**Module 12: The Job Search Process**

**Transcript**

**The Employers’ Problem (video clip 1)**

To understand how to look for a job, you need to understand the perspective of the people whose attention you’re trying to grab. The Great Recession caused obvious problems for job seekers, but you may not realize it caused some problems for employers as well.

Suppose you own a company and need to hire someone. You write up a job announcement and post it to online job boards like Career Builder, Monster, and Craigslist. You’re excited to see what kind of awesome people contact you about your job. You figure you’ll leave the posting up for a couple weeks, then start interviewing.

When you come into work the next morning and turn on your computer, you find that you already have 100 applicants. By the next day, you have 200. In a panic, you go online and pull down all of your ads. Your job was only posted for 2 days, and you now have 200 applications to sift through.

So, you stare at your stack of resumes, wondering what to do with it. You start skimming through them quickly, maybe spending 5-10 seconds on each. By the time you’ve skimmed through about 30 resumes, your eyes are glazing over, they’re all starting to look the same, and you begin to realize that trying to find the right person for the job by searching through a giant stack of papers is about as difficult and pointless and trying to find a needle in a haystack. You have no idea how you’re going to go about narrowing these 200 applicants down to only a couple to interview.

Finally, you give up and abandon the stack of resumes. You send an email out to all of your staff asking if they know of anyone they think would be a fit for the position. You then start contacting your friends in the industry and other professional contacts asking them to suggest candidates as well. A couple of those people tell you they know someone who has already applied who would be a great fit, so you go looking for their resumes and pull them out of the stack to look at more seriously. You also get a couple new names, so you have the friend or colleague who made the referral contact the person and ask them to send you their resume directly. The resumes you’re now focusing on don’t necessarily look that much different than the rest of the applicants, but you trust the opinion of the people who referred these candidates, so you decide to interview them. By getting referrals, you’ve narrowed your list of candidates down to only a handful, and because people you trust already knew them, you were able to find the perfect person for the job.

Based on that experience, the next time you have a position you need to fill, you just skip ever posting the job and announcing it to the public. Instead, you only announce it privately to the employees at your company, your professional contacts at other companies, and your friends and family – the people who you’d trust to refer someone to you. You collect names, talk with those people, fill your position, and find that doing it that way was much easier.

You may have heard of the “unadvertised job market,” or the “hidden job market” before. *This* is what those terms refer to. It is estimated that up to 80% of jobs are never advertised, and are filled via word of mouth and referrals instead. Knowing the right people and getting referred for positions isn’t just a matter of luck, though, and this module will cover how to seek out jobs in the hidden job market.

**Video Slide 1**

*Tracey Stone, MassMutual Idaho Recruiting Director:* “Well, networking is so important right now because there’s all kinds of online job posts, and I kind of call it the “post and pray,” you don’t know what you’re going to find at the end of that process if all you’re doing is sitting online and posting to job boards. So what I recommend is that you really get out in the community and network. You don’t know who is out there that is looking for a career, you don’t know who they know that’s also got a job that’s out there, so it’s a great time to get into the community and get to know those individuals.”

**Video Slide 2**

*Don Slater, Swire Coca-Cola: “*Employers are always looking for the right talent. I am always recruiting. I may not have a position, but I’m always recruiting, because the next superstar, I never know. I’ve had some of my best hires on an idle Tuesday standing in line at Starbucks, where I wasn’t in the mood or I wasn’t inclined or looking for something, a position to fill per se, but I just come across the right person, and wow, one thing leads to another, leads to another, leads to another, and they turn out to be wonderful employees. So we’re always recruiting.”

**Old Job Search vs. New Job Search (video clip 2)**

While the job market has changed a bit since the recession, the ways employers prefer to find and hire candidates hasn’t. Unfortunately, many job seekers are still trying to find a job by using strategies that don’t work very well anymore. Let’s talk about how college grads used to look for a job, and how that compares to how a college grad SHOULD look for a job today.

This “old job search” will probably look familiar. You would start by going online to a job board to browse available jobs and learn what kinds of opportunities are available to someone with your qualifications. You’d read through job descriptions, decide what you’re interested in, and apply by sending a resume and/or application. The employer would call you, you’d interview for the position, and if you did well, they would offer you the job.

The “new job search” – the one that works best today – looks more like this. You start by figuring out what you want to do *first*. You then identify what types of companies or organizations would hire someone to do that type of job, research potential companies, and decide where you’d like to try to get a job. Since job openings may not be posted, and employers prefer to hire based on referrals even if they ARE, you will then need to identify or establish at least one contact, which just means a person in your network, who can refer you for a position at each company you’re interested in. You’ll probably still be asked to submit a resume and interview, but those things may not happen until the very end of the process.

