

Christians are Networking Workbook



A Jobs Ministry Sponsored by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington

Version 3.0

Acknowledgements and Dedications

We want to thank the many volunteers who like Simon the Cyrenian are willing to carry the cross for those impacted by our nation's current economic crisis.

Finally, we dedicate this handbook to all job seekers. Some, like Jesus in St. John's gospel, may be able to bear their crosses by themselves. For you, we offer prayerful support of your efforts. Others however, like Jesus in the synoptic gospels, may need to accept help under the weight of their unemployment burdens. For you, we offer ourselves in prayerful service, so that daily you may carry your cross well and ultimately see the revelation of God's plan for you.

Letter from Bishop Loverde



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

It is with great enthusiasm and above all, hope, that I write to encourage the efforts of Christians Are Networking (CAN). I am particularly pleased to see Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington sponsoring a ministry for the benefit of those in search of meaningful employment. This new program embodies my continuing and fervent desire to enliven Catholic social justice in ways that strengthen individuals, families and communities and exemplify the humble privilege of serving those in economic need.

CAN focuses on discerning the state of life to which Our Heavenly Father has called our job seekers. It enriches their employment journey with the prayerful service of fellow Catholics, who serve as career mentors and ministers in the identification of potential job opportunities. Its mission is to embolden job seekers that they may carry their crosses well and, ultimately, experience the wonderful revelation of God's plan in their lives.

I started this letter by mentioning hope. I speak often of the need for all of us to be people of hope. How prescient was our Holy Father when, during his visit last year to Washington, D.C., he reminded us of "*Christ our Hope*." In the midst of our current economic challenges, my dear brothers and sisters, we must reflect and pray for this gift of hope and share it with all we meet so that we may be leaven within our communities and workplace.

Like many of you, my life has been deeply impacted by individuals from the "Greatest Generation." As inspiring as these people have been in my life, I have great hope and optimism when I witness today's faithful responding in efforts like CAN. May future generations be inspired by our response to this present economic climate and may they find us to be people of faith and, above all, hope.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul S. Loverde". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Most Reverend Paul S. Loverde
Bishop of Arlington

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Arlington's Christians are Networking (CAN). CAN is a very real symbol of Catholic Charities' mission *seeking to implement the Church's mission of social justice ...in ways that strengthen individuals, families and communities.*

Our goal is to help you become all that God wants you to be. Our purpose is to provide ministry and support to people who are seeking employment or considering a career change.

Created in God's image, we were given the mandate to transform the earth. By their work people share in God's creating activity... Awareness that our work is a sharing in God's work ought to permeate even the most ordinary daily activities.
~ Pope John Paul II

We offer:

- ❖ A module based handbook to help you develop your own personal marketing plan focused on where God is calling you.
- ❖ A support group where participants exchange networking ideas and offer moral and prayer support.
- ❖ Consultation regarding job-seeking skill development in such areas as resume refining and development, Internet searches, networking, marketing yourself, and interviewing techniques.

What We Can Do For You

CAN:

- ❖ Provides a weekly meeting for pursuing relevant CAN services.
- ❖ Offers support, nurturing, and advice.
- ❖ Provides consultation for skill development or job search developmental needs, based on the needs of each participant.
- ❖ Provides training - in private consultation and at the meeting - in networking skills, with access to relevant network sources in business, government, ministry, and not-for-profit organizations, as appropriate.

What We Cannot Do For You

CAN does not:

- ❖ Provide jobs or job lists.
- ❖ Facilitate employment placement.

- ❖ Provide networking sources to ensure employment.
- ❖ Ensure that networking sources will be supportive, relevant, or helpful to each individual's search.
- ❖ Provide monetary support or transportation to the meetings.

What You Agree To Do

Remember: This is your job search. CAN will assist you in any way we can, but you will need to invest a lot of time and energy into your job search. *You* must be willing to identify job leads, develop your job search documentation and marketing plan, make telephone calls, build your network of contacts, go to appointments (job interviews, informational interviews, etc.) and generally commit yourself to the hard work of finding a job.

When you participate in CAN, you agree to:

- ❖ Respect the confidentiality of all participants in the meeting.
- ❖ Complete all agreed upon assignments.
- ❖ Approach network contacts with the highest regard and courtesy, with no demand for employment.
- ❖ Treat all prospective employees, network appointments, and participants in the ministry gently and with dignity, honor, and respect.
- ❖ Comply with the rules and procedures of the ministry.

CAN Services are Free

There is no monetary charge. But, we do ask that you come back and share with others your experience, God's work in your life, and ask that you help someone else once you have landed a position.

Getting Started

For many, beginning a job search seems like an overwhelming and daunting task. Beyond the emotions, you may find yourself faced with many questions:

- ❖ What do I want to do? What should I be doing?
- ❖ What tasks and activities are necessary for a successful outcome?
- ❖ Where do I start?

Our goal at CAN is to provide support and encourage you to network and benefit from the experience of the volunteers and other participants as you search.

Jesus did not come to explain away suffering or remove it. He came to fill it with His presence. ~ Paul Claudel

Your search is a project and will need to be managed. There will be many phases to your search, from discovering the role you are called to do, marketing yourself, asking for God to intercede, and measuring your success in completing tasks.

Finding a Job the Catholic Way

God has a plan for you—or, rather, *you* have a place in God’s Plan. The Bible speaks of God’s Plan as “the Kingdom of God.” Jesus came to proclaim the Kingdom of God. After His Baptism, He went first to His own town and entering the synagogue, took up the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah where it is written:

Seek you first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. ~ Matthew 6:33

God’s kingdom is a kingdom where all have hope and His plan is a plan in which you can play your role in transforming this world into the sort of place that God wills it to be—a world where all can reasonably hope for the share of this world’s goods that their heavenly Father wishes for them. God doesn’t have only a job for you—*He has a vocation for you*. This is your opportunity to find it.

Some suggestions to meditate on:

- ❖ Recognize that God has a plan and a place for you in that plan.
- ❖ Pray over your anger, your fear, your sense of rejection or failure, and your disappointment.
- ❖ Invite others to pray with you and for you.
- ❖ Ask the prayers of your parish community.
- ❖ Supported by prayer and Christian fellowship, relax, and put your trust in God.

Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6

Remember: You are God’s handiwork. He created your innermost being and knit you together in your mother’s womb. You are fearfully and *wonderfully* made. You have been given work-related Gifts that have been chosen specifically for you. God desires for you to use the gifts He has given you. Working out His Plan will bring you satisfaction, will bless and enable you to serve others effectively, and will bring glory to God. To make good career decisions, you must have a thorough knowledge of your personality, skills, abilities, interests and values (See Module 1). Without this knowledge, you are not fully equipped to make good career decisions. Our goal is to help you discover His path.

Prayer

Prayer is a relationship that you have with God. Like all relationships, it is built on communication. Prayer places us in God's presence and opens the deepest chambers of our hearts to Him, allowing Him to change us. Prayer draws us closer to God, helping us realize that we depend on Him for *everything*. This relationship, as we pursue it, will result in your having peace of heart and mind.

So I tell you: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. ~ Luke 11:9-10

Are you willing to take a few minutes every morning? Not five mornings out of seven. Not six out of seven. But, seven out of seven! Ask God to help you: "Lord, I want to meet You first thing in the morning for a few minutes. Tomorrow when the alarm goes off, I have an appointment with You."

Your morning prayer might be, "*Morning by morning, O Lord, You hear my voice; morning by morning I lay my requests before You and wait in expectation.*" ~ Psalm 5:3

Often, people do not pray. They find themselves caught up in "I don't know what to say." Prayer is not a show for God; it is a way of communication between you and God. It is personal and private. God created and designed us to relate to Him! Prayer is talking to someone we love.

There are four dimensions to prayer; remember "ACTS":

A: Adoration. This is the purest kind of prayer because it is all for God – there is nothing in it for you. You do not barge into the presence of a King. You begin with a proper and respectful attitude. So, worship Him. Acknowledge his greatness, but also remember God is a loving father and Jesus is our faithful brother. Tell the Lord that you love Him. Reflect on God's greatness, on God's power, on God's majesty and sovereignty, but also reflect on the deep love He has for you and His desire for you to be happy!

C: Confession. Standing in the Presence of God, we now want to be sure every sin is confessed and forgiven. We come to the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be assured of God's having put our sins behind us—and Him. We need to look into our hearts, every day, and confess our faults and failures. We need to ask for His pardon.

Confession comes from a root word meaning "to put our faith with someone." We put our faith with God. We have enough faith in God to trust Him to forgive any sin, if only we are truthful about it. We don't have to lie to God. He knows us better than we know ourselves. So we need to stand before Him in complete honesty and complete humility, naming our sins and asking for His pardon.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
~ Romans 8:38-39

T: Thanksgiving. Everyone likes to be thanked for what they have done for others. Acknowledgement of time and effort is important in showing appreciation. God, of course, requires neither time nor effort, but He wants us to have “an attitude of gratitude.” So express your gratitude to God. In your prayers, name specific things to thank Him for your family and friends, your possessions and health, your church, ministry and other responsibilities. Thank Him for hardships; these “thorns” are a fellowship of pain with Him who suffered for your salvation.

In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.
~ 1 Thessalonians 5:18

S: Supplication. This means to “ask for, earnestly and humbly.” This is the part of your prayer life where you make your petitions known to Him. Ask for others, then for yourself. Remember to pray for others who, like you, are searching to find God’s plan.

Remember to pray for those whose situation is even more serious than your own. Pray for the sick, the homeless, and all those in need. Pray for the needs of the Church — especially for vocations to the religious life and to the priesthood. Include other people around the world, such as the Pope, missionaries, our military, students studying abroad, friends in distant places, and, above all, the people of many lands who have yet to hear about Jesus Christ.

