

How to

Job Search Effectively

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- Interview Advice
- Job Search Help
- Grad School Prep
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How to Job Search Effectively

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A. The Basics

1. Network. Networking is the process you use to “acquire internal referrals” who can help advocate for you in your job search.¹ It’s one of the very best ways to find a job, get advice, find mentors, and choose a career. Be genuine—as an extension of your existing social life, networking is about “building organic relationships rooted in professional respect.”²

- **Start with who you know.** People who already know and care about you—family, friends, classmates, professors, etc.—are interested in seeing you succeed. Let them know what opportunities you’re looking for, and ask them who they know who might hire you.
- **Informational interviews. Ask for advice—not jobs!** One of the best ways to get a really great job is through *informational interviews*, where you interview someone to **ask for advice on their career, industry, and the culture of a potential workplace**. Why? People feel flattered that you asked for help; people like to talk about themselves; and people like to build relationships.³

How to do it? See *Attachment 3: Informational Interview Tips* for details.

- **Job shadowing. “Try on” the job.** Once you’ve done informational interviews and identified jobs you might be interested in, ask your contacts if you can shadow them for an hour or two, or for a full day. This will allow you to see firsthand what the job and the work environment are really like, and connect with the team there. If they like you, you’re one big step closer to a job or internship.
- **Organizations.** Join a club, a community group, or a charitable organization. Show up consistently, help out, and get to know people. After establishing a relationship of trust, you can ask these contacts for help in your job search—let them know what opportunities you’re looking for, and ask them who they know who might hire you.
- **Networking events.** See the *Resources* section for a list of networking events.
Exchange info. Come prepared with business cards. Offer yours, and get theirs.
Follow up. Send a note within three days that it was a pleasure to talk with them.⁴ Add them on LinkedIn, and keep in touch.
- **Social media.** Your social circle includes everyone you’re connected with online. Post and tweet to let them know you’d like some help in your job search. Make it easy for them—be very clear and specific about what type of opportunity you’re looking for.

LinkedIn is king. Start with people you know, then see who they know. Also, look for common interests—one of the best is to *find SUU alumni via the “Alumni” tab on the Southern Utah University page*.⁵ Then, ask if they would be willing to introduce you to their colleagues who have hiring needs. See *Attachment 1: LinkedIn Profile Checklist* for more in-depth info on building your profile.

¹ Dalton (2012), p. 10

² LinkedIn (n.d.) [The Student Job Hunting Handbook, Part 2](#)

³ Pfeffer (1995)

⁴ LinkedIn (n.d.) [The Student Job Hunting Handbook, Part 2](#)

⁵ SUU on LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/school/southern-utah-university](https://www.linkedin.com/school/southern-utah-university)

2. Research specific jobs. Search for industries, read about them, and make notes on what sparks your interest and what doesn't. Read about specific employers in the industries that look interesting to you. Do lots of informational interviews (see *Networking* section above). Talk to faculty, Academic Advisors, parents, and others to get insights about the jobs, employers, and industries they work in.

- **Decide on a career.** See the SUU Career Center's page on deciding on a major and career at <https://www.suu.edu/careercenter/majors-careers/>. The "What Can I Do With This Major" link is especially helpful.
- **Search job postings.** See the *Resources* section for a list of places to search for jobs.
- **Connect to people.** Once you have searched job postings to get a good idea of what's available, contact people who can get you more information about the jobs you're interested in. Note that job posts don't tell the whole story. Would you choose to marry someone you've never met, just based on their online profile? Of course not! Similarly, don't assume that a job post can tell you exactly what the job will be like—contact people close to the job and explore the opportunity. **Don't waste your time applying online without contacting someone—you will fail 95% of the time.**⁶ See *How Employers Hire = Why You Should Network* at the end of the packet for details.

3. Build your brand. What is professional branding? It's your reputation and image as a professional, and it's critically important. Your brand includes the following elements:

- **Your name.** Spell your name the same way *everywhere* you want employers to see. For example, if your name is "Suzanne Amanda Chesterton," don't write "Sue Chesterton" on your resume and "Mandy Chesterton" on your LinkedIn profile. Pick one way, and stick with it.

Privacy. If you *don't* want employers to view a particular social media account, consider a pseudonym that can't be easily connected to your name—and then make your account private.

- **Online image**

LinkedIn profile. In the U.S., if you don't have a Social Security Number, you basically don't exist. In the professional world, if you don't have a LinkedIn profile, you basically don't exist.

- **Everyone googles you.** Before employers seriously consider you, they will google you. Make it easy by including the link to your LinkedIn profile on your resume and on your business cards. That way, employers find the right "Sarah Smith" or "Tom Jones," and not someone who shares your name.
- **Key info.** Include a custom URL to use on your resume & business cards, a professional looking photo, a summary, your experience and skills. And get recommendations!
- **Need more details?** See *Attachment 1: LinkedIn Profile Checklist*.

