

10 Key Steps to a Successful Job Search

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This checklist provides an overview of the complete step-by-step process for identifying a career path and pursuing jobs that suit your needs. Using the right attitude and resources, you can narrow down the unlimited number of career choices and find a great job, just by following these simple steps:

1. Identify where you want to live. It sounds obvious, but honestly, there is no better way to narrow down a career search than defining where you want to live while you work. If your answer is "anywhere," then take the time to figure out where you would LOVE to live. Pick no more than two locations so that you can limit your search to these towns and the surrounding areas. Keeping in mind, cost-of-living, transportation access, proximity to family and friends, etc., you'll want to select places that suit your lifestyle and budget.

2. Determine your skills, work preferences, and personal strengths. Take the time to write out on paper all the things that you excel at. Ask friends and family to give their input as to what they think are your best assets when it comes to helping others and being effective doing tasks. It's time to organize your thoughts as to who you are and what you can offer to potential employers. Use [career assessment tests](#) to help you summarize your unique combination of skills and abilities so that you can match them to careers and articulate them to hiring managers.

3. Create a list of "must-haves," "nice-to-haves," and "don't wants" with respect to work. What is most important to you? What do you want your first job to provide you with? What things must be present in your work so that you can achieve not only your professional goals, but your personal goals as well? Keep this list handy and use it as a way to gage a career's ability to satisfy your needs. **NOTE:** The longer you make this list, the harder it will be for you to find a satisfying career. Don't make the mistake many Americans make with respect to career: expecting too much from your job is the fastest way to becoming unhappy. A good career doesn't guarantee a happy and fulfilling life. It's up to you to keep your career in perspective and make sure that you are able to find happiness outside of work. A career is just one aspect of who you are - it does not define you as a person, so don't wrap your personal identity up too much in what you do for a living.

4. Research careers using career interest tests.:

<http://www.uttler.edu/careerservices/CareerAssessments.html>

5. Create a Career Story. Write out and rehearse a short summary of who you are and why you feel a particular career is a good fit with your interests and strengths. Be sure to highlight your attributes and how you see them helping you to succeed in this particular career. You'll want to rehearse and get comfortable with this story so that you can tell it, without hesitation, to anyone you meet, especially friends, family, teachers and potential employers. Anyone who could help you in your career search should be able to easily understand and get excited by your Career Story.

6. Design a high-impact resume that showcases your strengths and accomplishments. Most resume formats used today are out-dated and ineffective. Your resume should be a simple, one-page summary of your experience. But more importantly, it should quickly draw attention to your best attributes. Your resume can be designed using the Resume Builder function in [PatriotJobs](#).

7. Set up and complete Informational Interviews. Contact your career center, your parents, friends and anyone else you can think of to help you identify individuals in your field(s) of interest. Your goal? To set up either a phone call or in-person meeting with them to learn more about this particular career and how they have become successful doing it. **NOTE:** You are NOT asking for a job, or even interviewing for one. You are simply gathering data so you can make an informed decision about a career. Think of yourself as a reporter, trying to get the whole story. The good news is that the majority of college grads and young professionals who take the time and make the effort to complete Informational Interviews, usually end up getting job offers from either the person they interviewed, or someone they subsequently referred them to. This is called "networking" and it is the #1 method for getting access to the best job opportunities!

8. Pick a career based on how it will suit your needs, not someone else's. When choosing a career, make sure you choose a career you will enjoy. A career that will inspire you to want to learn more and grow your abilities. Becoming an 'expert' in a field is one of the best ways to find career success and satisfaction. To achieve this, you must find your internal motivation for work. This can only be found when you choose work that makes you feel challenged, excited, and alive. Choosing a job solely to impress others, get status and recognition, or make a lot of money, may make you feel good in the short-term, but in the long-term, you will feel empty and unmotivated. Ask anyone who has chosen a

career using these misguided reasons and they'll share with you the unhappy results.

9. Keep it in perspective. Statistics show that most Americans today will have as many as 9 careers in their lifetimes with an average of 3 jobs in each career. Do the math. You are going to be doing a lot of different kinds of work in your life, which means, they'll be plenty of opportunities to switch paths, should you find one no longer suits you. They call it a 'career path' because of all the twists and turns you'll take along the way!

10. Take Action! If you want to find a good, satisfying job, then you need to make the effort. Even a college degree does not guarantee a successful career. You've got to do the soul-searching, research, and action steps necessary for finding a career that best suits you. The sooner you realize and embrace the need to proactively search for a career, the faster you'll be on your way to finding the personal and professional success you want and deserve. So don't wait, and get to work!

Follow these ten steps and you'll be on your way to an exciting and rewarding career path.