Remember to listen. Too many people have a one-way conversation with God. He knows already what is in your heart, but He takes the time to listen to you. It is more important that we hear what is in *His* heart. So an important part of our prayer is learning to sit back and quiet yourself and your surroundings. He doesn’t speak in thunder but in *silence*. Learn how to be silent in His presence and let Him get a word in edgewise in your prayer.

Do it *not* because other people are doing it, *not* as a spiritless duty, but because God has granted us the priceless privilege of being His friend.

Dear Father, I need You. I acknowledge that I have been directing my own life and that, as a result, I have failed. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins. I now invite Christ to again take His place as the Lord of my life. I pray that my heart will be willing to follow the guidance of Your Holy Spirit. I pray this in the name of Jesus. As an expression of my faith, I thank You for directing my life and for filling me with the Holy Spirit.

For the Catholic, God and His Will must always be your focus. We have our needs and wants, but we can’t allow them to distract us from God’s plan for us. The things we really need - and should really want - are the things that God has in store for us.

Do you think that when you pray and ask God for the things you need - or think you need – that your words change God’s mind? Prayer is meant to change *your* heart ...not God’s mind. Know that God

will *always* provide the best answer for you! When we listen to God, in prayer, He will change us, our hopes, our plans and the desires of our hearts.

May there be peace within me today.
May I trust God that I am exactly where I am meant to be.
May I not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.
May I use the gifts that I have received, and pass on the love that has been given to me.
May I be confident knowing that I am a child of God.
Let His presence settle into my bones, and allow my soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.
It is there for each and every one of us.

Other Job Search and Career Tools

Below is a sampling of resources to help you in your job search or career transition.

Note: None of these listed resources are endorsed by Catholic Charities or CAN. This list is provided solely for your convenience.

- ❖ Finding Work Without Losing Heart, Bill Byron, S.J.
- ❖ What Color Is Your Parachute? Richard Nelson Bolles
- ❖ Live Your Dreams, Les Brown
- ❖ The Complete Idiot's Guide to Changing Careers, William Charland, David E. Henderson
- ❖ How to Get a Job in 90 Days or Less, Matthew J. DeLuca
- ❖ Job Searching Online, Pam Dixon
- ❖ The Complete Idiot's Guide to Getting the Job You Want, Marc Dorio, Rosemary Maniscalco
- ❖ The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Perfect Interview, Marc Dorio, William Myers
- ❖ Career Planning, Lee Ellis
- ❖ The Complete Job Search Handbook, Howard Figler
- ❖ The Accelerated Job Search, Wayne D. Ford, Ph.D.
- ❖ How to Make Use of a Useless Degree, Andrew Frothingham
- ❖ Job Hunting for Dummies, Robert Half, Max Messmer, Jr.
- ❖ Career Change: Everything You Need to Know to Meet New Challenges and Take Control of Your Career, David P. Helfand
- ❖ Before You Say "I Quit!" Diane Holloway, Ph.D., Nancy Bishop
- ❖ God's Little Instruction Book for Graduates, Honor Books, Inc.
- ❖ The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Perfect Cover Letter, Susan Ireland
- ❖ The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Perfect Resume, Susan Ireland
- ❖ The Job Seeker's Guide to Socially Responsible Companies, Katherine Jankowski
- ❖ Cover Letters for Dummies, Joyce Lian Kennedy
- ❖ Job Search Kit for Dummies (audio), Joyce Lian Kennedy (Reader), Polly Adams (Narrator)
- ❖ Resumes for Dummies, Joyce Lian Kennedy
- ❖ The Career Coach, Carol Kleimans
- ❖ Change Your Job, Change Your Life, Ronald L. Krannich, Ph.D.
- ❖ Welcome to the Real World, Stacy Kravetz
- ❖ College Grad Job Hunter, Brian D. Krueger, CPC (Certified Placement Counselor)

- ❖ The New Rules of the Job Search Game, Jackie Larson & Cheri Comstock
- ❖ Professional's Private Sector Job Finder, Daniel Lauber
- ❖ Non-Profits & Education Job Finder, Daniel Lauber
- ❖ The Pathfinder: How to Choose or Change Your Career for a Lifetime of Satisfaction and Success, Nicholas Lore
- ❖ Rites of Passage at \$100,000+, John Lucht
- ❖ Insider's Guide to Finding a Job in Washington, Bruce Maxwell
- ❖ Kiplinger's Survive & Profit from a Mid-Career Change, Daniel Moreau
- ❖ Consulting for Dummies, Bob Nelson, Peter Economy
- ❖ The Complete Idiot's Guide to Starting Your Own Business, Ed Paulson, Marcia Layton
- ❖ Job Hunting for the Utterly Confused, Jason R. Rich
- ❖ Life 101, John Roger & Peter McWilliams
- ❖ Total Life Management, Bob Shank
- ❖ The Complete Idiot's Guide to Starting a Home-Based Business, Barbara Weltman
- ❖ Through the Brick Wall, Kate Wendleton
- ❖ Don't Send a Resume and Other Contrarian Rules to Help Land a Great Job, Jeffrey J. Fox
- ❖ Dig Your Well Before You're Thirsty The Only Networking Book You'll Ever Need, Harvey Mackay
- ❖ Knock 'Em Dead, Martin Yate

MODULE 1: FINDING YOUR PURPOSE AND VOCATION

Finding Your Purpose

God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission – I may never be told it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I have a part in this great work; I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught.

~ Cardinal John Henry Newman

Some of the greatest people in history have been great because they had the ability to read a situation and they responded differently than their contemporaries. Where most saw chaos, they saw opportunity. Where most were paralyzed, they were energized and focused in their response. Seeing opportunity within the chaos allowed them to find new and wonderful responses to their situation.

Many see today's dire economic situation in paralyzing terms. There are a few, however, who see it as an opportunity to reflect on where they've been and determine where they are to go. In fact, it can become time to pursue what they've always wanted, but were afraid. It can be a liberating time, rather than a time of paralysis.

The first step in this process is one of discernment and reflection. What is my purpose and direction? Cardinal Newman was right when he said that God created you for a unique purpose. Embrace this economic crisis as an opportunity to find your unique purpose. It will provide you with a powerful advantage over many other job seekers.

You are not looking for a job. You are seeking your vocation and this can make all the difference in the world!

Step 1: Completing the Purpose Diagram

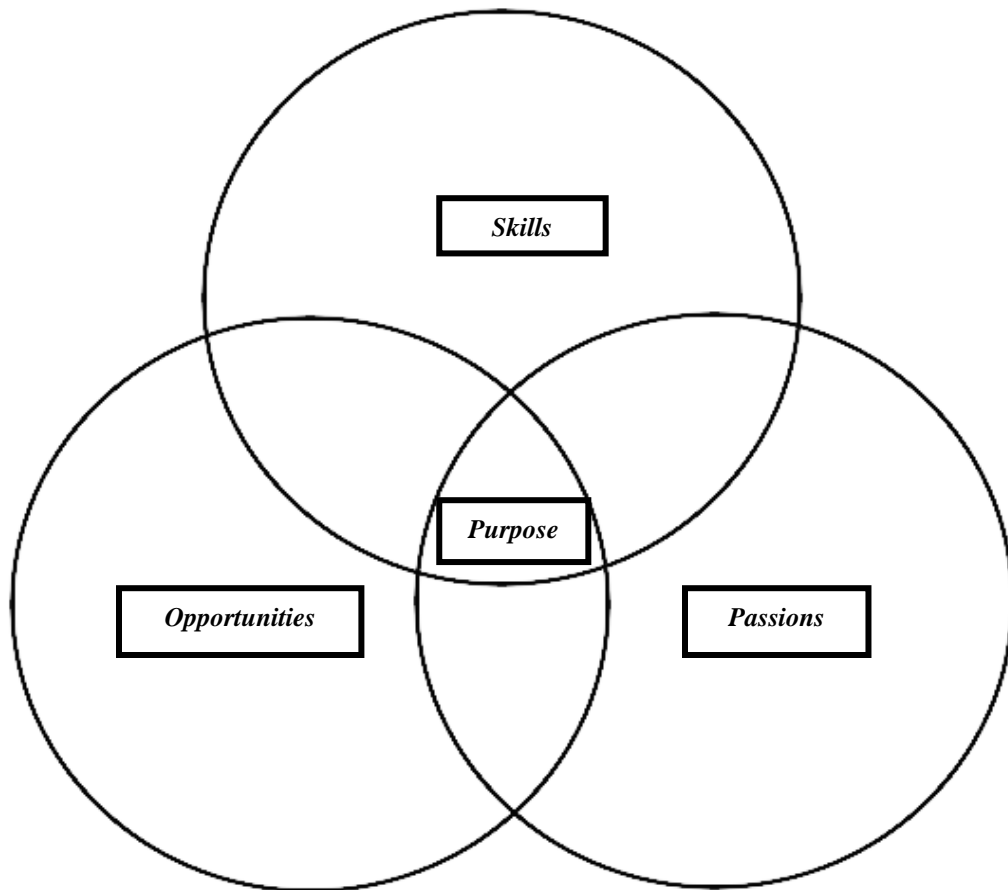
Below is a diagram (Exhibit 1.1) that – once completed - will assist you in finding your purpose.

Completion of this diagram involves discernment and reflection in three areas:

- ❖ What are your skills or talents?
- ❖ What activities/situations create the most passion for you?
- ❖ Where do you see the greatest opportunities?

By answering these questions, you will complete each of the circles. Through a process of reflection and discernment, some common themes between these three circles will emerge. The intersection point of your skills, passions and opportunities, will help define your purpose.