The old job search, while very straight-forward, was also pretty haphazard. The new job search requires much more planning before you ever get to the point of formally applying for jobs. There are different ways you can choose to structure your job search plan, but in this module we will be covering a suggested job search plan that you can use as a guide. (show 7 steps outline here)

**Becoming Employable (video clip 3)**

Before we talk about each of the steps, there’s one last thing that’s important to keep in mind, which is that getting a job isn’t just about your job search strategy, it’s about how employable you make yourself during your time in college. In addition to a degree and your technical skills, employers care about your professional skills and your experiences outside the classroom. Make College Count and make yourself employable by completing internships, getting involved in relevant professional organizations, and taking advantage of other opportunities such as Service Learning, student clubs and organizations, volunteering, research, study abroad, student jobs, and class projects to hone your professional skills, gain experience to showcase, and build your network.

The sooner you start, the better, but keep in mind that it’s never too late to boost your employability, even if you’re in your final semester. Now is the time to make a plan to fill in any remaining gaps in your qualifications!

**Step 1: Define Your Goal (video clip 4)**

The fact that most jobs are never advertised means that you have to *know what you’re looking for* in order to find it. Therefore, assessing yourself and your goals is a necessary first step in any job search. You’ll need to work on figuring out what type of work you want to do, what type of organization you want to work for, what you want and need in a job, what skills, strengths, experiences, and other qualifications you have, what sets you apart from others, and what *unique* contribution you could make to a company.

If you still need to do more work on assessing yourself and defining (or refining) your goal, the Career Center has plenty of resources to help, such as career counseling, our career planning modules and our career planning handout, our “What Can I Do With This Major?” documents, and our Career and Job Market Research webpage. Go to career.boisestate.edu for more information.

**Video Slide 3**

*Don Slater, Swire Coca-Cola:* “Know who you are. And knowing who you are, and having that honest, candidate conversation with yourself of what I can do, what I’m skillful at, what I’m not, what I’m scared of, what I need more development on, knowing that dichotomy and answering those questions in your head honestly, will set yourself up so you can go after (the second part of answering the question), know who you are, but then know what you want., and passionately go after what you want.”

**Activity Slides 1-6**

(Audio) Assess your progress in Step 1 of the Job Search Process. Rate yourself on each of the objectives of Step 1 by selecting the statement that fits best. This is just for you, so be very honest with yourself here, looking for opportunities to further define a given area.

**Step 2: Build Your Brand (video clip 5)**

When you hear the term “brand,” you probably think of a company’s brand. But today’s job search requires having a “*personal* brand.” Just like a company’s brand is what they’re known for, your personal brand is your professional reputation – it’s what YOU are known for. In a job search, you are marketing yourself, so you have to think like a marketing professional would. In this step, that means determining what you want to be known for by potential employers and professionals in your career field. Using the results of your self-assessment in Step 1, *especially* what sets you apart from others and what unique contribution you could make to an employer, you will need to build a clear, consistent marketing message that will show employers “why YOU.”

We’ll talk about promoting your brand in Step 5, but for more assistance with building and promoting your brand, see the Personal Branding and Your Online Presence module.

**Activity Slides 7-8**

(Audio) Your brand needs to represent *you*, but it also needs to really fit the type of work you want to do. Pretend you are a hiring manager trying to fill the position below. Read the position summary, then go to the next page to see three candidates, all with strong brands summarized by a few adjectives, and decide which of the three you’d prefer to hire for this job.

**Step 3: Find and Research Companies (video clip 6)**

Now that you know what you want to do and what you have to offer, it’s time to start exploring where you could work. Remember, you’re NOT going to do this by just looking at what companies have open positions posted. Your goal is simply to find out what companies you COULD potentially work for should a position become available, and which of those companies you would WANT to work for. At the end of this step, you’ll have a list of companies you plan to target in your job search, which you’ll use to strategically network and seek out opportunities in those companies.

To find companies you might work for without relying on job postings, you’ll need to be a little creative. Start by identifying criteria that will help you focus your search, such as where you want to live or what industry you want to work in, and use those things to guide where and how you look for companies.

One of the resources you might use is LinkedIn’s company search feature, which allows you to find companies by location, industry, and size.

Another is states’ Department of Labor sites, which sometimes provide lists of employers in that state. For example, the Idaho Department of Labor provides searchable lists of all businesses in the state via the Idaho Career Information System site, which you can access from the Career Center website. You can also find the links to all 50 states’ Department of Labor sites on the Career Center website.

