for. Some recruiters also will ask
you to revise your resume to their specific format. You have to be persistent when working with a recruiter but they can be a good resource; just don’t rely on them exclusively in your search.

Slide 19:
The job posting process has truly changed in the past few years. Companies are discovering that it’s easier to post positions, and that they’re better able to target qualified candidates, on social networking sites like LinkedIn, and through their company Facebook and Twitter pages. Indeed, some companies post their job openings solely on social networking sites. Additionally, recruiters are able to connect with potential employees through their social networking connections in a kind of referral process, which takes away an element of the unknown about a candidate.

On the candidate side, your ability to promote yourself and network online demonstrates that your technical abilities are current. Social networking sites also give you the ability to differentiate yourself in a variety of ways, highlighting your skills and accomplishments to prospective employers beyond a traditional resume. We all know that networking is the number one way to find a job. Social networking sites allow you to develop connections with companies, contacts and recruiters, all of which you can then use in your search for the perfect job.

I recommend you become conversant with at least LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook in your job search.

Slide 20:
We’re not going to go over setting up a profile in LinkedIn here, but if you’re new to LinkedIn, you’ll want to set up a strong profile first. We can help you with that, and review your profile if you have one set up.

In terms of finding actual jobs using LinkedIn, there are several things you should do. There’s a Jobs tab that allows you to search for posted positions directly, by keyword, location, and job function. There’s also a Job Seeker Premium feature that offers additional features for the job seeker, for a monthly fee. Make sure all your contacts know you’re looking for a job, and join and participate in Groups, as we’ve just discussed. Members of groups share job leads, articles of interest, and tips to assist each other. For example, employers frequently post active job openings on our RIT Career Services group. Many companies have their own LinkedIn pages, where you can find jobs, get information about the company, and see what employees you may be connected with (either directly or through your contacts’ connections). You can also check and see if any RIT alumni work at companies in which you’re interested – reach out and make a connection with them! Search on People using industry key words, and see where people with your skills are working – this may give you additional companies to research. As we mentioned earlier, more recruiters and hiring managers are using LinkedIn exclusively to find candidates these days, so make sure you’re attractive to recruiters, by using all the relevant key words for the job you want.

Slide 21:
On a company’s LinkedIn page, search the New Hires section, to see if there are any who are connected to you, that you can reach out to.
Here’s something you may not have thought of – find start up companies who may have a need for your skills; this is a chance for you to get in on the ground floor of an exciting opportunity.

Do reach out directly to hiring managers and let them know how exactly you can help them solve their problems, why you’re the best candidate.

Slide 22:
You may be unfamiliar with Twitter, or know it as a medium for letting people know what you’re doing at any particular moment. It can also be a powerful tool in your job search, by helping you further expand your network, and even through specific job tools.

Twitter can help a job search in several ways, which we’ll discuss in detail.

First, it allows you to help build your credibility with people and companies in your industry and interest areas.

Through Twitter, you can also expand your network of professional contacts.

Finally, you are able to find actual job postings on Twitter, through a variety of ways.

Slide 23:
Twitter offers a good opportunity to expand your brand and connect with a whole new constituency. Brand Yourself on Twitter provides tools that help you manage your online reputation and promote yourself across the social web. When you create your Twitter profile, remember you’ll be using this media for professional purposes. Use your real name for your username, so recruiters can find you. Keep your professional picture. Your bio needs to be targeted, as you only have 160 characters available. Use specific key words for your industry, that will show up in a search. And take advantage of the tools available on Twitter to create a custom, professional background, on which you can showcase your other online information, including websites, LinkedIn profile, blogs, and articles you’ve written.

Once you’ve set up your Twitter page and profile, you’ll want to gain followers (who can hopefully lead you to jobs). The way to do this is to actively Tweet (submit comments) – add content to the Twitter network. Here are some ways to do this. Your goal is to be seen as an active and knowledgeable participant, eager to be involved in your industry, and to make connections with like-minded people.

Slide 24:
To build your online network, search for and begin to follow people, companies, professional associations, journals, etc in your industry. Once you start following other people and commenting on their Tweets, you can begin to establish relationships, which can ultimately lead to referrals, recommendations, tips and suggestions for your search (as with any other networking contacts). Your ultimate goal is to follow many people to gain industry knowledge and potential contacts, but to really develop and nurture a few relationships that will turn into valuable assets for your job search and career.
Slide 25:
There are two main ways to use Twitter in your job search.

First, you can use Twitter as a networking tool, and find opportunities indirectly through your connections, followers and those that you follow. These opportunities will result from your networking efforts.