Exhibit 1.1



Step 2: What are your Skills?

Your talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God.
~ Leo Buscaglia

Most of us are born with an innate awareness of our gifts and talents. Things that come easily to us are often nourished and nurtured. In an effort to fit in or not appear boastful, we may lose track of these talents. We may take them for granted and assume that everyone has these abilities. The first step in better understanding our purpose is to *recreate* that innate awareness of the talents and gifts God has given us.

In discovering your strengths, which are your skills and abilities, you may want to use the skills list provided below (Exhibit 1.2). We suggest that you to give this same list to five-to-seven people, who know you well, and ask them to identify your strengths without having seen your self-assessment. Sometimes our most powerful reflection of who we are comes from the mirror of our friend's feedback.

Exhibit 1.2 – Skills List

Skills List

1. From the list of traits below, select 7 that are the best descriptors of *YOU*.
2. Prayerfully place them into a priority order.
3. Show the list to your friends and family. Ask them: “Which skill best defines me?” *Listen* to their feedback.
4. Put your top three or four answers into the appropriate circle in Exhibit 1.1.

Teaching	Analyzing	Managing conflict
Team building	Developing policy	Listening
Assessing performance	Surveying	Interviewing
Training	Conceptualizing	Relating to clients
Motivating	Designing	Selling
Helping others	Reviewing	Managing sales
Serving customers	Administering	Marketing
Responding promptly	Setting priorities	Managing sales
Handling complains	Restructuring	Analyzing markets
Setting standards	Developing work plans	Client relations
Measuring	Assigning	Editing
Gathering data	Categorizing	Facilitating
Computing	Taking inventory	Correcting
Assessing quality	Coaching	Following up
Research	Corresponding	Reporting
Advertising	Drawing	Auditing
Pricing	Writing	Budgeting
Promoting	Public speaking	Controlling
Counseling	Negotiating	Cost accounting
Fund raising	Mediating	Financial analysis
Managing finance		

Step 3: What are you Passionate About?

I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did.
~ Steve Jobs

Try to remember a time when you were working on a project or hobby and were so involved that you lost track of time. What were you doing? Have you ever been involved with a team of people who shared your vision and passion? In those times, it seemed as if anything was possible.

This exercise (Exhibit 1.3) is meant to help you remember those times in an effort to identify themes. Once you become more aware of what activities stir you to love what you do, you will not only find your purpose, but you will be located with a group of people who are like minded. A group of people

who not only love what they do, but create success because they believe in the work they are doing. It no longer becomes a job, but a vocation.

Exhibit 1.3 – Discover Your Passions

List the Things You Are Passionate About

1. First, discern your answers to the following questions. Spend some time with your answers. Pray about them and come back to them in a few days.

- ❖ How would you describe your strongest passions?
- ❖ When have you been most committed, passionate and enthusiastic?
- ❖ When have you been most creative?
- ❖ When have you been most sure of yourself and your decisions?
- ❖ What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment?
- ❖ When have other people considered you to be most successful?
- ❖ When have you enjoyed your work most?
- ❖ What talents were you relying on, and using, in these situations?
- ❖ For what would you take a very strong stand?
- ❖ What about the world puzzles or disturbs you that you could make an impact on?
- ❖ What jobs do you like to do at work when you have a choice?
- ❖ What activities are you drawn towards out of work?
- ❖ If money were no concern, what would you be doing?

2. Ask someone close to you to review your answers. Listen to their feedback.

3. Put them into a priority order. Put your top three or four answers into the circle in Exhibit 1.1.

#	Passions (in priority)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Step 4: Where do you see Opportunities?

When written in Chinese, the word "crisis" is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity. ~ John F. Kennedy

Earlier, we discussed the ability of great figures to see opportunity in the midst of chaos. The difference between the person who is paralyzed by chaos and the person who is energized by it is the gift of stepping outside the situation and finding the opportunity that is present in that moment. God calls each of us to be truly listening in these moments. Your response to that call is an increased awareness of the

opportunities, which exist, in this present moment. As Pope Benedict asked in his visit to America, “*What is God whispering to you?*”

Completing the questions found in Exhibit 1.4 will help you identify opportunities that may help in focusing where to concentrate your job search and refine your purpose.

Exhibit 1.4 – Identifying Opportunities

1. Look at relevant industry research and discern the answers to the following:
 - ❖ If someone offered me financial backing for a new business, what opportunity would I address?
 - ❖ What businesses do I most admire and why? What are they currently doing well and taking advantage of in their respective market?
 - ❖ What business is struggling in spite of implementing a strong plan? What could they adjust to be better positioned?
 - ❖ From your industry experience, what frustrates customers or users the most? Could these frustrations be resolved through another solution or offering?
 - ❖ From your industry experience, what does everybody think "won't work"? Asking questions about what others have thought impossible is a great way to get new ideas.
 - ❖ Where do I see the most job opportunities and for what type of skill sets? Are any relevant to me and can I focus my search in these areas?
 - ❖ Where are spending trends occurring? Which industries or businesses are forecasted to grow?
2. Spend some time with your answers. Pray about them and come back to them in a few days.
3. Ask someone you respect, who has relevance to some of these opportunities, to review them and give you some feedback. Listen to their feedback.
4. Place your list in priority order.

#	Opportunities (in priority)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Step 5: Putting it all Together

Now that you have your answers to Exhibits 1.2 - 1.4:

1. Put them into your respective circles (Exhibit 1.1).
2. Draw lines between similar answers and see if a common theme jumps out.
3. Place that common theme at the intersecting point.
4. Take this common theme to prayer. Let God speak to you ... illuminate you. Look at it over a period of days and try new purpose statements. Ask the opinions of others that you trust.
5. Do not be frustrated if it does not fall into place immediately. Have faith and trust that in the appropriate time, God will make it all clear to you.

Additional Resources:

Additional Resources:

Additional resources can be found on the internet. You may want to take advantage of vocational assessments available online.

The following sites offer online quizzes and other exercises to help you to match your interests, personality traits, and talents to the job market. You may even find that some will tell you that what you thought you wanted would not be the best fit for you. While most are free, some require registration or have a fee:

- * www.keirsey.com is a personality assessment instrument, the Kiersey Temperament Sorter-II. A preliminary assessment is free and more in-depth reports are available for a fee.
- * www.assessment.com advertises a Motivational Appraisal of Personal Potential and claims to match the client with careers, but the results of the free test do not provide those details. The free introductory test takes about 25 minutes with an option to purchase other packages for a fee.
- * www.self-directed-search.com/index.html offers a 20-30 minute test for a modest fee. The company theorizes that most people fit six types, with occupations and work environments being similarly grouped.
- * www.d.umn.edu/student/loon/car/self/career_transfer_survey.html provides a transferable skills survey for 1) communication, 2) research & planning, 3) human relations, 4) organization, management & leadership, and 5) work survival. While this website provides free and immediate results, it does not offer any help in interpreting the numerical scores.
- * www.free.typefocus.com is an on-line personality-type test. Clients must register to take the test and the results are sold in various packages, such as information on careers, relationships, leadership, and work-life balance.
- * www.onetonline.org O-Net Online is a partner of the Department of Labor's American Job Center Network. This site provides detailed explanations of occupations.
- * www.bls.gov/ooh is the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Occupational Outlook Handbook*.
- * www.rileyguide.com/careers/index.shtml provides information on careers, salary guidance, and needed educational credentials. It also provides suggestions for job research and guides for cover letters and resumes.

MODULE 2: RESUME WRITING

Even the best resume will not get you a job. Instead, it is a self-marketing tool used to secure an interview with a potential employer. As a marketing tool, what you submit should:

- ❖ Detail and summarize your accomplishments, skills, interests, work experience, special skills and strengths.
- ❖ Create a positive first impression.
- ❖ Entice the potential employer to want to learn more.

**I will prepare
and some day
my chance
will come.**

**~ Abraham
Lincoln**

Hiring professionals spend between 20 and 25 seconds screening a job seeker's resume. So it is imperative that a resume tells an employer, at a glance, what you can do and what you are good at. During this scan, employers review resumes for content, "keywords" and over-all appearance. Many employers now use software to screen for "keywords" so it is critical that your resume contain the same "keywords" as the job descriptions that you find most interesting.

Keyword Help

Use a word cloud (such as tagcrowd.com, wordle.com or taxedo.com) to identify keywords. Cut and paste the vacancy notice into the box, then hit the "Visualize" button. The site analyzes the vacancy notice for the keywords. The larger the word, the more often it was used in the vacancy notice. Next, cut and paste your resume into the box to see whether it addresses the same keywords.

Resume Rule #1: **Never lie, embellish or exaggerate.** But, it is also important not to be unnecessarily modest. If you can't sell yourself in your resume, you will not have the opportunity to sell yourself in an interview.

Resume Rule #2: Tell the prospective employer the story of you. It should answer these kinds of questions:

- ❖ What accomplishments made you the most proud?
- ❖ What have you done that made the difference?
- ❖ What does an employer get when they pick you and not someone else?

One-Size Does Not Fit All

If you want to grab a potential employer's attention, you need to give them what they want. *Expecting one resume to address the requirements of all employers is unlikely.* You need to customize your resume for each job opportunity to attract their interest.

Customization requires reviewing the job qualifications and credentials for each job posting and including them in your resume. Every job listing outlines the specific skills, credentials, education,

computer skills, etc. the employer needs for the job. This is the list of “keywords” in the posting. Every resume should reuse these keywords used in the job posting.

Organize each resume to highlight how your abilities match the needs of the posted job. The easiest way to accomplish this is to have a Master Resume that can be customized for every job.

