

JOB SEARCHING

Tips & Strategies



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access hyperlinks.



CAREER CENTER

DO WHAT YOU LOVE, LOVE WHAT YOU DO

Finding a job and developing a career path that fits your interests and qualifications is a complex process of self-assessment, research and exploration, networking and communication with others. Expect your job search to take time, so don't wait until the last minute! Ideally, you should begin your search 3-6 months before you'd realistically like to start working. The purpose of this job hunting guide is to guide you through this process, and to provide you with useful resources to make your search more effective.

"Every work which he began in the service of the house of God in law and in commandment, seeking his God, he did with all his heart and prospered."

-2 Chronicles 31:21

Job Tip #1: Know Yourself

Before beginning your search, be sure to do a thorough evaluation of your workplace interests, values, strengths, and areas in need of improvement. If you'd like a guide to help with this, utilize the assessment inventories through [FOCUS](#) in the Career Center.

What do YOU have to offer to a potential employer?

We encourage you to think broadly about what you have to offer, even beyond what might be traditionally associated with your academic major. Once you determine your core strengths (skills, qualifications, experiences), take confidence in them, and learn how to communicate these strengths to others. Knowing how to clearly articulate strengths and the value of your experiences to an employer will make you a more marketable candidate.

Job Tip #2: Industry Research

Once you've thoroughly gone through the process of self-assessment, it's time to do some research and narrow down your options. What career fields best represent your goals and areas of interest? It may be helpful to think and research more broadly at first.

Resources to assist in researching careers:

- [Career Center Website](#) – messiah.edu/career
- A few other websites to get you started...**
 - Occupational Outlook Handbook: www.bls.gov/oco/
 - O*Net: <http://online.onetcenter.org>
 - Wet Feet: www.wetfeet.com
- Company/Organization Websites** – Pay careful attention to important items such as their mission statement, population they serve, special recognitions, etc. Note their "Human Resources" or "Employment" links for job postings. You should also begin to follow companies and organizations through their **Twitter**, **LinkedIn**, or **Facebook** accounts.
***NOTE:** Be sure your own [social network profiles](#) are professional in nature before you connect with potential employers!
- Informational Interviews** – **Learn** more about fields of interest through informational interviews with professionals who have taken similar paths. Consider networking with alumni through the [Messiah College Professional Network](#) on **LinkedIn**. See the [Career Center](#) website for more information. Keep in mind, you are not asking for a job; rather, you are gathering information on a particular profession or career path. You never know where this might take you next!



Job Tip #3: Documents that Brand and Differentiate Yourself

Résumé

See the Career Center's guide on [Résumés & Cover Letters](#) for information on how to perfect these documents. The Career Center offers a drop-in résumé/cover letter critiquing service. Take advantage of it as often as necessary!

Your résumé should reflect your significant skills, experiences, and educational background. Employers will also pay attention to see if you have highlighted key transferable skills for the position to which you're applying.

Cover Letter

"Do I need to send a cover letter?" Unless the employer specifically states that they do not desire a cover letter, the answer to this question is ... yes! A cover letter provides you the opportunity to let the employer know what you are seeking, what you have to offer, and why you would like a position with their company/organization. Also, the cover letter demonstrates your writing and communication skills. More information, along with samples, is located in our [Résumé & Cover Letter Guide](#).

References

Choose individuals who know you and your work ethic well. [References](#) might include professors, advisors, work or internship supervisors, or others in professional positions who can speak to your strengths and accomplishments. It's important to *ask* them if they feel comfortable serving as a reference for you. As a courtesy, provide your identified references with sufficient time and your résumé and job description for the position for which you're applying. **Don't forget to write them a [thank-you note](#)!**



Job Tip #4: Conducting Your Search

When conducting your job search, it's essential to use a mixed-method approach – don't rely just on monster.com or the want-ads. Instead, plan on utilizing a combination of strategies mentioned below.

- Networking** – As you may have heard, networking is the #1 access point to career opportunities. Think about those who are in your network – family, friends, church members, professors, Messiah alumni, internship supervisors, your roommate's parents, and on and on! Ask people in your network for referrals so you can begin to "grow" your connections. Don't be afraid to ask! Check out the "Networking Tracker" tool on the Career Center's [website](#) to help you organize your network. Also be sure to utilize the [Messiah College Professional Network](#) Group on **LinkedIn**.
- FalconJobs** – Messiah's online job search/employer database. Contact the Career Center with any questions.
- Career Fairs** – Don't miss the face-to-face time with employers. A few of the career fairs sponsored/co-sponsored by the Career Center include:
 - Fall Career & Grad School Expo (largest recruiting event - open to all majors)
 - Accounting Night
 - Cumberland Valley Consortium (CVC) Job & Internship Fair
 - Central Pennsylvania Employment Consortium (CPEC) Job & Internship Fair
 - Teacher Recruitment Day
 - CVC Virtual Job Fair***Check the Career Center [website](#) for dates and locations of these and other events!**
- Volunteer Experiences** – In today's tough economic climate, many times the best way to get a foot in the door is to offer your time free of charge to an organization. This is especially true for some fields, such as nonprofits and human service industries. Additionally, volunteer experiences in general are a great way to increase your networks and add to your relevant experiences.