Second, you can find opportunities directly through Twitter in these ways. Outreaching to people who work at your targeted companies can lead to information on job openings. Following companies can get you information on jobs in real time, and sometimes before they're released to the world at large. Savvy job seekers will stay on top of these opportunities by actively following their companies of interest. Putting @Microjobs in the search area on Twitter brings up Tweets from companies and contacts with actual job postings, and often links directly to the postings or companies. @TweetMyJobs (again search in Twitter) is a place for people to talk about job openings as well as their jobs successes, sharing information and leads. If you go to the website Http://TweetMyJobs.com, you’ll find job postings, and can set up search agents to send alerts to your Twitter account when jobs matching your search criteria are posted to the site.

Slide 26:
As with other social networking sites, it's helpful to develop an organized strategy that focuses on a few key elements for using Facebook as a job search resource. First of all, since Facebook is generally known as a social networking site, it's going to be necessary to make your profile professional and also to monitor your Facebook page regularly to ensure that all the information on your page stays professional. Make sure you have a professional photo, and keep your social pictures off your page. You'll want to include things that showcase your expertise including your resume - Facebook does have an application that lets you puts your LinkedIn profile or your resume on Facebook, and they have a bunch of applications. So you just visit the applications section and do a keyword search on resumes. You can also post any other things you’ve done on the Internet, like blogs or articles that you’ve written, professional associations that you belong to, and anything else that again represents your professional brand.

Facebook also allows you to organize your connections by category. So you can make lists that are things like for family, friends, professional contacts, business. This lets you easily share relevant information and updates with the most appropriate contacts. But again, it's necessary to check your privacy settings and monitor your page freely to make sure that other people are not posting inappropriate things on your page, including links to pictures and things.

In addition to making friend with individual contacts, Facebook lets you become a fan of pages -- of companies through their Facebook pages. So doing this again lets you get information and updates on your targeted company, to see job postings, and even community event that are sponsored by the
company that you may be able to attend. This is a good way to stay up to date on companies that interest you.

Slide 27:
Here are some specific suggestions for using Facebook in your job search. Facebook does have a marketplace. So you can advertise numerous goods and services, you can buy a car on Facebook or look for housing. But some companies actually post job opportunities there. And sometimes they even let you send a message and your resume to the hiring manager. So you might want to check that out.

You can also search for and join groups in your professional field of interest and you can become fans of the groups’ pages. So once you’re a member of the group, you can connect and network with other members, you can share industry information, job opportunities, referrals and tips for a job search. As with any other networking group, the more the members get to know you, the more willing they will be to send jobs your way when they hear about them and to make recommendations on your behalf to their own contacts. Use your personal contacts and friends, let them know that you’re looking for a job and you would appreciate any job contacts and referrals they can make with you. You can use the classmate and coworker searches to connect with former classmates and people with whom you used to work. So you can find somebody that you know who now works at a company that you’re interested in, and then they can help you get a foot in the door. Facebook allows you to add numerous applications to your profiles, and this link is a really good one for assisting with your job search and networking activities.

Slide 28:
Also relatively new is something called Branch Out. Which is an application that lets you create more of that professional presence on Facebook and lets you better leverage the Facebook contacts to get connections to jobs. So Branch Out is Facebook’s answer to LinkedIn. But it’s still relatively new and kind of hasn’t been used a lot yet. But it lets you search for jobs by company, position, location, industry and area of expertise. It also displays what inside connections that you might have in companies that you’re interested in, and recruiters can also use this application to search for candidates. So when you register for Branch Out, it shows up on your Facebook page. And after you complete your profile, then you can start searching for jobs and see your inside contacts. You can get endorsements from contacts that get you noticed by recruiters, and lets you see extended contact possibilities.

Slide 29:
You may have heard 70+% of all jobs are found through networking; many of these opportunities are not even posted anywhere. Companies would rather hire based on someone’s personal recommendation, so the larger your network is, the better your chances of getting on the right people’s radar so that when there are openings, they think of you. So it is essential to develop and maintain your network of contacts, with a goal of finding contacts within your targeted companies, to get at those hidden jobs. More importantly, you’ll want to connect with the key decision makers for your targeted job within those companies, not just the HR person. Once you determine your targeted companies –
from your self-assessment and company research, you can set about finding those key contacts. There are many resources for finding key people. The RIT alumni network, through the Tiger locator, allows you to search an extensive database of RIT alumni, by a number of criteria including company, and then to reach out for networking purposes. We also have a database of alumni and employers in our Job Zone system, called the Professional Network, for networking. Professional associations are a wealth of connection opportunities, and don’t forget any community or volunteer organizations of which you’re a part. You never know when you will connect with someone who can give you a lead into one of your targeted companies. LinkedIn is also great for networking, especially with other RIT alumni. There’s a feature that shows you where RIT alumni are, even by company, so you can find alumni to connect and network with in your targeted companies. Once connected, you can hopefully make your way through the company to the hiring manager.