Step 1: Decide on a Resume Format

One of your first decisions you need to make is how to organize your resume’s content. There are basically three formats: Chronological, Functional, and Hybrid.

Chronological Resume: The most commonly used format and the resume perspective employers expect. Typically, use this resume format unless there is a clear reason to use one of the others.

- ❖ Provides job titles, job responsibilities, and achievements in reverse chronological order for each employer, starting with your current or most recent position.
- ❖ Useful if much of your experience is in one field, you have no large employment gaps, and you plan to stay in the same field of employment.
- ❖ For an example of a typical Chronological Resume, see Exhibit 2.1 at the end of this Module.

Functional Resume: The least commonly used resume. It is used if you are looking to switch fields or wish to focus on a key skill set that is poorly shown in a chronological resume.

- ❖ Arranges job history to highlight special skills, functions, and achievements without associating the information with a specific time period or employer. Shifts the focus from dates/positions/employers to skills and work functions.
- ❖ Useful if there are unexplained gaps in your employment history, you are a more mature job seeker, you want to change career direction, you’ve changed jobs frequently, or you are seeking employment opportunities at higher levels.
- ❖ For an example of a typical Functional Resume, see Exhibit 2.2 at the end of this Module.

Hybrid Resume: A common alternative to the chronological resume if you are attempting to show career progress or are applying for a position above your current role where you need to show growth in skill and ability.

- ❖ Highlights skills and achievements that might otherwise be buried within your job history, while providing (but de-emphasizing) job chronology. Focuses on transferrable skills and experiences that are applicable to the job posting.
- ❖ Useful if you have a varied job history that doesn’t reflect a clear career path, if your work experience doesn’t link to the desired position, or if you have large employment gaps or numerous jobs of short duration.
- ❖ For an example of a typical Hybrid Resume, see Exhibit 2.3 at the end of this Module.

You are built not to shrink down to less but to bloom into more. ~ Virgil

Step 2: Parts of a Resume

Regardless of the resume format you choose, there are elements that are common to all resume formats that show your accomplishments in an easily accessible list. Using the “MAKE” model is a helpful tool in helping you fill out the details of your resume that will differentiate you in the marketplace:

- ❖ **M**etrics-driven — Show numerical accomplishment when they are available.
- ❖ **A**ccomplishments-based — Show how you accomplished the goals established for your position.
- ❖ **K**eyword-imbedded — Use the words in the job posting to who your skill set match what they need.
- ❖ **E**lectronically friendly — Recognize that emailed resumes may look different to the recipient. Manage this risk by minimizing formatting.

Key Elements:

Contact Information: Your Contact Information includes your name, telephone numbers with area codes (home, cellular, pager), e-mail address (make sure it is a professional e-mail, not something like Iamsocute@livinglife.com) and your personal web page, if applicable.

Professional Summary: This is one of the most important sections of your resume. A Professional Summary is a concise statement (3-5 line paragraph) matching your qualifications with the job responsibilities. This section previews your overall work history and contributions. It should answer the questions: Why are you qualified? Why should I hire you?

It also provides an opportunity to include “keywords” early in your resume. Electronic databases use keyword searches to match candidates to positions.

Omit statements that aren’t relevant to the specific job opening as they can raise unintended and unwanted questions in the minds of prospective employers.

Employment History: Include the companies you have worked for and positions/job titles you have held. Positions are listed in reverse chronological order. Generally, only include the years (without the months) for dates of employment. There is no need to include work history that is older than 10 or 15 years, unless it is relevant to the current job opportunity. If you wish to include older information, it might be appropriate to use a hybrid resume.

Employment history should highlight accomplishments and experiences, not duties and responsibilities. You should focus your accomplishments on items that were most valuable to your employer, not ones that consumed most of your time. Whenever possible, provide quantifiable measures of accomplishments and successes. Quantification and scope add impact. Ask yourself: What did I improve, increase, or enhance? What did I decrease, prevent or avoid? What did I create, design, launch, or establish?

Examples include: revenues (e.g., generated or retained); budgets; expenses (e.g., reduced or avoided); market share (e.g., grown or retained); P&L responsibility; quantity (e.g., number of employees), size (e.g., geographic region, span of control), dimensions (e.g., time saved, customer satisfaction rates), and capacity (10% increase in productivity or accuracy/reliability).

To help you gather and summarize this information, try using the “STAR” model. (See Exhibit 2.4 at the end of this Module for a sample worksheet.) This will help you demonstrate how you attained or exceeded your job goals, how you improved something or “went above and beyond” (e.g., challenging or unusual situations, turnaround situations, start-up companies, mergers, acquisitions).

ST: Description of the **S**ituation/**T**ask in which you were involved

A: What **A**ction you took or how you **A**ccomplished your success

R: The **R**esult of your action or direction.

For example: “Company faced difficulties in finding qualified new management candidates. Counseled individuals to identify their personal, professional objectives and developed individualized plans that resulted in 32 associates being promoted to management positions.”

STAR STATEMENTS

ST = Situation/Tasks

A = Actions

R = Results

Education/Training: Summarize your education and training background in reverse chronological order. Include your highest degree achieved and the name/location of the college/university you attended. List certifications you hold that are relevant to position you are seeking. If you hold a current technical education that is relevant for the job opportunity, include the date you obtained your certification.

If you are a recent graduate, include your GPA (if it is higher than a 3.5 on a 4.0 scale). If you graduated with “honors,” include this information.

If you are currently enrolled in an educational program, list the name/location of the college/university, your anticipated degree and graduation date (month and year).

Include high school information, if it is your only education or certification.

Other Information:

Military Experience: If you were recently released from active duty or if your experience is relevant to the job opportunity/your career path, list your rank, branch of service, rating or military specialty.

Volunteer Experience: Include any appropriate volunteer experience. Experience and skill building does not need to be paid for it to be valuable to employers.

Association Affiliations or Memberships: Include memberships and any offices held in associations of which you have been a part. Include any community activities if they support your objective.

Other Categories or Information to highlight and consider: If appropriate, list languages, security clearance, professional licensing/certifications, additional training, patents, computer skills, awards or titles of publications/presentations you have written.

Key Attributes:

- ❖ List information in the order of importance to potential employer. For example, list your position title before your dates of employment. If your education or computer skills are most relevant to the position, list them first.
- ❖ Use the active voice and bullet points to make information easier to digest. Steer clear of passive verbs, such as “accomplishments were achieved.”
- ❖ Do not use personal pronouns like “I” or “me.”
- ❖ Fit your resume on no more than two pages, no matter how extensive your experience. Only include information that will help you land an interview.
- ❖ Leave white space on all four margins; don’t crowd your resume.
- ❖ Your resume should be organized with consistent headings, fonts, bullets and style. Do not use Times Roman; it is most commonly used. Consider using Georgia or Tahoma. Print should be large enough to read off a screen without eye-strain.
- ❖ No typos. *Your document should be perfect.*
- ❖ Do not list references on your resume. Provide them only when requested. Mirror the format used in your resume.

Consider the ‘So What?’ Factor

Each statement in your resume should have impact. After each sentence, ask yourself, “So what?” If you don’t have a good answer, remove the statement from the resume.

Part 3: Length of a Resume

As we started this section with the statement that hiring professionals spend between 20 and 25 seconds screening a resume, keeping your resume as brief as possible and focused on your key skills and attributes is important. The ideal resume length for a non-government position is one page. If you feel it is important, 2 pages are acceptable, but do not expect resume reviewers to spend a lot of time reading the second page.

Remember: A resume is a personal sales tool. You do not like sales tools that are too long or appear to have irrelevant information. Hiring professionals feel exactly the same way.

Government resumes, however, must be longer. To fill out the appropriate information and to have the information that will be reviewed by the high number of resume reviewers for government jobs requires more space.

For a government resume, it is important that it includes:

- ❖ Keywords from the job posting.
- ❖ Core competencies taken from the major duties from the job posting.
- ❖ Examples of your knowledge and abilities that show you are well suited for the position.
- ❖ In the end, your resume should reflect you.

Still Struggling?

There are hundreds of sample resumes and resume templates on the internet. Consider performing an internet search for your area of expertise (e.g., bookkeeper resume sample or bookkeeper resume template). See what those resumes contain.

Exhibit 2.1 – Sample Chronological Resume

Jane Doe

(999) 888-9364

djones@email.com

An accomplished Database Administrator with demonstrated success designing and implementing database solutions that improve business functionality. Possess diversified technical background with Enterprise Systems Solutions. Proven ability to implement technologies that decrease costs, increase performance and positively affect the bottom line.

QUALIFICATION HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ Extensive experience working with all aspects of in-house developed systems.
- ❖ Polished leadership skills, with ability to motivate teams to increase productivity.
- ❖ Deep understanding of technology with focus on delivering business solutions.

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Software	Oracle (6,7,8), DB2, Sybase, SQL Server, IMS, Access, ESSBASE
Systems	OS/390, MVS, VM, OS/390, VAX/VMS, UNIX (Solaris, AIX, Sun/OS
Hardware	IBM Mainframe (360, 370, 30XX, S/390), IBM RS/6000, Sun, SGI
Languages	C, Perl, Visual Basic, PL/SQL, Transact/SQL, COBOL, IBM Assembler
Networks	TCP/IP, IMS/DC, CICS, MQ/Series, Windows NT 4.0 Server
Certifications	Oracle Certified Professional, Oracle Database Administrator (Oracle 8)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CCC Company, Anchorage, AK Senior Database Consultant

October 1988 – Present

Oversaw design and maintenance of Database environment at Arco Alaska division of \$20 billion Oil Exploration and Production Company. Supported distributed Oracle database environment. Performed upgrades, patch maintenance and integration with vendor software on AIX, NT and Solaris platforms. Led up to 7 team members performing Database Administration.