Another resource, if you are looking in a specific geographic area, is local chamber of commerce sites.

Of course, don’t forget about the professional organizations for the career field you plan on going into! Some of these organization’s sites may provide resources or tips for identifying relevant companies. Network with professionals in those organizations online via their website or LinkedIn group, and in person at events, and ask questions about the best companies to target in your job search.

Don’t forget to ask the rest of your network for suggestions as well, including professors, classmates, coworkers, friends, and relatives.

Career fairs, such as the Boise State University Career Fair, also provide an opportunity to identify companies you might be interested in.

Once you’ve identified companies you could possibly work for, begin researching those companies. Review the information available on their websites, follow them on social media, search online for articles, and find them on sites like Glassdoor where employees discuss their experiences with the company.

As you’re conducting your research, use your self-assessment from Step 1 to evaluate how well each company might fit what you’re looking for, and work on determining what needs the company might have that you could meet based on your qualifications. Finally, compile a list of your target companies.

**Video Slide 4**

*Tracey Stone, MassMutual Idaho Recruiting Director:* “Research the company so that you know exactly what that position is, not just ‘I want a job,’ ‘just over broke’ – ‘I want a career.’ You know, how can I really show that I’m interested in you. You know, we’re looking for those candidates, but those candidates should be looking for us. They should be interviewing us as much as we interview them. That’s the kind of candidate I want, somebody who knows about who I am, knows about my company, and is invested enough to take the time to research us before they come to my door. I’m doing it for them, I was expect the same from them.”

**Activity Slide 9**

(Audio) Let’s take a little closer look at the process you’ll go through. Based on whatever you already know today about your goals, start by thinking of three companies or organizations you think you might like to work for, and type them in the spaces below. You’ll use this information again a little later.

**Step 4: Formulate a Networking Plan (video clip 7)**

Remember that you want to have at least one contact at each company you’re targeting in your job search, so that you find out about openings and can get referred for them. Now that you know *where* you’d like to work, it’s time to plan out how you’re going to *get* those contacts.

Networking doesn’t need to be intimidating, even if you’re an introvert or hate the idea of networking. In this step, you will formulate a networking plan so that you are able to be *strategic* and *focus* your networking efforts on connecting with the people it is most important for you to be connected to.

Your best professional contacts are the people who have seen your work, such as an internship supervisor, but to establish the kind of relationship that might lead to a referral with someone you *don’t* already know, the best thing you can do is conduct informational interviews. An informational interview is simply an informational meeting with a professional in which you ask for information or advice about the person’s job, company, or career field. The purpose is informational – use it to gain insight and insider tips in your job search, but the secondary benefit is networking. It’s a way to get people you don’t know to sit down and talk with you about your goals, and most professionals love to talk with students. There are tricks to doing this effectively, though, and the Career Center’s Job Search Process handout, which you can get on our website, has a full page of tips and sample questions.

In this step, identify people you can contact for informational interviews by doing the following.

Start by using your existing network. Ask everyone if they know someone who works in one of your target companies (even if that person is in a different field). Use your LinkedIn account to find 2nd and 3rd degree connections and group members who work at those companies. If you’ve exhausted your current network and still have companies left on your list, search online for names and contact information of employees at those companies, ideally trying to find people in positions similar to what *you* hope to do.

**Video Slide 5**

*Tracey Stone, MassMutual Idaho Recruiting Director:* “What’s nice about an informational interview is if that student is attractive to me, what I will do is refer that student out when I hear about a job. So I’ve had cases where someone has come in for an informational interview, they’ve brought me their resume, then at the end of that, I’ve referred that particular person out, and then they get a job with where I’ve referred them out to. I’ve had it happen with several different large companies, where I’ve called the person up, and the most recent was Idaho Power. The gal came in and we knew it wasn’t the right fit for MY company. I said ‘tell me more about what you’re looking for’ and she said ‘there’s this great position that I’m looking at.’ This is the networking part – I got her resume and that job description on the HR person’s desk over at that company and she was hired on.”

**Activity Slides 10-15**

(Audio) Now you’ll get a chance to think about what kinds of connections you may already have to the three organizations you said you were potentially interested in working for. Begin by selecting which of the three scenarios below best describes how you’re currently connected to the company shown at the top of this page.

**Step 5: Get Out There (video clip 8)**

Now that you’ve done all of your prep work, it’s time to get yourself out there – network, promote your brand, and make yourself known. The more visible you are within your career field, the more job opportunities will become available to you.