Slide 30:
If you’re inexperienced or uncomfortable with the idea of networking, here are some tips that may help. Create an organized strategy, with clear goals and expectations, and a specific plan and action items or tasks. Once you do this these just become part of your overall job search strategy that you have to accomplish. Set clear and appropriate goals and expectations for each networking activity. For example, if you’re going to a networking event, say that you will stay for an hour, and meet at least 3 new people, with the hope of connecting with someone who works at the XYZ company, or knows someone who does. In building your network, don’t forget to reconnect with people you may have lost touch with; old friends, all your family, former colleagues, even former classmates – here is where RIT alumni can be helpful. Use every opportunity to grow your network; go to events you normally wouldn’t attend, and really stretch yourself. Network virtually, as well as in person; be creative about connecting and meeting. Overall, remember that your networking should be strategic and purposeful with a clear goal in mind, that you should focus on developing relationships, instead of just asking for help, that you should always think about how you can help your networking contacts too, and that when in a job search, you should always have a networking mindset. This means that no matter your situation, ask yourself if this can be an opportunity to develop or grow your network.

Slide 31:
We have a lot of resources, and dedicated advisors that can help you achieve job search success, so don’t hesitate to use us! Our website and Job Zone job listing system have jobs, company contact information, and resources for company research, along with guides for every aspect of your job search. The advisor for your career field has expertise with the resources and strategies that work best for your field and industry, and can work one on one with you, in person, by phone or through email. All our networking events and career fields are open to alumni, if you’re in the area. And of course you always have access to our experienced alumni advisors in the Professional Network. Don’t hesitate to contact us and let us know how we can help.

Slide 32:
When in a job search, think outside the box and don’t be afraid to explore alternatives to a regular full-time job in a company. Volunteering gives you a chance to expand both your skills and network. These
days there are many alternatives to full-time work, including short term consulting, contracting, or project work. Here are a few places that offer those opportunities.

Flexjobs
Guru
Elance
Odesk

Job sharing may be an alternative at some companies, and you may want to explore starting your own business with your expertise. There may be more opportunities at non profit organizations or government agencies.

Solve a problem – approach a company with a solution – research & talk with people (alumni) – prove your abilities

If you’re older, the AARP has a lot of job searching resources, specifically for the over 50 population. And do some investigating within your desired industry or field; there may be opportunities specific to that area that will allow you to at least get your foot in the door.

Slide 33:
Like most things, much of a job search deals with your attitude, how you present yourself to the outside world, and how mentally prepared you are for the challenges you will face. These next tips address this important area. First, be honest and ask yourself what kind of a search are you conducting. Are you being proactive, using all the resources we've discussed, seeking out the hidden jobs, and constantly expanding your network? Or do you passive respond to posted jobs and wait for a reply? The effort you put into your search determines the results you get out of it.

Slide 34:
When in a job search, you must always present yourself in a positive way, even though you may not be feeling particularly positive, energized or enthusiastic. Again, you never know when you will meet someone who will lead you to your next job, so you always have to be prepared. Have a positive attitude, with no negativity towards your situation or especially your former employers. Prepare what you will say if and when someone asks you how you feel, what happened at your last job, or anything related to your job situation. Prospective employers will be looking for resilience and your ability to handle adversity. Take the opportunity of unemployment to update your professional image – get a makeover and update your wardrobe, and to update your skills and maybe learn some new ones relevant to your field or industry. Project confidence, and this comes from being comfortable with your brand and all related marketing materials. Be prepared to address any potential concerns prospective employers may have – if you meet them head on instead of trying to cover any up, they will be less of an issue.
Here are some tips to help you adopt a new attitude in your job search.

Look at this time as an opportunity to expand and grow, professionally and personally, instead of just finding a job.

Use your expertise and experience to become a key leader in your field, finding ways to share insights, ideas, trends.

Increase your visibility, in your profession and your community.

Launch pad – expand your focus – keep abreast of new industries that can use your skills, don’t box yourself in on just replacing position that might no longer exist.

Research online – make known your desire to contribute to specifically targeted opportunities, based on market analysis and needs identification.

Offer to help colleagues – take focus off you and your job search – adopt a wider outlook.