- ❖ Initiated utilization of Data Warehouse ETL software during conversion of legacy data in IMS to Oracle, saving over 50% of total project costs by reducing contract programming.
- ❖ Performed key role as technical consultant during transition from IBM Mainframe to client/server model. Recommended database, development and network software that contributed to eliminating mainframe support structure with 20% decrease in support costs.

BBB Company, Dallas, TX Database Design Consultant

April 1984 – October 1988

Designed, developed and implemented databases within IBM Mainframe environments. Utilized database management systems including IMS, DB2 and Oracle. Provided application development support for internal developers. Configured DB2 tuning/support infrastructure. Performed instrumental role in project development from inception to implementation. Supported development and implementation of relational database environment.

- ❖ Coordinated efforts with Big 6 consulting firms to deploy enterprise wide financial and reporting systems,

performing design, development and implementation support, completing project within 3-year time frame.

EDUCATION

University of Texas, San Antonio, Texas
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

Source: www.technical-resumes.com

Exhibit 2.2 - Sample Functional Resume

John Doe

(999) 888-9364

John.Doe@email.com

Qualifications Summary

Administrative Support professional experienced working in fast-paced environments demanding strong organizational, technical, and interpersonal skills. Trustworthy, ethical, and discreet: committed to superior customer service. Confident and poised in interactions with individuals at all levels. Detail-oriented and resourceful in completing projects; able to multi-task effectively. Capabilities include:

- Customer Service & Relations
- Word Processing & Typing
- Computer Operations
- Accounts Payable/Receivable
- Filing & Data Archiving
- Office Equipment Operation
- Telephone Reception
- General Accounting
- Problem Solving

Experience Highlights

Administrative Support

- Performed administrative and secretarial support functions for the Vice President of a large sportswear manufacturer. Coordinated and managed multiple priorities and projects.
- Provided discreet secretarial and reception services for a busy family-counseling center. Scheduled appointments and maintained accurate, up-to-date confidential client files.
- Assisted with general accounting functions; maintained journals and handled A/P and A/R. Provided telephone support; investigated and resolved billing problems for an 18-member manufacturer's buying group. Trained and supervised part-time staff and interns.

Customer Services & Reception

- Registered incoming patients in a hospital emergency room. Demonstrated ability to maintain composure and work efficiently in a fast-paced environment while preserving strict confidentiality.
- Conducted patient interviews to elicit necessary information for registration, accurate prioritization, and to assist medical professionals in the triage process.
- Orchestrated hotel special events and reservations; managed customer relations and provided exemplary service to all customers.

Employment History

ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT, Guardian, Inc., Gonic, IL

PATIENT SERVICES REGISTRAR, Grogan Health System Hospital, Grogan, MA

Education & Training

Grogan College, Exeter, CA - Concentration in Business Administration

Source: www.distinctiveweb.com

Exhibit 2.3 – Sample Hybrid Resume

Charlie Doe

212.555.1212 CharlieDoe@email.net

MARKETING EXECUTIVE

Product Launches ~ Overseas Partnerships ~ Presentations

Accomplished, multilingual Professional consistently recognized for achievement and performance in the fuel industry. Innovative and successful in mining new sales territories and establishing business alliances, including the recent partnership with M.IM Oil in Korea. Proven leader with special capabilities in building teams, strategizing, and implementing workable marketing plans employing television, radio, Internet, and print media. Fluent in English, Korean, Japanese, and French.

BUSINESS SKILLS

Marketing

- Launch gasoline exports in conjunction with new production plant start-up; target overseas markets.
- Initiate sales of ULS, an environmentally-friendly new product launched in the European market.
- Establish joint venture partnerships in Europe and Far East; implement marketing for aviation fuel and asphalt as a value-added commodity.

Market Planning

- Analyze regional import / export economies and the interregional oil markets.
- Participate in contact negotiations for strategic alliances with major European and Asian concurs.
- Achieved \$25 million in revenue by developing offshore storage programs that fulfilled seasonal market trends in the region.

Product Planning

- Optimize production mode by selecting appropriate refinery; research product specification revisions by country.
- Propose and participate in the Plant Operation Committee, a team effort between production and sales.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

TTR CORPORATION, New York, New York 1993 - Present

Vice President, Overseas Business Division

- Promoted to position in March 1996; selected as one of the three employees to attend an MBA course in 2003.
- Named Employee of the Year in 1996 based on professional achievements.

FUEL INDUSTRY OF AMERICA, New York, New York 1989 – 1992

Manager of Marketing

- Provided analysis on fuel industry, drafting report for the White House.
- Awarded the Honor Prize in 1992 based on performance evaluations of oil producers.

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, New York, New York

Bachelor of Arts in Communications, 1988

Source: www.Workbloom.com

Exhibit 2.4 - Sample STAR Worksheet

STAR Worksheet

ST: This is a description of the **Situation** or **Task** in which you were involved

A: What **Action** you took or how you **Accomplished** your success

R: The **Result** of your action or direction.

Quantifiable measure of accomplishment and successes, you're a STAR.

MODULE 3: MARKETING YOURSELF

Many job seekers fall into the trap of trying to convince prospective employers that they are just like incumbents and other applicants. **Remember:** As with selling any product or service, you must distinguish yourself from other applicants. Identify the one thing that will make you stand out from the crowd. Basically, you need to “Sell Yourself.” To do this, you should have a well-defined and focused marketing plan. Consider what your “audience,” the prospective employer, is trying to accomplish in the decision to hire a new employee.

A marketing plan defines your goals and develops a series of activities to achieve your goals.

The goal of this Module is to help the job seeker develop a specific actionable marketing plan that enables you to conduct a productive job search and find the position that best fits your talents and interests.

Developing Your Marketing Strategy

A marketing strategy should include a definition of your mission/purpose (to secure a position in this industry at this salary in this location in this timeframe; think in terms of your “ideal” job), a profile of prospective employers, and an analysis comparing your specific skills and experience (favorably and/or unfavorably) to your competition. The following questions may help in developing a strategy:

- ❖ **Who is your audience?** Do your research. Who are the companies that have people who do what you do? Which companies are hiring? Are you interested in non-profits or associations? Federal, state or local government? Set specific criteria (geography, industries, size of companies, preferred organizational culture).
- ❖ **What are the current trends and need of the prospective companies?** Is the industry expanding? Contracting? What issues are confronting this company (economy, new laws and regulations, controversy)?
- ❖ **Are you considering a move to a new industry or type of job?** Research those as well. Review your “Finding Your Purpose Diagram” (Exhibit 1.1) and focus on transferrable skills for ideas on different job positions.
- ❖ **What skills and abilities is the prospective employer looking for?** How closely does your experience and skill set match the employer/position requirements? It is important to focus your valuable time on finding opportunities where there is a high probability of having a good match with your skills and experience and position requirements.

To do's:

1. Prepare a list of target companies and research them. Start with a list of at least 10 companies/associations/government agencies to research and network into. Choose

companies located in your preferred geographical area. Establish a timetable for visiting their web sites and researching the companies in-depth. In researching the companies, look for companies or organizations with business plans or missions that are likely to grow or remain stable over the next several years, and that have positions in the geographic area you are interested in. Check for current job listings. If possible, identify the hiring manager in areas of interest. Organize your research for reference in future phases of your search.

2. Set up e-mails for corporate and industry developments. Stay abreast of current issues of interest. Subscribe to trade journals and newspapers. Join internet networking sites (LinkedIn, etc.) and subscribe to groups that are specific to your industry and target companies. Collect and retain key research on your target companies and positions.
3. Identify contacts who can help you network into your target company. As networking is the most critical part of your job search, it is important to identify anyone you know who could either provide information about your target company, or provide an introduction to someone within the company. Establish a timeframe for connecting with your contacts or developing new contacts (alumni, trade association professionals, internet networking, networking groups). The Networking worksheet on the CAN web site can be used to track not only the initial contacts, but also subsequent contacts that you are introduced to during your search. (Ask a CAN mentor for the location.) Module 4 contains tips on building your network.
4. Meet with contacts who can provide background information about your industry or desired position. An “interview for information” can provide valuable inside information about industry trends and what potential employers are looking for in candidates for your desired positions.
5. **Remember:** People want to help other people. Let them!

Fear melts when you take action towards a goal you really want.
~ Robert G Allen

Using the Internet in Your Search

The Internet is a wonderful resource for job seekers. It can facilitate research into specific companies and enable broader searches by occupation, location, or type of employer. Most employers also use the Internet to search for candidates, so it is important for you to have a presence on-line that showcases your skills and abilities.

The best way to start your on-line search is with directories that provide lists of resources related to a specific topic. There are directories for various businesses, trade associations, state and local governments, local Chambers of Commerce, non-profits, federal contractors, professional

associations and other groups. The site for federal government jobs is USA jobs.gov. The following directories and web resources may be helpful.

- ❖ LinkedIn – Primary e-networking tool for job seekers.
- ❖ Idealist.com - Non-profits job listings.
- ❖ Indeed.com –Job listings aggregator for thousands of companies, job boards and newspapers.
- ❖ Fbo.gov – Federal sector jobs listings. Set up alerts to see which firms are winning government contracts, then market yourself to those companies.
- ❖ Climber.com – Connects job seekers with recruiters.
- ❖ OneWire.com – Uses a person’s LinkedIn information to create a resume that recruiters can review to determine their interest in a job seeker.
- ❖ Worldprivacyforum.org – Provides useful guidance on the use of the internet for jobsites with an extensive listing of websites.
- ❖ NVTC.org – Northern Virginia Technology Council lists jobs in multiple areas with focus on technology but also public affairs and editor positions.
- ❖ ASAEcenter.org – Job listings for associations.
- ❖ USAjobs.gov – Federal government job listings.