- ❑ **Informational Interviews** – Talking one-on-one with someone in your field of interest is an excellent way to increase your networks and your knowledge of a particular field. While the purpose of an informational interview is never to ask for a job, often times these interviews may indirectly lead to additional job leads or points of contact. For more details visit the Career Center’s [website](#).
- ❑ **Internships** – A proven way to gain entrance into an organization is through an internship. Visit the [Internship Center](#) on campus for more information (located directly beside the Career Center).
- ❑ **Professional Associations** – Most career fields have a professional association that offers professional development resources, networking opportunities, and sometimes job postings. You may have to pay for membership, but most associations offer discounted rates to students. If you’re unsure if there’s an association for your field of interest, ask someone in your academic department or check out a [professional association directory](#).
- ❑ **Internet** – [Websites](#) focused on specific job areas (e.g. “Art Jobs Online”) are typically more productive than those that try to cater to every type of field (e.g. Monster.com).
- ❑ **Local Chamber of Commerce** – Locate yours at [U.S. Chambers](#)
- ❑ **“New Professionals” Local Networks** (e.g. [Harrisburg Young Professionals](#))
- ❑ **Company Websites** – Identify companies that hire for the positions you are seeking, and regularly check their job postings.
- ❑ **Local Career Services Offices** – If you are relocating, look at college career services pages from your local area. See who is recruiting on their campuses. This may give insight as to who you should be contacting to explore potential job opportunities.
- ❑ **Direct Mailing** – If the company you desire to work for does not have openings posted on their website, send a résumé and cover letter which clearly states your interest in their organization, what type of position you are seeking, and your qualifications. This does not guarantee they will respond to you, but they may see something in your materials that piques their interest.

Job Tip #5: Utilize Social Media

When utilized correctly, social media can be an integral part of your job search. The following platforms each offer a unique way to connect professionally with others while developing your digital career brand:

- I. **LINKEDIN** - The most popular, international networking resource! Utilize [LinkedIn](#) to connect professionally with others in your field of interest, join professional groups (including the **Messiah College Professional Network**), follow companies, and search for jobs. Find more specific tips on the [LinkedIn section](#) of the Career Center’s website.
- II. **TWITTER** - In addition to connecting you with others in your field, this platform can provide you with access to a wealth of information from industry experts. Twitter also is a fantastic way to view job postings, as over one million job openings are tweeted each month (be sure to utilize [TweetMyJobs](#) to expand your search). When using Twitter, it is recommended that your “160me” be professional in nature. Your Twitter profile should include a link to your LinkedIn profile. All of your tweets should primarily be about items that relate to your field of interest, and should make optimal use of hashtags and retweets. A final recommendation is to follow people on Twitter who you would like to know you, such as industry leaders or human resource representatives.

**Some helpful sites to support your Twitter use include [Listorious](#), [Twellow](#), [TweetDeck](#), and [HootSuite](#).*



- III. **FACEBOOK** –Before you begin to utilize Facebook to network professionally, be sure ALL of your postings, pictures, and updates are appropriate. Some effective ways to use Facebook when networking include: linking your blog or website to your Facebook page, reminding others of your job search status through your status updates, and/or posting a professionally-written note about your current career situation onto your profile page.

Job Tip #6: The Interview

Pick up a copy of the [Interviewing Guide](#) in the Career Center, and take advantage of our **Mock Interview Service**. Thorough preparation is the key to interview success!

Job Tip: #7: Helpful Hints

Consider the following suggestions when you are conducting your job search:

- **Voicemail:** make sure it's professional – nothing funny or cutesy. Always answer the phone in a professional tone.
- **Professional communication:** No slang or “text-speak”; use capital letters and appropriate punctuation. Always remember to have your materials edited by a peer, professor, and/or a career coach before you send them out to potential employers. Any mistakes can count as a strike against you.
- **Thank-you notes:** This is a very important part of the process! If you meet a new contact who provides you with information related to your job search, send them a [thank-you note](#). The same goes for individuals who participate in an informational or job interview.
- **Keep records** of your networks and places you're applying, and remember to follow-up.
- **It's never too late** to build your [experience](#). Consider an internship, part-time job, volunteer experience or co-curricular organization to become involved in. These are great résumé builders.
- **Procrastination doesn't pay:** Don't wait until the week of graduation and expect to land a position for the following week. Start early, and set achievable goals to keep yourself motivated.
- **Attitude:** Make a conscious effort to maintain a positive attitude. Remember that many strong, qualified candidates experience rejections, so get back on your feet and forge ahead!
- **Support network:** Surround yourself with people who will offer encouragement and support to you through the job searching process.



