

Job Search Strategies for Difficult Times



George Knox

Coordinator, Jobs & Internships

PCC Sylvania

Email: gknox@pcc.edu

Web: <http://spot.pcc.edu/jobs/jobsearch>

Job search today is scary.

- Because of the pandemic and the recession, you may feel that finding work right now is hopeless. But it's not.
- It will be tough, but **there are things you can do to find work**, even during bad times.
- You have **resources** and **people to help you** with your job search.

Today's topics:

- Good news about jobs (in tough times)
- How to do a job search (in tough times)
- Tricks and sneaky techniques (for tough times)
- Q & A

Good news? Really?

- Even during recession, there are job openings.
- Even during a pandemic, there are job openings.
- The “**Hidden Job Market**” is where those jobs are filled.

During hard times ...

- Direct recruiting slows. Fewer jobs are advertised. Employers are pickier about candidates. Competition for jobs increases.
- But employers still have work and still need workers.
- An **aggressive, targeted job search** will get you to those opportunities and give you an edge over other candidates.

Fully commit to your job search.

- In order to find a job in tight times, you need to give your job search **focus, energy, time** and **full effort**.
- If you make **finding a job a priority, pursue opportunities aggressively,** and **persist as long as it takes,** you will be successful.

Start your job search now.

- Do not delay your job search, wait until the economy improves or there are fewer applicants.
- Things may not improve soon, and by starting earlier, you can **pace yourself** through what may be a long job search.
- Give yourself time to **target your job search**, which is the **real key to getting hired**.

Target your job search.

- The key to a successful job search is to **match your skills, strengths, aptitude and skills with the needs and demands of the employer.**
- Your job search method, tools and materials must be **focused** on a **specific employer** and a **specific job.**
- Before you can target, you will need to **assess yourself** and **research the job market.**

Review your work needs.

- What do you need from a job? What will you accept for position duties, salary, relocation, etc.?
- When will you need to start working? Will you need additional training or certification?
- What jobs do you not want to do?
- **Setting a range of acceptable work will help you target jobs and companies.**

Realistically assess your situation.

- Before you start contacting employers, list and describe **tools, achievements, direct and transferable skills,** and any **value-added qualities** you offer.
- What made you successful in your professional, academic and personal life? You need to know what you have to offer an employer.
- **Consider your strengths and weaknesses.** What do you want to emphasize to the employer? What do you want to avoid or downplay?

Research the job market.

- In a recession, most job openings are not widely advertised.
- You will need to find **non-traditional ways of finding out about job opportunities.**
- Look carefully to see which employers are active and what they look for in employees.
- The more you know about a particular field or company, the better you will be able to find, contact and interest employers.

Research Tools for Job Seekers

Published Resources

- Quality Info (State of Oregon Employment Dept.):
<https://www.qualityinfo.org/>
- Oregon Chambers of Commerce:
<https://www.oregonchamber.org/list/category/chamber-of-commerce-95>
- Portland Business Journal:
<http://www.bizjournals.com/portland/>
- Professional Associations (careeronestop.org):
<https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/training/find-professional-associations.aspx>
- Occupational Outlook Handbook (US Dept. of Labor):
<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

Research Tools for PCC Students/Grads

On-Campus Resources

- **Career Services** (All campuses):
Offer a variety of skills/interests assessments, self-directed career research tools and publications.

Offer listings of current job openings and local employers; Specialists can provide career specific info.
- **Career Technical Education Depts.** (All campuses): Faculty and advisors can provide information on job needs of local industries and specific skill sets for careers
- **Library** (All campuses): Offers a large number of publications and directories; Especially useful are targeted magazines and journals

Target potential employers.

- Once you've done your self-assessment and research, **identify** and **match** your skills and interests with potential employers.
- Create or revise your resume, cover letters, portfolio and other job search tools focused on a particular job.
- **Customize** your application material to **each** job you apply to.
- Be ready to **demonstrate** to the employer **why they should hire you**.

Job Search Assistance

Help for PCC Students/Grads

- **Career Services:**

Specialists are available to work individually with students/grads on resumes, letters, applications, portfolios, etc.; Career specific samples are available on-line and from specialists; Mock interviews available

(Use the Virtual Help Tab on MyPCC)

Help for Community Members

- Workforce Development:
<https://www.pcc.edu/workforce-development/>
- Portland Metro Workforce Training Center:
<https://www.pcc.edu/workforce-development/metro/>
- Other Work Source offices (statewide):
<http://www.worksourceoregon.org/>

Be aggressive about job search.

- Look for job openings in multiple places, but **don't wait for openings** to be announced.
- **Contact potential employers directly** whether they have job postings or not.
- Get your resume and application out to as many companies as possible.
- **Follow up** with the most promising employers by phone or e-mail.
- **Maintain contact** with potential employers over time.

Job Postings for PCC Students/Grads

- **Panther Works:** On-line job posting service accessible through MyPCC on the Paying for College tab
- **Job Boards/Binders** are available at Career Services offices (when campuses are open)
- **Career Services specialists** coordinate recruitments specific to PCC programs for students and graduates

Network human connections.

- **Networking** is the most successful job search technique
- Look for (virtual or live) job fairs, open houses, professional and trade events where you can interact with professionals in your field.
- Talk to family, friends, colleagues, former colleagues, and contacts within religious and social organizations to which you belong.
- **Hiring is done by people**, not by web sites, e-mails or apps. So **make the human connections** that will put you in the right place when opportunities arise.

The Student Advantage

College students have opportunities that other job seekers do not.

- **Co-op Internships:** Short term, paid or non-paid work experiences in a particular field; An excellent way to get into a company and demonstrate your skills and abilities
- **Informational Interviews:** A field survey where you interview a professional about what s/he does at a company; A great way to get inside a company, make contacts and get first-hand information
- **Special Projects:** Using local employers as resources for papers, presentations, service learning, etc. A good way to make contacts (and make your projects more interesting)

Use job seeker tools.

- You have a number of resources available to you as a job seeker for career exploration, education and training, and job search assistance.
- These include federal, state and local agencies, on-line and published resources.
- Use apps and online services like LinkedIn, Indeed, Gigwalk, etc. (<http://spot.pcc.edu/jobs/pccmobileapps.html>)
- Most of these offer free services. (*Don't pay for them.*)
- Don't limit yourself to one or two resources; **use all of them.**

COVID-Era Job Search


- Many employers have NOT changed their job advertising, application and screening process (already online)
- College recruiters HAVE changed their process as access on-campus is limited or unavailable (e.g., job fairs, on-campus recruiting, etc.) *Some of these are now virtual*
- Nearly ALL employers have changed their interviewing process to remote options (phone, video conference, text, chat, online presentations, etc.)
- Some employers are relying even more on social media tools to connect with applicants

COVID-Era Strategies

- Prepare your job search materials for online and remote delivery (including during the interview)
- Highlight your ability and willingness to work remotely (at least for the short term)
- Prepare for your remote interview
 - Check with employer about their app preference/requirements
 - Test your connections, hardware and apps before the interview
 - Stage your interview space (setting, lighting, sound, etc.)
 - Remember that a remote job interview is still a job interview (Don't wear shorts or pajama bottoms! I'm not kidding.)

Tips, Tricks and Sneaky Techniques for Job Seekers

- Names, names, names
- Apply for jobs you're not qualified for
- Apply for jobs you didn't get ... later
- Employers don't really mean what they say
- Honesty, but never full disclosure
- Be smart, play dumb
- Don't annoy the employer, annoy your Career Services specialist



Even in difficult times, there
are job opportunities, and you
can get one.

Questions?