Use search engines such as Google only after you have narrowed your search. Learn to use advanced search techniques. Google has a tutorial for its site.

Once you have narrowed your search to target occupation or particular positions, and have updated your resume, set up a profile on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com). Many employers use LinkedIn as part of their strategy to search for candidates, and this site has become most useful for job seekers. It is estimated that 90% of employers who use social media in their hiring process use LinkedIn. Recruiters also use it as they can view multiple candidates easily and cost effectively. An easy way to start is by reestablishing contact with old friends and former colleagues. Search the LinkedIn Group Directory and join any groups that match your professional interests. Module 4 contains other suggestions for networking through LinkedIn.

As you identify potential employers, you can check their web sites for more information and for specific job postings. Professional associations and trade groups also offer opportunities to post your resume to the audience most relevant to your search. Recruiters and employers scan resume banks for potential candidates for advertised and unadvertised job openings. Many job boards provide a service that matches your resume with job listings as they appear on their site. If you sign up for their email notifications of this you may receive daily updates on job listings that match your resume or key words from your resume.

Establishing a Job Search Alert

Avoid setting up a job search alert with large homogenous boards like Monster. Set up search alerts on industry-specific and professional association websites that are more like a talent hub than an aggregator. Also, consider an alternate strategy that looks at how people can find you instead of how you can find them. Job search boards are migrating to a social networking function where their primary function is matching people with relevant interests and needs.

- ❖ Use only four-to-six job search sites. If you use more than six, managing your resume can become overwhelming.
- ❖ Develop a strategy for helping people find you. Set up a web presence via LinkedIn or another networking site so you can be more effectively found by relevant employers via search engines. More than 4 million job-related searches are conducted on Google daily.

Developing the Right Marketing Tools

Just as the process for looking for a job has changed, so have the materials needed to perform an effective marketing campaign. Today, in addition to a resume (See Module 2), you need the following:

Professional e-mail account - Make sure it is a professional e-mail, not something like “Iamsocute@livinglife.com.” Do not use numbers or special characters. Some companies treat such addresses as “spam.” Include all or part of your name, so that companies may readily identify you.

Personal Business Cards - Get business cards printed with your name and personal contact information. Be sure to use two to three words to market yourself on your business card. Online, www.vistaprint.com has an offer for 250 free business cards, plus shipping and has ready to use templates. Select a card that speaks to your personality, but is appropriate for the industry and roles you are targeting.

Elevator Pitch (Instant Introduction)

One of the most important tools in your job search is the Elevator Pitch or “Instant Introduction.” This is a very brief overview of what you have done and where you want to go... a short verbal resume. It should not be any longer than one (1) minute. The objective is to engage the interest of the person you have just met and start a conversation that invites their ideas to help in your job search. Developing the best one for you will involve some thought to distill out the most important information that you want to share with people you meet. It is also a good idea to practice out loud both alone and with a friend or family member until you are completely comfortable using this in different settings, such as a first meeting with a new contact, job fair, or in social gatherings.

Include the following:

- ❖ Describe what makes you unique or special. Use powerful, attention keeping language.
- ❖ Describe your skills, background and accomplishments (briefly).
- ❖ Explain that you are engaged in a job search and describe what you are looking for and how your audience can help.
- ❖ Most of all let your passion and personality shine through. Think of this as a conversation starter, rather than a speech. Deliver it with energy and conviction and you will be surprised at how often people will respond with great ideas that can be used in your search.

Sample – Job seeker has specific position and companies in mind:

My name is _____. I'm in the Information Technology Industry. I am an Oracle database administrator with six years of Windows NT and Unix Systems administrator experience. I am also a systems analyst and have been a team leader at major companies including _____. I love to use technology to solve business problems. I am interested in an opportunity in a mid-size company where I can contribute and build on my current skill set. Some of the places I am particularly interested in are _____ and _____. Do you know anyone in the IT departments there? If not, do you know of any other companies that might need someone with my skills and experience?

Sample – Job seeker is transitioning to new area and looking for basic information:

My name is _____. I have been a high school teacher for many years and am now exploring a career transition. I really enjoy helping people learn new material and skills and think that I could make a good contribution as a trainer. Do you know of anyone who works as a trainer who could give me some background information on this field and which companies or government agencies in the area employ trainers?

Work Your Plan

Your Marketing Plan is a series of actions to help you sell/promote your product (“you”). It should include:

- ❖ Quantifiable goals. Set specific goals for each week. Depending on the status of your search, goals might include identifying new contacts to obtain background information, posting resumes to positions that you know are good matches for your skills and interests, practicing for interviews or other activities.
- ❖ A record of activities, with follow-up actions noted as appropriate.

A good marketing plan establishes concrete marketing actions for you each week regarding the number of:

- ❖ Hours you'll devote to your job search.
- ❖ Resumes and letters you'll send.
- ❖ Follow-up calls you'll make.
- ❖ Face-to-face meetings you'll arrange.

Keep track of your job search efforts and make adjustments as needed. Focus attention on strategies that yield the best results. The CAN web site contains sample worksheets to help you track activities for networking, resume postings and interviews. (Ask a mentor for the location.) The following web sites that provide resources and tools that may assist you in working your plan.

- ❖ JibberJobber – Provides an easy way to keep track of all the information that you collect during a job search. You can track where you have sent your resumes, the jobs you apply for, and log the status of each job as you proceed through the hiring process.

- ❖ Becomed.com – A free job search management tool. You can record your applications, resumes and cover letter templates, and track the job applications you have sent, how far they have advanced in the hiring process and what the next steps in your job search will be.
- ❖ Yipeejobs.com - Free personalized job search management database to users. You can manage and organize your job search by tracking of jobs, contacts or companies.

Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase. ~ Martin Luther King Jr.

Prospecting Your Target Companies

You don't have to wait for your target companies to have advertised job openings before approaching them. A common approach for getting your name in front of a potential employer is to send an unsolicited prospecting letter (can be email). See Exhibit 3.1. This is a letter that defines who you are and what you can do for your targeted company(ies).

Exhibit 3.1 – Sample Prospecting Letter

Your Address
 Your Email Address
 Phone Number

Contact's Name
 Contact's Title
 Contact's Department
 Company Name
 Company Address

Dear Ms./Mr. [Name/Title],

[XYZ Publication] reports that you have bid on a contract with the federal government for [xxxxx]. As a 25 year veteran of [xxxx], I could be a real asset to your company in implementing the contract when awarded.

As noted in my enclosed resume, I have [xxxxxxxxxx].

I will welcome the opportunity to discuss with you ways in which my expertise will contribute to your team's continuing success. I will contact you next week and hope that we will be able to schedule a convenient time to speak. If you wish to contact me sooner, I am available at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

Attachment

Find the name of a person in your desired area of employment within the company (e.g., sales, accounting, marketing, information technology). You can usually find this information on the company's web site in the "About Us" link. Look for organization charts.

Review your network contacts for people (e.g., LinkedIn), who either work in your target companies, or those who may know someone who works there. Once you have identified a contact inside the company, follow up to arrange an introduction or ask to have your resume forwarded to the department which is likely to have suitable positions.

In your communication, show that you have done your research and describe how your skills and experience would help the employer meet those challenges. Researching a company demonstrates to the company that you are serious about working for them.

Remember: This company's problems are your opportunities to sell yourself ...proposing solutions is a great way to get the potential employer to notice you.

Even if there aren't current opportunities, a prospecting letter may signal you as a candidate for a future position with the company ...before the position is advertised.

MODULE 4: NETWORKING

Networking is inviting others to help you. It is contacting people you know and telling them that you are looking for a job... letting them know that you need help. It is engaging them to “be as Christ to you.” A function of the human condition is that people *want* to help one another. Let them. Ask them if they know of a job opportunity. Ask them if they know someone who may be able to assist you in your job search.

...knock and the door will be opened to you. ~ Matthew 7:7

Networking is an essential element of a successful job search. Although many job seekers initially view building a network as a daunting task, everyone has personal and professional relationships that can be developed into a network to assist in the job search.

Networking is an inverted pyramid. It starts with you as the base. The next tier is your list of contacts. You engage them to build your next tier ... their contacts and so on. As you expand your contacts, be aware of how each person fits into your search and the type of help that they can provide. Networks offer both information and access to decision makers and it is important to recognize how each new contact in your network can help you. Some people can act as an advisor to help provide direction for your search and guidance on where to learn more about an industry, company or occupation. Those who know you well act as a mentor, providing advice on possible next steps when challenges arise. You will also want to identify a sponsor who will have contacts in your field and who is willing to actively promote you as a candidate for a particular position. Your contacts may be able to fill more than one of these roles, but it is helpful to think about what type of assistance you need from them at each point in your search.

What Networking Isn't

Networking is not asking others to find you a job. You are responsible for your own job search. If you focus your networking conversations solely on whether someone can identify a current job opening, you miss the opportunity to gain valuable information on the industry, company or occupation that your contact would be happy to provide if they knew it would be useful for you.

Networking is not a series of cold-calls. You need to ask others to introduce you to people they know.

Networking is not a one-way street. It is establishing relationships and relationships involve give and take.

Authentic networking is not *transactional*; it is *relational*. You do not *use* your network, you *engage* your network and that means valuing the relationship for how it can help everyone involved.

The successful networkers ...continually put the other person's need ahead of their own. ~ Bob Burg

Types of Networking

Networking may come in all shapes and forms. But generally, it falls into two categories: traditional and e-networking (aka social networking).