CAREER CENTER RESOURCES & SERVICES

- Career Coaching** – Not sure which direction you're headed? Have specific questions about your search? Don't hesitate to set up an appointment to talk with one of our career coaches.
- Mock Interviews** – Stop by or give us a call to set up an appointment. Come professionally dressed.
- Résumé & Cover Letter Drop In Hours** – Check out our [website](#) for current days and times.
- Networking Tips** – an essential component of any job search! Join the [Messiah College Professional Network](#).
- Job Boards** – There are several free and subscription-based (free to students) job search links on the Career Center [website](#). For [subscription-based resources](#), the username is "Messiah". The password is "falcon".
 - *Current Jobs in Writing, Editing & Communications*
 - *Current Jobs in Liberal Arts*
 - *Current Jobs in Performing Arts*
 - *Environmental Career Opportunities*
 - *The International Educator (TIE)*



Diagnosing Your Career Roadblock

Sometimes, despite our best efforts, the words “you’re hired!” remain an elusive dream. Don’t give up – overcoming the obstacles to securing your first job may be easier than you think!!

SYMPTOM	DIAGNOSIS	REMEDY
<p>You are sending hundreds of resumes, but have not received a single phone call back or an invitation to an interview.</p>	<p>Your resume and/or cover letter may not be up to par. These important documents create the first impression an employer forms of you, so it is vital that they are top notch and error-free. Are your documents tailored to the position for which you’re applying? Would the employer see the clear connection between your skills and experience and the job responsibilities?</p>	<p>Have your resume and cover letter critiqued by a Career Coach during scheduled drop-in hours. Be sure to ask about the best way to submit your documents.</p>
<p>You are getting invited to interviews, but are not receiving any job offers.</p>	<p>Focus on strengthening your interviewing skills, which can encompass a broad array of verbal and non-verbal areas. Have you done extensive research on the organization/company? Are you articulating concrete examples of your skills and abilities? Do you display confidence, a strong handshake, and a positive, professional demeanor? Are you dressing in proper interview attire?</p>	<p>Schedule a mock interview with a Career Coach. Be sure to wear your interviewing apparel to the mock interview. It is also recommended that you review the interviewing information on our website, including videos on professional dress, and a copy of our interviewing handout.</p>
<p>You have a phone interview with a recruiter, but do not get asked for a follow up on-site interview.</p>	<p>Phone interviews provide a unique set of challenges. Focus specifically on practicing your over-the-phone conversational skills, which may also include improving your basic interviewing skills. What is being conveyed by the tone of your voice (since you aren’t face-to-face)?</p>	<p>Dress professionally and smile during phone interviews, it will make you sound confident and alert. Do not converse in a place where there is background noise. Request a mock phone interview with a Career Coach.</p>
<p>You are attending many job fairs, but are not hearing back from any recruiters.</p>	<p>You may not have an effective “one minute sales pitch” to use when approaching recruiters. Other contributing factors may be your resume, attire, or lack of follow-up.</p>	<p>Talk with a Career Coach about how to successfully navigate a job fair. Watch the “Career Fair” video on our website. Pick up a “Job Fair Tip Sheet” from the Career Center.</p>

OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Like it or not, there are many factors in the job search that are beyond your control. Recognizing these factors is an important step towards your success. It can be easy to take rejection personally; understand that as a job seeker you are only aware of a small piece of an organization's hiring needs and time schedules. **Focus on the things that you CAN control** versus those that you cannot, and realize that the job search requires confidence and determination, even in the bleakest of moments.

Factors YOU CONTROL in the Job Hunt

- Your interview attire and display of professionalism
- Quality of your resume and cover letter
- Your communication skills (e.g. how you come across verbally and nonverbally)
- The amount of time and energy you invest in your job search
- Your attitude and demeanor
- Expanding your personal and professional network
- Interview preparation – which includes researching an organization as thoroughly as possible and preparing specific examples to demonstrate your qualifications
- Appropriate follow up (write that thank you letter!)

Factors BEYOND Your Control

- Number of qualified applicants with whom you may be competing
- Inside prospects (when posting the job is done as a formality, and a candidate has been pre-identified)
- Personality and agenda of the interviewer
- Time schedule of hiring decisions
- Existence of internal candidates or personal referrals

**FOR MORE ON THIS TOPIC, CHECK
OUT THESE ARTICLES!**

[Not Getting Hired? 10 Reasons Why](#)

[Getting Interviews but Not the Job?](#)

[30 Things You Can Control in Your Job Search](#)



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