

Finding your dream job takes many steps and involves just as many decisions. This checklist is designed to help you along the way and guide you to the appropriate sources. Be sure to discuss your progress with your career advisor.

KNOWING WHAT YOU WANT

- Choose your ideal work environment – large corporation, small business, government agency or non-profit organization.
- Choose your ideal location – urban, suburban or rural.
- List your three most useful job skills and know which is your strongest.
- Know if you want to work with others or work alone.
- Know whether you enjoy new projects or prefer following a regular routine.
- List some of the main career fields which might interest you.
- List your favorite leisure-time activities.
- Know what kind of reward is most important to you in a job – money, security, creative authority, etc.

RESEARCHING CAREER OPTIONS

- Develop a list of career possibilities to research.
- Visit the Career Services Library to learn about various careers. The *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* and the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* are valuable resources.
- Consider whether your desired career requires an advanced degree.
- Keep up with current trends in your field through trade publications and news/business magazines and newspapers.
- Identify employers interested in interviewing someone with your academic background and experience; create a list of three or more employers in the field you are considering.
- Make at least three professional contacts through friends, relatives, professors, or association meetings to learn more about your field of interest.
- Meet with faculty and alumni who work or who have worked in your field to talk about available jobs and the outlook for your field.

GETTING EXPERIENCE

- Narrow down the career options you are considering through course work and personal research.

- Participate in a work experience or internship program in your chosen field to learn of the daily requirements of the careers you are considering. Such assignments often lead to job offers following graduation.
- Become an active member in one or more professional associations. (Consult the Encyclopedia of Associations for organizations in your field.)
- Volunteer for a community or charitable organization to gain further work experience. Volunteer positions can and should be included on your resume.

CREATING A RESUME

- If used, form a clear job objective.
- Know how your skills and experience support your objective.
- Use action verbs to highlight your accomplishments.
- Limit your resume to one page and make sure it is free of misspelled words and grammatical errors.
- Create your resume on a word processing program and have it printed on neutral-colored paper, preferably white, light gray or beige.
- Compose a separate cover letter to accompany each resume and address the letter to a specific person. Avoid sending a letter which begins "Dear Sir/Madam."

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Arrange informational interviews with employees from companies with which you might want to interview. Use your network of acquaintances to schedule these meetings.
- Thoroughly research each employer with whom you have an interview – be familiar with product lines, services offered and growth prospects.
- Practice your interview technique with friends to help prepare for the actual interview.
- Using the information you have gathered, formulate questions to ask the employer during the interview.
- Arrive on time in professional business attire.
- Collect the needed information to write a thank you letter after each interview.

Compliments of Cass Communication