Traditional Networking. Traditional networking involves thinking of everyone who can serve as a contact for you and then engaging them in your job search. This could include:

- ❖ Family and friends
- ❖ Neighbors
- ❖ Co-workers (current and past)
- ❖ Alumni and Professors
- ❖ Classmates
- ❖ Your doctors and dentist
- ❖ Your priest and fellow church members
- ❖ Members of professional/trade organizations
- ❖ Conventions
- ❖ Charities and volunteer activities
- ❖ Cocktail parties and fundraisers
- ❖ Members of your gym

Traditional networking includes face-to-face meetings, phone conversations, information interviews and attendance at various social/professional events. It involves seeking out and making affirmative connections, but it also means capitalizing on opportunities that present themselves to you.

The basic rules of traditional networking:

1. Set goals for yourself. It will help you to remain focused. Do you want to reach out to 3 people at each networking event? Do you want to learn about a company or industry? Do you want to establish 4 new contacts each week? Do you want to secure an introduction to someone attending an event?
2. Be specific about the type of help you want. You must succinctly articulate what you are looking for and how they can help. Are you soliciting career advice or are you asking for a referral or recommendation? Do you want them to socialize your resume? Do you want the name of a resource or address?
3. Be positive and energetic. What image are you conveying? Leave your baggage at the door. This is not the time to burden people with your trials and tribulations. Also, shut-

off the “negative chatter” in your head. **Remember:** You *are* interesting and worth speaking with.

4. Listen. Observe the principle: “Listen twice as much as you talk.” You are seeking advice ...listen to it. Make eye contact. When speaking with one person in a group setting, do NOT scan the room for your next opportunity.
5. Build an ongoing relationship. Be prepared to give as well as receive. Networking is a two-way street of helping each other. If you want someone to help you, you need to be willing to help others in return. Also, if you are known to be a powerful resource for others, people will remember you. It will keep you visible.
6. Be prepared. Always be prepared for an opportunity when it presents itself. You never know when a potential contact will be in front of you at the coffee shop or working-out next to you in the gym. So always be ready to make a contact and exchange business cards. Always be ready to use your elevator pitch /instant introduction.
7. Follow-up quickly on referrals you have been given. You are a reflection of the person who is helping you. Respect and honor what others are doing on your behalf.
8. Write “Thank-You” notes (can be email) and follow-up with your network. Make sure your contacts feel engaged and appreciated for their actions. Keep them informed on the progress of your job search.
9. Talk to everyone you come into contact with. Do not be afraid to tell them that you are out of work! You do not know who they are or whom they know. Someone you talk to may know someone, or even be someone in the specific company or type of company in which you are interested.
10. Be prepared for rejection. It happens. Don’t take it personally and move on to the next part of your search. It helps to identify several prospects for you network so that you will not be discouraged when one person turns you down.

E-Networking (aka Social Networking). Social networking augments your traditional network activities by creating a community of “virtual” contacts. Social networking facilitates making connections with people that you might never meet, otherwise. It places you into a virtual community and provides context to who you are and what you are interested in. This is particularly important if employers are using these sites to find prospective candidates.

What are the benefits of social networking?

- ❖ It expands your networking possibilities exponentially.
- ❖ It serves to “break the ice,” if you ultimately meet with the contact in person.
- ❖ The other party can’t see you “sweat.”
- ❖ You can engage or be engaged as you wish.
- ❖ What are the disadvantages of social networking?

Information you place on the internet is public and permanent. So, be careful about what you post in cyberspace. It is a good idea to search your own name on Google to see what information would come up when a potential employer does that search.

Putting someone in contact with one of your business contacts (by opening up contact list) can be risky. Referrals are a reflection of you. You need to vet these referrals in the same way you would a traditional networking request.

Where do you go to network on-line?

- ❖ Social networking websites. These profile driven sites ask you to create a personal profile. It then allows you to cull through their membership for networking opportunities. They work on the principle of “six degrees of separation.” The best resource for job searches is LinkedIn.
- ❖ Chat Rooms, Virtual Meeting Rooms and Web Forums. These sites have informal settings, where participants discuss current events and topics of common interests.
- ❖ Bulletin Boards. These are web sites that are generally operated by trade or professional associations, colleges, alumni associations, etc.

You review the various postings and look for someone who shares a common interest and appears to be knowledgeable about a topic of interest to you.

Sites generally post an email address of the participant. It may even provide the person’s company, industry affiliation, and job title. Use this information to e-mail your contact.

Follow business protocols associated with traditional networking. For example, Do NOT ask for a job. Be willing to give as much as you receive.

Social Networking Tips:

- Ensure that your profile is complete and compelling.
- If you blog, link your blog content to your profiles and status updates.
- Include links to your Website/portfolio/blog in your profiles.
- Ask and answer questions through LinkedIn Answers.
- Join sub-groups within venues like LinkedIn that focus on your profession and interests. Communicate and connect with members of these groups.
- Research employers through company pages on Facebook and LinkedIn.
- Limit yourself to contacts with whom you can claim a valid (even if limited) connection. If you are trying to establish contact with someone you do not know, ask for an introduction from a mutual acquaintance. Personalize your message by stating how you met them (e.g., we met yesterday at the Job Fair).
- Participate in discussion forums and boards in your career field.
- See if professional organizations in your field offer social-networking tools.
- Always offer help to those with whom you connect and thank your contacts for their assistance and advice.
- Realize that even on sites with good privacy settings, your profiles may be less private than you think. So, be careful about what you say and post on social-networking venues.
- Invite your real-world contacts to join your networks, and invited contacts from one venue to join your network on other venues.

Following are strategies for discovering an employment opportunity before the employer advertises the position. But, they can all be summarized with three words: Networking. Networking. Networking.

1. Word of Mouth

Offline. Let as many people as possible know that you are looking for work is important. Every time you meet someone, be prepared to tell them about your situation and give them your Elevator Pitch.

Online. Blast an e-mail to everyone you know letting them know that you are looking for work. People such as friends, former co-workers, former bosses, family, neighbors, and your church family care about you and want to help.

Monitor online discussion groups and networking group. Opportunities are often posted to these sites.

2. Associations

Associations are a great way to network, get acquainted with other people in similar circumstances and to access the hidden job market.

Networking within **professional and industry associations** puts you in contact with other people within your profession. Most association members will be glad to assist you in your job search.

3. Alumni Associations/College Placement Offices

are also a valuable network of contacts. They are also outstanding ways to locate fellow alumni working in your professional field.

Recent college graduates should utilize their college placement offices and become well known in the placement office. Many companies will recruit through the placement office and on-campus organizations/associations.

Associations usually have a large database of member-companies, links to “niche sites” specific to their industry and postings for their own job openings and opportunities.

Member-companies will often direct link to/from the associations' web sites and use this link for posting job openings and opportunities.

Informational Interviews

Once you have made a new contact, informational interviews are an excellent way to gain information about the industry trends, companies, skill requirements and other background information. The benefits of doing informational interviews include:

- ❖ You become familiar with the field, its jargon, and the important issues.

- ❖ You get to see how different environments can shape a career and eliminate places that are not a fit for you.
- ❖ You to expand your network.
- ❖ It is a low-pressure way of practicing self-marketing skills. It gives you the chance to practice presenting yourself professionally in a field that interests you.
- ❖ You may learn that the company is planning to expand in the near future and that there will soon be openings.

Follow the guidelines regarding etiquette (dress and professional behavior) that you would in a job interview.

Use your network to identify people who would be valuable sources of information needed in your job search. Ideally, your contact would make the introduction and then you can call or email to arrange the interview. Identify yourself and state the nature of your research. You might give the interviewee some idea of the types of questions you will ask.

The following sample script (Exhibit 4.1) may be used in making the call to set up an informational interview:

Exhibit 4.1 – Sample Prospecting Script for Informational Interview

Sample Script for Informational Interview

Hello Mr/Ms. _____ . My name is _____ .

I am a _____ professional and an interested in the field of _____ . _____ suggested you as someone to contact for expert information and advice.

I would love to schedule an appointment with you, at your convenience, so that I might better understand this profession.

[Ask the contact for 15 - 20 minutes of his or her time and give reassurance that you are NOT looking for a job but, rather, contacts in the industry or information about their function within the organization. You might also ask if he or she is willing to look over your resume.]

Keep these points in mind in preparing for your Informational Interviews:

- ❖ Define your purpose for the interview. Is it to gain background information about industry trends, a specific company, skills needed for positions that are of interest to you, or some other purpose?
- ❖ Research the profession, organization and person whom you will be interviewing. The more informed you are, the easier it will be to have a productive discussion.
- ❖ Prepare. Make a list of questions that you want to ask. As time will be short, aim for a few questions that will give you useful information for your search. Sample questions are provided in Exhibit 4.2.

- ❖ Practice. Practice interviewing friends and family members. This is critical and will help you to be relaxed when you are in a “real” interview situation.
- ❖ Listen. Listen to what the individual is saying. Show enthusiasm and appreciation and maintain good eye contact.
- ❖ Take notes. This will help you remember important information that is discussed during the meeting.

Exhibit 4.2 – Sample Informational Interview Questions

Sample Questions for an Informational Interview

- What is a typical day like here? What do you actually do?
- What are the most interesting aspects of your job?
- What do you especially enjoy about your work?
- What are some of the difficulties and frustrations of your work?
- What are the characteristics of successful people in your organization?
- What are some of the important factors that have contributed to your success?
- What were the jobs that you had which led to this one?
- What skills are most important to be competent in this field?
- What degrees and/or training are necessary for this kind of work?
- What types of training do companies give to persons entering this field?
- What courses or field experiences would be beneficial to prepare for this field?
- Is there a present demand for people in this field? In the next two to three years?
- How stable is the job market in this field? Is government funding a major factor?
- Do you see new types of positions developing?
- How mobile and flexible can one be in this occupation? Location? Hours?
- What are the salary ranges for various levels in this field?
- Do you have information on job specifications and descriptions that I may have?
- What sources of literature would you recommend to learn more about this profession?
- What professional organizations would you recommend? Should I join them now?
- Are you doing what you thought you would be when you started?
- Are there other individuals who might talk with me and provide further information? May I use your name?

