LOOKING FOR A JOB IN A TOUGH ECONOMY

The key to finding and keeping work in tough times is the same as in good times: take action. Economic uncertainties and fluctuations make it especially important for job seekers to learn how to conduct an effective search and to be actively engaged in the process. If you are looking for an internship or a full-time position, you must be proactive. Assessing one’s strengths and taking steps to improve skills are things to do to improve your chances. Some action steps are outlined below.

DON’T PROCRASTINATE!

Looking for a job or internship takes time and needs to be a priority. While there are likely to be competing demands on your time, a job search requires time and energy. Make sure you reserve time in your schedule to focus on it.

STRENGTHEN YOUR CANDIDACY AND MAKE CONNECTIONS

If you are completing your degree this year, what are you doing now to build your resume? Are you interning, volunteering or actively involved on campus or in the community? Many employers, especially in a tight economy, recruit interns for their full-time openings. If there is an organization that you’d really love to work for, think about how you can position yourself within it to enhance your chances of ‘being at the right place at the right time’ should an opening occur.

PREPARE YOUR JOB SEARCH MATERIALS EARLY

You need a good resume. You must be ready to respond immediately as you become aware of jobs for which you want to be considered. Use CDC’s resources on resume writing, cover letters, and interviewing. Current students can have typed draft documents reviewed during Counselor-on-Call.

USE MULTIPLE STRATEGIES

It is important to strike a balance between looking for advertised openings and unadvertised openings (the hidden job market). An effective job search is not limited to surfing the Internet. Many job openings are not advertised, so it is important to concentrate on this hidden job market through networking.

NETWORK!

Most people find a job through other people. Networking resources include professors, family, friends, neighbors, professional associations, current and previous employers (or internship supervisors) and alumni. Tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job and ask for suggestions or contacts. Use the Alumni Career Network to identify Binghamton graduates working in particular fields, locations, or for specific employers and seek their advice. Alumni want to help so take advantage of his resource.

Utilize social networking resources also. Post your job search goals in your Facebook status update. Create a personal brand through LinkedIn and connect with professionals in your desired industry through groups. Follow industry leaders on Twitter and search for job posting tweets. Each of these strategies can help you learn more about your field, potential employers, and job/internship openings.
TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AND FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

Realize that getting a job is your responsibility, while simultaneously recognizing that there are external factors beyond your control. Don't waste precious energy and time on “woe is me” or other negatives.

COMPETE!

Apply to openings and do so often. If you don’t apply, you will definitely not get the job. Take what you hear about the job market in stride; don’t let it immobilize you. Apply and let people know you’re looking. Be smart and do a quality job search.

USE CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER EVENTS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Many employers connect with Binghamton candidates through the CDC. It is important to make the most of what is available right here at the University. CDC sponsors several programs and events where students have an opportunity to network, including on-campus recruiting, employer information sessions and programs, and the Job & Internship Fair. Bring a resume and dress to make a good first impression. Check CDC's website for topics and schedule.

CDC RESOURCES

- Read the Quick Reference Guide, “How to Find a Job”.
- Current students can bring a typed draft to Counselor-on-Call for review.
- Use eRecruiting, CDC’s web-based service as part of your job search. Many employers contact CDC for assistance in identifying candidates for openings. Students submit resumes through eRecruiting to participate in On Campus Recruiting. Every matriculated undergraduate and graduate student has a personal eRecruiting account.

CONSIDER SHORT-TERM SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES OR TEMPORARY POSITIONS

It’s possible to pursue professionally oriented positions that are temporary, educational, and/or service-oriented. Short-term experiences can serve as a way to gain experience, increase self-confidence, earn money, and perhaps lead to something more permanent. One way to secure “bridge” or “interim work” is by working through a temporary employment agency.

Depending on one’s personal situation, the period immediately following graduation or in between jobs could offer a window of opportunity. Creatively exploiting this window can have a profound effect on one’s future. It can be an exciting time to experiment with careers of interest or perhaps experience another culture; what is gained can be life changing and move you closer to clarifying long-range goals. Consider service programs such as VISTA, Peace Corps, Healthcorps or Teach for America. CDC’s website links to many short-term opportunities. You can also learn about One Year Service Opportunities through Idealist.org.

KEEP AT IT!

A job search rarely produces results immediately. It takes time and effort. Some leads will take you to dead ends, and, unfortunately, rejection is part of the job search process. Try not to lose focus and keep going. Pick yourself up and get back in the race.

POSITION YOURSELF FOR THE FUTURE

While you may have to accept a position that isn’t your “dream job,” keep in mind that many kinds of experiences can be career stepping-stones. Make choices that increase your future options. Learning new skills, volunteering in a field that professionally interests you while working “just for money,” thoughtfully investigating graduate school, and effectively networking are positive steps to take for the long term.

Remember: most big breaks don't just happen—they are created. Make your own breaks early!

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