

TIPS FOR CREATIVE JOB SEARCHING

Adapted from www.campuscareercenter.com and from the Career Center, University of Iowa
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Use ALL your resources

Be creative in not only what you are searching for, but how you are searching. Are you covering all the bases in your search? This includes online applications, career fairs, informational interviews, and networking through friends, family, faculty, and alumni.

Don't keep your job search a secret

Everyone knows someone who knows someone, so when you're looking for employment, shout it from the rooftops. Talk to everyone you know who might know something about what you're interested in. Ask if you might send them your résumé, and ask them to forward it to any contacts who might be in need of your skills.

Use Central's alumni network

Networking with Central alumni is a great thing to do! Over 600 alums are waiting to hear from you! Go to: www.central.edu/connections and search for alums by major, career field, or location. Make contact with an E-mail message introducing yourself and describing your interests.

Broaden your horizons

Read job descriptions thoroughly and research organizations to see if an opportunity might be a good fit. Just because it's a company or job title you've never heard of doesn't mean it is not a good job. Also, look outside your major—don't feel like you can only apply to a position if you have a certain major. Finally, if you have been searching in one or two geographic areas, expand your search area. This will give you more opportunities and options.

Recession means you have to be flexible

If you can't find a job that matches your skills, look at related jobs and pursue one of them. Taking a job that's a bit outside your area of expertise means you'll expand your skill set. When the market picks up again, you'll be that much more attractive to employers. One area that might afford opportunity is sales, in any capacity. In economic slowdowns, companies scale back on support staff and beef up their sales force.

Apply online

Of course you will! But be selective. Go directly to employer websites of interest, search for positions where you meet MOST of the qualifications, and follow application instructions to the letter. Also most professional associations (and there's at least one for every career field) post jobs on their Web sites, like www.apa.org (American Psychological Association).

Best nationwide websites?

www.careerbuilder.com (This is what the Des Moines Register uses to post jobs.)

www.indeed.com

And CareerLink@Central: Register by going to: www.central.edu/career

You can search for jobs sent to Central and jobs nationwide!

Sell yourself with a tailored resume and cover letter

Don't try to get by with generic application materials. You've got to make the connection between your skills/experience and the job's demands. Include samples of your best work when possible. Be confident in your experiences and abilities; make it clear that you're the employee they need!

Pay attention and follow up on all leads

You can't just post your resume and wait for the phone to ring. Follow up with a phone call if at all possible to confirm that your online application arrived and to ask about the timeline for selecting candidates to interview. Also, stay alert to any and all opportunities, and follow up on all leads, even those where you're only mildly interested.

The government is always hiring

Nationwide postings in every career field: www.usajobs.opm.gov

Government jobs in Iowa in every field: http://das.hre.iowa.gov/state_jobs.html

Read and write

Get into the habit of reading publications, relevant to your field of interest, to stay on top of events, trends and other vital news in your industry. If you see an interesting article that you think an employer might find useful, clip it out and send it along with a little note about who you are and why you think he or she might like it. It's a great way of introducing yourself as it's non-threatening yet shows you have an interest in their business.

Your first job doesn't have to be your DREAM job

The most important thing is that you find a job that will help you move in the direction you want to go in your career. If you find a job that gives you experience in a related field – go for it!

Listen to the media – but not too closely

Keep in mind that media reports can be generalizations and exaggerations at times. What may be true for a job market in one location may not be true for another. Don't get discouraged and be patient! Your persistence and positive attitude will pay off!