

Job search checklist

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Developed for and by STC WorkQuest™ members.

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STC WorkQuest™ is a support group for people looking for work. For more information, see <http://home.earthlink.net/~workquest/>

The following checklist reflects many of the discussions we've had at our weekly STC WorkQuest™ meetings. Not all items apply to all job search situations so be sure to personalize the checklist as needed. The checklist is divided into sections for convenience; however, it's clear that many of the startup phase tasks will overlap with the active job search phase. And many of the startup tasks will have to be revised or redone during the active job search phase.

Startup phase

✓	Create resume(s).	You will need several versions.
✓	Test resume.	Show it to several people and get their suggestions.
	Define your limits.	Geographic, \$, job type.
	List everyone you know.	Categorize and prioritize list.
	List companies who might hire you (target companies).	Categorize and prioritize list.
	Find and prioritize job search sites on the internet.	Create a list of sites to check.
	List newspapers and other print sources that have employment ads.	Specialty newspapers such as the Business Times or an industry newspaper might offer want ads of interest.
	Create a record keeping system.	Calls and messages sent Companies and people contacted Responses received Information gathered about companies and contacts Resumes sent Meeting and phone call notes Interviews Thank you notes Other?
	Create a weekly schedule and list of tasks.	Set aside particular hours each day for job search. Do housekeeping chores, personal errands, etc., at other times

	Create marketing materials.	Brochure? List of projects? Paper versions? Electronic versions?
	Create business cards.	
	Gather materials and create portfolio.	Electronic? Binder or case? Box or file drawer?
	Create electronic versions of your resume.	Use plain text for resumes that will be imbedded in email. Use standard fonts for resumes that will be sent as attachments.
	Create a personal marketing campaign (job search plan).	What you will do when, how many people you will contact each week, etc.
	Develop a needs-contribution statement.	List of industry requirements compared to your list of capabilities.
	Contact people who might become references.	Professional and personal. Use them as “advisors” for your job search. Might need different references for different job search situations.
	Practice talking about your capabilities and job desires.	30-second drill: name, job, qualifications, history, etc (sometimes called “elevator talk” – what you can cover in an elevator ride)
	Practice your “reason for leaving” statement.	
	Write several sample cover letters.	Different versions for different potential jobs. Both for paper and for email.
	Write several short versions of your biography.	For inclusion in emails, job search internet sites, etc.
	Check the library(s).	For job search resources.
	Read some how-to books and articles about job search.	The library and Internet are good sources
	Gather office materials.	Good paper for resumes, stamps, envelopes, stapler, paperclips, etc.
	Start an appointment calendar.	Paper or electronic.
	Set up a workspace.	Need to keep records and materials orderly. Need a computer and internet connection.
	Set up email.	Use your name in your email address so you’ll appear professional -- not some clever “handle”, code, or other person’s name (such as a spouse). Make sure the <i>from</i> field that the recipient sees contains your full name. Create a signature file that contains your address, phone, email, etc. Do NOT include clever sayings, quotes, text drawings, or other non-professional stuff.

	Set up phone answering machine or service.	Create a professional outgoing message or at least a dignified family message. If possible, use a service that picks up when you're on the phone. This is especially important if you use your phone line for your internet connection.
	Create a personal job search website.	Include your resume, photo, list of projects, contact information, writing samples, etc. Do NOT include games, jokes, personal or family stuff.
	Decide what you'll say about your salary history or requirements	
	Other	
	Other	
	Other	

Active job search phase

	Contact everyone you know.	Use the list you created in the startup phase. Talk to anyone you meet.
	Contact people who might know of openings.	Ask them for additional possibilities, names, companies, etc.
	Contact people to ask for an information interview.	Ask them for advice about your job search, not for a job.
	Attend STC or other professional society meetings.	Tell everyone you meet there about your job search. Pass out your business cards. Collect names of potential contacts.
	Attend social, community, or church gatherings.	Tell everyone you meet there about your job search. Pass out your business cards. Collect names of potential contacts.
	Join a support group.	PAPEN, WorkQuest™, etc.
	Expand internet search.	Respond immediately to any openings you see.
	Join e-newsgroups and subscribe to e-newsletters and maillists that might list jobs	Such as the Pittsburgh STC maillist.
	Expand list of contacts and potential employers.	Through networking and through research.
	Revise resume and other materials in response to the market.	

	Make cold calls and send out unsolicited resumes with cover letters.	
	Register with job search agencies.	Headhunters, employment agencies, placement agencies, temp agencies, etc.
	Answer the phone in a professional manner.	Make sure your family members also do this. Minimize background noise. Have notes handy.
	List questions you plan to ask an interviewer.	
	Practice how you will answer some of the standard interview questions.	
	Do something "professional" every week.	Volunteer work, courses, learn new software tools, write articles, prepare presentations, create websites, do PR for some organization, etc. Some of these can be added to resume.
	Create an interview agenda	List of items you want to cover. Take it along to an interview.
	Other	
	Other	
	Other	

Weekly tasks

	Emails, letters, and thank you notes.	
	Phone calls.	
	Meetings.	
	Other networking activities.	
	Check printed want ads.	Respond immediately.
	Back up data.	
	Review marketing materials (e.g., resume) and update as needed.	

	Review job search plan and update as needed.	Especially review your goals for number of contacts to make per week.
	Update list of tasks to be completed.	
	Update weekly calendar.	Appointments, meetings, tasks, etc.
	Maintain your personal appearance.	Keep your hair, beard, nails, etc., trimmed and neat. Ensure you have a clean, appropriate, well fitting interview outfit, from shirt to shoes, in your closet at all times.
	Other	
	Other	

Daily tasks

	Respond immediately to any opportunities.	From ads, personal contacts, phone calls, internet postings.
	Check email several times a day.	
	Check internet job search sites and newsletters.	Respond immediately.
	Check job postings on target company websites	Respond immediately to job postings
	Make cold calls (phone, in person, or email).	Use the list you created of target companies and people to contact. Try to meet goal for number of contacts made.
	Check phone answering service.	Several times a day.
	Do something fun or personal every day.	To remain sane.
	Other	
	Other	
	Other	