Conduct all of your informational interviews. If you haven’t already, join all of the relevant local and national professional organizations for your career field, and attend all of their meetings, events, and conferences that you’re able to. Consider joining other local organizations as well, such as Boise Young Professionals. Attend career fairs and other professional networking events at Boise State and in the community.

Build your online presence and promote your brand. You want everyone in your field to know who you are and what you have to offer. Establish a strong presence using LinkedIn and other social media sites and e-Portfolios. Engage with others in your field, make a name for yourself, and establish credibility by writing a professional blog or creating a YouTube channel, participating in discussions on relevant message boards and in LinkedIn groups, and posting relevant articles.

Of course, don’t forget that part of getting yourself out there is *the actual work you do in your career field*. Intern, volunteer, and make sure your brand is consistent in how you present yourself.

For more assistance with this step, see the Personal Branding and Your Online Presence module.

**Video Slide 6**

*Kristin McGee, J.R. Simplot Company Recruiter: “*Use your network. Make sure that you have contacts ready. Go to career fairs, go to BYP events, join clubs at your university, make connections through that.”

**Video Slide 7**

*Richard Gines, Hewlett-Packard: “*For me, the most important aspect of trying to find a candidate is being able to meet them in person. So I go to career fairs because I can tell from looking at a person in-person, you know, whether they might be a candidate I’d like to learn more about. Whereas if I look through stuff online, you know, it’s a lot of time sifting through and not even really knowing how they represent themselves, so the online submission is my last resort. So going to career fairs and being able to meet people in-person allows me to have a better assessment of whether we want to talk more with them.”

**Video Slide 8**

*Michelle George, Idaho State Police Human Resource Specialist Senior:* “You don’t know when opportunity is going to come knocking. I have seen it and I’ve experienced it as well, how, not even when you’re looking, what things can happen because people know who you are. They know the quality you bring. You know, you always want to make sure your credibility is very close to your heart.”

**Step 6: Identify Opportunities (video clip 9)**

Finally, the part you’ve been waiting for – you now get to look for specific job opportunities. Follow up with each of your contacts and make sure they know that you are ready to start applying for positions, and ask them to notify you of any relevant opening that come up in their company, or other opportunities they hear about and think you might be interested in. When applying for a position, if you have a strong relationship with your contact at that company, ask if they would be willing to speak with the hiring manager about you.

Also monitor the “careers” page of your target companies’ websites so you don’t miss any formal job posting or application procedures. Remember that if posted at all, jobs may only be posted on the company’s own site and nowhere else. Check each company’s site once a week.

In this step, you may also want to keep an eye on other job posting sites as well, for other possible opportunities you weren’t targeting, such as BroncoJobs, which you can access from the Career Center website.

**Video Slide 9**

*Tracey Stone, MassMutual Idaho Recruiting Director:* “Let’s say that you’re looking for a job at one of the companies here in town, and you know somebody who works for that company. They, then, will be able to get your resume with that particular job posting, get it to the person who’s in charge of looking at those resumes. So, I always recommend that if you find a job that you like online, find out who you know that works there. Say, ’listen, here’s the job I’m looking for, here’s my resume, could you just set it on that HR person’s desk, so I have the opportunity to at least get in the pool,’ because if you just post and pray, you probably won’t even be seen.”

**Step 7: Be an Impressive Applicant (video clip 10)**

All those traditional aspects of the job search still matter – having a strong, targeted resume for each position, having well-written cover letters that explain why you’re the best person for the job, and being able to show in an interview that you’re the right fit. Hone those skills with the modules on resumes, cover letters, and interviewing, see the handouts on our website, or come visit us at the Career Center.

**Job Search Timeline (video clip 11)**

After learning about the steps involved in today’s job search process, you’ve probably already figured out that waiting until you graduate to start your search is NOT going to be a good idea! Unlike the old job search, which was a relatively short process, the new job search involves a lot of prep work that you would ideally at least start on early in college. Try to really kick your search into gear by the beginning of your final year, though, by seriously working through 1-5. By the start of your final semester, you’re ready to begin formally applying for positions. Don’t wait, because it often takes several months to secure a position once you start actively applying.

**Closing (video clip 12)**

Remember that the Career Center is here to help you Make College Count, and get a job when you graduate! Visit our website, access the Job Search Process handout, use our links to job market information and job search resources, attend our career fairs and other networking events, use your BroncoJobs account, and come see us if you need one-on-one help with your job search strategy. To maximize your future employability, connect with us early in your time here at Boise State. Come see us, connect with us on social media, visit our website, and let us help you Make College Count!