Handshake profile. Similar to LinkedIn, recruiters can search for candidates like you—if you have a great profile, you greatly increase your chances of getting hired.

Other social media. Did you know that people lose jobs *all the time* because of thoughtless internet posts? For example, in August 2018, "Naomi H" lost an internship with NASA after using profanity in

⁶ Burnett & Evans (2016), p. 129, Dalton (2012), p. 3

tweets. If you want to maintain a good professional reputation, avoid posts with vulgar and discriminatory language, and consider the impact of sharing political posts.

- **Appearance.** Obviously, you should dress professionally for job interviews. You should also dress professionally for job fairs, networking events, employer site visits, and even attending a speaker series. Basically, dress professionally any time there's a good possibility of meeting someone who could hire you.

Everyday dress. There is nothing wrong with choosing to wear jeans and t-shirts every day—just be aware that how you choose to dress daily will influence others' opinions of you. Imagine if the CEO of your dream company happened to be on campus and you got to shake her hand—while wearing a T-shirt and pajama bottoms! Do you think you'll get hired? Don't blow the opportunity!

- **Reputation.** Always be kind and reliable. Keep commitments, show up on time, watch what you say and how you engage with others. Employers may call any mutual connection to find out about the real you. So, just be a nice person—who wants to hire a jerk?
- **Business cards are part of adulting.** Why would a student carry business cards? Because professionals always exchange business cards when they first meet. If you've got a card, you look like a professional adult, instead of just a college "kid". You can cheaply and easily get business cards printed at a local print shop or via online services.
- **Resume / Cover Letter / References List. Be consistent and compelling.** These documents should all match each other (same header, font, format, and style) and tell a compelling story about why they should consider hiring you. For more details, see the Resume and Cover Letter packets.

4. Tailor your documents. Each opportunity is different. Once you've written an awesome general resume and cover letter, go back and tailor them to each opportunity you are applying for. Look at the employer's website, mission and vision statements, and job descriptions. Then use language in your resume and cover letter that matches the employer's style and the job description. For more details, see the Resume and Cover Letter packets, which can be found at suu.edu/careercenter/resume.html.

5. Apply. Follow instructions. Carefully read and follow the instructions to apply. For example, the job posting may have an "Apply" button *but* say "Please email resumes to Sarah Jones at sarah.jones@asdf.asdf." In that case, email your resume to Sarah! ***This might be for the employer's convenience, but it could also be a test to see whether you follow instructions!***

6. Communicate professionally

In person. Know your audience. Make sure to introduce yourself. Actively listen when someone else is talking. Be clear and specific when talking with someone. Speak in appropriate tones and be respectful. Use appropriate body language such as having a firm handshake, great eye contact, and keeping in mind personal space.

Email. Use an email address that sounds professional, not like *cutebunnyhophop@email.com*. Use a polite, professional tone, including beginning with "Dear" or "Hello" not "Hey" and using titles (Mrs./Ms./Mr./Dr.). Avoid emoticons and slang. Keep your goal in mind, and be concise. Don't copy

people who don't need to be. And always proofread before sending! See the *Resources* section for more details.

Phone calls: incoming. Answer by introducing yourself professionally and respectfully, like this: "Hello, this is Rose. How may I help you?" Avoid filler words like "umm" and "like." Before ending the call, exchange contact information. This avoids you having to figure out the best mode of contact later.

Phone calls: outgoing. Provide a greeting with your name and title. Make sure to include your reason for calling. Use appropriate wording for your audience. At the end of the call, make sure to thank them for their time.

Voicemail: incoming. Record a brief, professional message to introduce yourself, like this: "Hi, this is Brandon with ABC Motor Company. Sorry I missed your call. Please leave me a message." If using your personal cell, you can shorten the message: "Hi, this is Brandon. Please leave me a message."

Voicemail: outgoing. Make sure it is concise and organized. Leave all important information which includes the following: first and last name, reason for calling, good phone number to call back to (make sure to say this slowly and precisely), and best times to call back (this avoids you missing their call).

Texting. You should normally only text those you have an established professional relationship with. Keep it brief. Don't send confidential information via text. Avoid emoticons and abbreviations. Use good grammar and punctuation.

7. Follow up. Always follow up! In every situation, be sure to follow up professionally. Consider a handwritten thank-you card—they are golden! In some cases, the employer may give specific contact instructions, such as to contact them by email only, or to not contact them until they reach out to you. Again, follow their instructions carefully!

9. Negotiate salary

On application. Never list a salary range or your past pay history on a job application. If the field is required, input "0" or "willing to negotiate".

