

# STAGES OF THE JOB SEARCH

A **job search** aims to match needs and interests to help *both* the candidate and the organization flourish. Below are stages of a successful search—and considerations within each stage—to help candidates simultaneously identify forums of interest and prepare for interviews.

## KNOW THE INDUSTRY/FIELD

Understand the industry at large by answering:

- When and why did the field begin, how has it evolved, and what are prospects for its future?
- Which trends have excited participants, and which have been less favorably received?
- Which organizations, teams, and individuals have stood out most in the field, and why?
- What are some of the greatest challenges facing the industry and its participants today?

## KNOW THE POSITION

Identify what makes this forum for doing work in the field unique by answering:

- What education, training, skills, values, and mindsets are mandatory—and which are nice-to-have—for the position?
- What tasks—short-term, long-term, one-time, ongoing—does the position entail?
- How is work to be done for the position, and what resources, if any, are available to do it?
- When, how, and by whom will the work be evaluated?
- What opportunities does the position offer, when do they become available, when and how are they assigned, and by whom?
- What's the typical trajectory of people who have held this position in this particular organization?

## VERIFY RECEIPT OF MATERIALS

If you don't get an auto-confirmation of your materials' receipt and you don't hear whether your materials have been received within 7–10 business days, email or call the organization to verify it has, in fact, received your application; if, however, the job posting specifies “no calls,” skip this step.

## INTERVIEW

Participate in initial and follow-up interviews to learn where and how you could help each other achieve mutually rewarding goals. To do so, listen, observe, and ask questions. Remember: you're interviewing the organization, too.

## GET JOB OFFER

Be enthusiastic and thank the representative for the offer. But... *before* committing to anything, ask for a day or so to think about it. Even if it's your dream position, you want to make sure the position is the best match for you at this time, and the only way to do so is to clarify the requirements before indicating your decision.

## NEGOTIATE OFFER

After getting an offer and *before* giving a response, discuss aspects of the offer that raise concerns; the conversation may involve salary, but it could also concern start date, moving expenses, projects and opportunities, training and support, flex time, and so on. Remember: Once you accept the position—even tentatively—negotiations close.

## THANK SUPPORTERS

Thank those who gave advice, recommendations, support, and other assistance during your search.

## KNOW YOURSELF

Generate 250–300 word answers to the following:

- Who am I?
- What have I done?
- What do I want to do?
- Why do I want to do it?
- Where do I want to work?
- What are my short- and long-term goals?

Your entry point for each question will tell prospective employers a lot about you.

## KNOW THE ORGANIZATION

Discover how a particular organization fits into the industry by answering:

- What does the company do, how, and why?
- What is the organization's history, mission, and target audience(s)?
- Who leads the organization at local, national, and global levels, and what are their values?
- What are the firm's short- and long-term objectives?
- What do clients/customers, current and former employees, and others in the industry say about the organization?
- Where does the organization excel, and where is there most room for improvement?
- When do various positions become available, where are they advertised, and how do candidates apply?

## APPLY FOR THE POSITION

Submit a cover letter and résumé highlighting ways you can help the particular organization achieve its goals (which, ideally, you share) and experiences you could bring to that work.

## PREPARE FOR INTERVIEWS

Continue to gather and review information on the organization, keeping a running list of ways you could contribute, as well as questions that arise. Get industry-appropriate interview attire, prepare any supplementary materials organizations may want (e.g., writing samples, portfolio), and practice answering interview questions.

## SEND THANK-YOU NOTES

Send a thank you to *each* individual with whom you had a meaningful exchange about the position, team, or larger organization—within 24 hours.

## CLARIFY REQUIREMENTS

Verify you understand what the position entails to ensure it is a position you are willing to do in the way the organization wants it done. Then, recap key tasks and responsibilities and ask if your understanding is accurate.

## ACCEPT OFFER

Accept offer and complete any documents the organization needs to confirm the appointment.

## DECLINE OTHER OFFERS

Notify *all* companies you've applied to that, having accepted another position, you're formally pulling your application from further consideration.

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