Ask contacts – don’t expect them to keep an eye out for you and your career – ask for something specific – a referral to one of their contacts, advice on or further information on a trend in the industry.

This tip goes along with breaking into the hidden job market, by becoming someone that gets noticed by people in your field. Here are some ways to get noticed, and many of them are online, through the various social media sites. First have a strong profile, loaded with the key words for your industry, because recruiters searching the sites are looking for those key words, and the closer a match you are, the more you will be found. LinkedIn and Twitter also offer the opportunity to demonstrate your expertise, by contributing to or starting group discussions, and commenting on posts by the key players in your industry. So if you’re online, don’t just lurk – participate! Professional associations are great opportunities to get noticed, both in person by taking on leadership or volunteer positions, and attending and participating in events, but also online by contributing to the association’s website, or newsletter. And don’t forget your volunteer organizations, which are a great place to get noticed, by volunteering for a leadership role, or by solving a problem.

And our last tip is to encourage you to acknowledge and admit what might be holding you back in your job search and to find ways to deal with these obstacles. So really, this is a soul searching thing, to think about what is really keeping you from achieving success in your job search. Some of these obstacles that are common might include ageism, or fear of being discriminated against due to your age. Maybe a fear of the job search process in general. Maybe a fear of rejection. Maybe you’re an introvert and don’t like networking. Procrastination could be another common obstacle. Maybe you're feeling overwhelmed and not knowing how to get started or getting stuck at a certain step and you might have other obstacles on your own that we haven't talked about. But it's important to realize just how much your attitude affects your success or lack of success. Recognizing the obstacles is the first step in
overcoming them. Your advisor in our office can help in this process as well, to kind of unstick you. Make sure you do use your support system as well, all of your family and friends, they are all there for you when you’re in the job search mode, members of your professional association, colleagues and former coworkers. If you are feeling depressed, you might need counseling. Don’t hesitate to take advantage of all the resources that are available to you.

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I wanted to say a few words about a common concern among more experience job seekers. Many experienced candidates are worried about being perceived as overqualified, and/or too old. However, it is a legitimate question for a company to ask anyone who has done work similar to the being applied to. They have their own concerns about any worker they hire and invest in, but sometimes especially with older workers. Here are some of the common concerns. It’s important to recognize these potential concerns and address them head-on with an attitude and responses that are honest and show your determination to get the job. For example, if you know the company is comprised of mostly young people, you can prepare an answer that shows how you are able to take direction – and prove it with a specific example – and that your experiences and accumulated knowledge will help add to their team’s success.

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Keep these things in mind when selling yourself to a recruiter. Attitude is everything – maintain a positive, enthusiastic attitude that shows you’re focused on the future, not stuck in the past. Show you’re keeping current with technology and that you enjoy learning. Emphasize your skills – not just the ones that directly relate to the job, but also the transferable skills you’ve gotten from previous jobs and life experiences; communication, leadership and teamwork skills are always valued. Emphasize all your experiences; for example, a leadership role in a volunteer organization is valuable also. If you’re more experienced, keep a positive attitude and emphasize the qualities you have that will be valued by an employer; you have a history of dedication, commitment and maturity that a new graduate does not have. Combined with flexibility and openness to new situations, this makes you a valuable candidate, and if you believe it, you can convince prospective employers also!

To allay concerns that you won’t stick around or feel challenged in the role, be upfront and clear with the hiring manager. Tell them exactly why you want the job and your motivations, and let them know you have every intention of taking the job seriously. Ask the manager what they’re looking for in a perfect candidate, so you can gain insight into what qualities and skills the employer is looking for, and can alleviate these concerns.

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It will be hard to stay motivated all the time, but rely on your support system to help you stay positive. Keep your regular routine and life outside of the job search – eat, sleep and socialize as you normally would. You will also experience rejection, so have a plan to deal with it – it is ok to grieve, but don’t let it hold you back from future job search activities. To the extent that you can, get feedback that will help you become a stronger candidate.
Here are some final tips for job search success. Always emphasize the perfect fit between you and a job and a company. Keep your technology skills current for your industry. Show that you're continuing to learn and being on top of things. Focus on your experience, on your problem solving skills and on your work ethic. These are very valued and important to employers. Demonstrate your skills and strengths through solid examples. Remember, focus on your accomplishments and achievements, and your brand, or what sets you apart from the competition.

And be flexible, and open to new opportunities. Don't be stuck on getting one job that you think you have to have. Your skills and qualifications might fit in a lot of different opportunities that you haven't thought of, so be open to them.

And remember our office is here to support you through your job search. Contact me if you’d like to be connected to your advisor in our office. We can take questions now.