During the interview. Let them bring up salary first. Research and know the going rate for your specific position in your specific industry and location. (See the *Resources* section at the end for links.) Have an exact number and be confident about it. Be prepared to support that number with reasons why you are valuable. Do not bring up past salaries. Be kind and firm, but not pushy.

B. Strategies by Type of Work

1. Search for local student jobs

Network. Ask your friends where they are working. Ask upperclassmen where they have worked. Use Google Maps to look up what employers are in Cedar City, and then go visit them. Contact the SUU Career Center for tips.

On campus:

- **T-Bird Campus Jobs** (my.suu.edu → **Apps** → **T-Bird Campus Jobs**). All jobs on the SUU campus are listed here.

Off-campus:

- **Handshake** (my.suu.edu → **Resources** → **Handshake**). Click “Jobs” then search by “Cedar City” in the location field, or “LOCAL JOB” in the job title
- Utah Department of Workforce Services (jobs.utah.gov)

2. Search for internships. Remember that (almost) anything counts. Did you know you can receive academic credit for nearly any job if it matches your academic studies? Check with your department to see if the jobs you’re considering might qualify.

Network. Reach out through your network, or contact employers directly and ask if they have internship opportunities available. Note that some internships may be unpaid.

Search postings. See list in *Resources*.

Think long-term. Try to find internships that could lead to full-time job offers.

3. Search for full-time / career positions

Network. Yes, we’re repeating here—networking is by far the best way to get a long-term job position. See above for details.

Internships. Internships are a great way to get an extended job interview—if they like you, it’s very likely they will offer you a full-time position when you graduate.

C. Resources

1. Job exploration

SUU Career Research Resources: suu.edu/careercenter/majors-careers.html

My Next Move: mynextmove.org O*NET: onetonline.org LinkedIn: university.linkedin.com

Occupational Outlook Handbook: bls.gov/ooh

2. Salary information

Utah Economic Data Viewer: jobs.utah.gov/jsp/utalmis/#/occupation

Occupational Outlook Handbook: bls.gov/ooh Glassdoor: glassdoor.com/Salaries

3. Professional communication

Grammarly: grammarly.com/blog/professional-email-in-english

College Info Geek: collegeinfo geek.com/professional-communication-guide

4. Networking

LinkedIn SUU Alumni: linkedin.com/school/southern-utah-university/people

Events & Groups: Eventbrite: eventbrite.com Meetup: meetup.com

SUU Clubs: my.suu.edu → Tbird Connection Networkr App: networkr.app

Cedar City Chamber of Commerce: cedarcitychamber.org

Conversation starters

- themuse.com/advice/30-brilliant-networking-conversation-starters
- forbes.com/sites/dailymuse/2012/03/06/non-awkward-ways-to-start-and-end-networking-conversations

Professional associations: suu.edu/careercenter/majors-careers.html

Click on "What can I do with this major?" → "View all majors". Click any major, then scroll down to the Professional Associations section and see what conferences they have available.

4. Job searching

For students & recent grads

- SUU Employment page: suu.edu/employment (list of resources at the bottom)
- T-Bird Campus Jobs: my.suu.edu → Apps → T-Bird Campus Jobs
- Handshake: my.suu.edu → Resources → Handshake
- HireOwl (internships & freelance): hireowl.com

Internships: Virtual Internships: virtualinternships.com Symba: symba.io

Parker Dewey: parkerdewey.com

Chegg Internships: internships.com

Global: LinkedIn: linkedin.com

Indeed: indeed.com

Monster: monster.com

Glassdoor: glassdoor.com

Government: USA Jobs: usajobs.gov Utah State Jobs: statejobs.utah.gov
GovernmentJobs.com: agency.governmentjobs.com/utah
National Science Foundation (research opportunities): nsf.gov
Police Jobs: how-to-become-a-police-officer.com/jobs

Utah: KSL Jobs: jobs.ksl.com
Utah Department of Workforce Services: jobs.utah.gov (not just government jobs!)

Freelance Jobs: hireowl.com/student/jobs

5. Books

- **Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-lived, Joyful Life** by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans
 - Also: *The Designing Your Life Workbook* and designingyour.life website
- **What Color Is Your Parachute?** by Richard Nelson Bolles
- **Résumés Are Dead and What to Do About It** by Richie Norton
 - Full text is available for free on [Medium.com](https://www.medium.com)
- **The 2-Hour Job Search: Using Technology to Get the Right Job Faster** by Steve Dalton

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university.linkedin.com

Pfeffer, J. (1995). *Power: Why some people have it—and others don't*. New York, NY: HarperBusiness.

Attachments

Attachment 1: LinkedIn Profile Checklist

Attachment 2: How Employers Hire = Why You Should Network

Attachment 3: Informational Interview Tips