Soon after each interview, write a Thank You note, expressing appreciation for your contact’s time and interest. You might also highlight some of the points you learned from your discussion. “Snail-mailed” notes generally are more appreciated than e-mails. Express your gratitude for the information you received. Keep the person informed of your progress; you might want to send him/her a copy of any report you write about your findings.

MODULE 5: RESPONDING TO OPPORTUNITIES (WRITING COVER LETTERS)

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

~Matthew 5: 14-16

Cover letters are a natural outgrowth of your networking efforts. When a contact suggests an opening at a business or you hear about a job opportunity, respond with a cover letter. When appropriate, use email to reach out quickly when following-up on a job lead. Be timely and respond to the position as soon as you discover the opportunity.

Be specific about the result you want from this letter.

Take care with grammar, spelling and vocabulary. This letter will be the employer's first impression of your work. Proof your work and ensure that the Spell Check spells the word that you selected.

Reflect your attitude, personality, motivation, enthusiasm, and communication skills.

Use social media and the organization's website to gather information for your cover letter.

Keep your cover letter brief and easily readable while still demonstrating a professional, thoughtful manner. For the writing style, decide what it is that you want to say and then write your message.

When Sending E-mails ...

For a first contact, e-mail employers when an employer specifically invites or instructs you to do so.

When sending an email, copy and paste a text version of your resume into the body of the e-mail. Also attach it as a document. By pasting a version into the text, the hiring manager can quickly scan of your resume, without opening the attachment.

If you can't find an e-mail contact, send a hard copy of your resume and cover letter.

Opportunities are never lost; someone will take the one you miss.
~Author Unknown

Parts of a Cover Letter

❖ Salutation

Address the letter to a specific title or name. Check the company's website or call the department of human resources to find out to whom your letter should be addressed. As a last resort, address your letter to the personnel manager, hiring manager, or recruiting representative. *Do not use "To Whom It May Concern."*

❖ List the Job Number and/or Position Title

Provide the job reference number or exact job title as described in the vacancy notice.

❖ First Paragraph

Introduce yourself and why you are writing.

- You want to grab the employer's attention.
- Indicate why you are interested in the position and /or why this organization.
- Use your network. If someone referred you to the organization (a current employee, friend, family member), include his or her name in the first sentence.
- Incorporate your "Elevator Pitch" information.

Use the word "I" sparingly. Change "I" statements into "You" and "Your company" statements. For example, change "I am interested in your company, because ..." into "Your company will benefit from my experience ..."

❖ Second/Third Paragraph

Tell the employer your story.

- Describe your qualifications for the type of position you seek using specific examples from academic, work, volunteer, and / or other experiences.
- Connect your accomplishments, skills and knowledge directly to the type of position, organization, and/or field.
- Avoid repeating facts outlined on your resume by focusing on key concepts.
- Explain what makes you special – stand out!
- Provide any information specifically requested in a job advertisement such as availability date, or reference to an attached writing sample.

❖ Final Paragraph

- Summarize and give a final statement of interest and qualifications.

- Your closing statement should be concise. Let the reader know what you want (an application, an interview, an opportunity to call). If you are planning to call the person on a certain day, you could close by saying, "I will contact you next Tuesday to set up a mutually convenient time to meet."
- Include your contact information. This information should include an email address, home phone and a daytime number (where a potential employer can leave a detailed message).

Ask someone else to proofread your cover letter for you.

Exhibits 5.1 – 5.4 provide sample cover letters. Exhibit 5.4a illustrates tailoring a cover letter to a job announcement (Exhibit 5.4b). You may want to use Vault.com as a resource for additional examples.

Exhibit 5.1 – Sample Cover Letter (email)

Subject line: *(logical to recipient!)* Application for marketing research position #031210-528

March 14, 2010

Ms/Mr, xxxxxx
 Title
 Company
 Address

Dear Ms. Prince:

As I indicated in our telephone conversation yesterday, I would like to apply for the marketing research position (#031210-528) advertised in the March 12th *Roanoke Times and World News*. With my undergraduate research background, my training in psychology and sociology, and my work experience, I believe I could make a valuable contribution to Large National Bank Corporation in this position.

In May I will complete my B.S. in Psychology with a minor in Sociology at Virginia Tech. As part of the requirements for this degree, I am involved in a senior marketing research project that has given me experience interviewing and surveying research subjects and assisting with the analysis of the data collected. I also have completed a course in statistics and research methods.

My experience also includes working part-time as a bookkeeper in a small independent bookstore with an annual budget of approximately \$150,000. Because of the small size of this business, I have been exposed to and participated in most aspects of managing a business, including advertising and marketing. As the bookkeeper, I produced monthly sales reports that allow the owner/buyer to project seasonal inventory needs. I also assisted with the development of ideas for special promotional events and calculated book sales proceeds after each event in order to evaluate its success.

I believe my combination of business experience and social science research training is an excellent match for the marketing research position you described. Enclosed is a copy of my resume with additional information about my qualifications. Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to receiving your reply.

Sincerely,
 Name
 Email address
 Phone Number

Resume attached as MS Word document

Source: Virginia Tech, Division of Student Affairs, Career Services

Exhibit 5.2 – Sample Cover Letter (Referral from a Networking Contact)

	Name Address Phone Number
	Date
Name Title Company Address	
Dear (Name):	
<p>Henry Poulet at the Louvre suggested I contact you to ask for advice about pursuing a career in Fine Arts Administration. I worked with Mr. Poulet last summer through an internship sponsored by the University of Michigan and found the work to be exciting and allowed me to use knowledge from many of my academic courses. Mr. Poulet suggested that an excellent first step in my career search would be a discussion with you.</p>	
<p>I am going to be visiting New York this March (from the 12th to 18th). I will call your office within the week to see if I can schedule an appointment with you during that time.</p>	
	Regards,
	Daniel Griffin

Source: Vault.com

Exhibit 5.3 – Sample Cover Letter (Hard copy)

Your Street Address City, State Zip Code Telephone Number E-mail Address
Month, Day, Year
Mr./Ms./Dr. FirstName LastName Title Name of Organization Street or P. O. Box Address City, State Zip Code
Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. LastName:
Opening paragraph: State why you are writing; how you learned of the organization or position, and whether you have a networking connection.
2nd paragraph: Tell why you are interested in the employer or type of work the employer does (Simply stating that you are interested does not tell why, and can sound like a form letter). Demonstrate that you know enough about the employer or position to relate your background to the employer or position. Mention a few specific qualifications which make you a good fit for the employer's needs. (Focus on what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.) This is an opportunity to explain in more detail relevant items in your resume. Refer to the fact that your resume is enclosed. Mention other enclosures if such are required to apply for a position.

3rd paragraph: Indicate that you would like the opportunity to interview for a position or to talk with the employer to learn more about their opportunities or hiring plans. State what you will do to follow up, such as telephone the employer within two weeks. If you will be in the employer's location and could offer to schedule a visit, indicate when. State that you would be glad to provide the employer with any additional information needed. Thank the employer for her/his consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature [on hard copy])

Your name typed

(In case of e-mail, your full contact info appears below your printed name [instead of at the top, as for hard copy], and of course there is no handwritten signature)

Enclosure(s) (refers to resume, etc.)

Source: Virginia Tech, Division of Student Affairs, Career Services

Exhibit 5.4a – Sample Cover Letter (Tailored to Job Announcement, Exhibit 5.4b)

Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code
Telephone Number
E-mail Address

Month, Day, Year

Alice Ford, Recruitment Specialist
Fairfax County Public Schools
8115 Gatehouse Road
Falls Church, VA 22042

Dear Ms. Ford:

I am applying for the position of school counselor at Rachel Carson Middle School as advertised on the Fairfax County Public Schools website on March 15, 2012.

As a graduate student at George Mason University, I will complete an M.Ed. in counseling and development with a concentration in school counseling in May 2012. The possibility of working at Rachel Carson is exciting to me because of its multicultural student body, its nontraditional teaching methods, and the innovative programs initiated by the school to help each child develop to his or her fullest potential.

In the past year and a half, I have held a counseling internship conducting individual and group counseling sessions covering anger management, social skills development, study skills, friendship, grief, deployment, and divorce. In addition, I worked with a diverse student body that included many non-English speaking recent immigrants at Bailey's Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences. During this practicum, I conducted individual and group sessions addressing attendance, academic, career, and social concerns.

Enclosed is a current resume for your consideration. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person so we might discuss more fully the scope of the position and my qualifications for it. I can most easily be reached on my cell phone at 703-555-4398.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature [on hard copy])

Your name typed

Source: George Mason University, "Moving On: A Guide for Career Planning and Job Searching"

Exhibit 5.4b – Job Announcement for Sample Cover Letter (Exhibit 5.4a)

Fairfax County Public Schools

Title: School Counselor, Rachel Carson Middle School

Job Function: Counseling/Consulting/Crisis Intervention/Program Assessment and Evaluation

Duties: School counselor will work with students from multicultural and diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Provide developmentally appropriate information, knowledge, and skills to promote student success in academic, career, personal, and social areas. Serve as a consultant to parents and teachers helping them to be more effective in working with students through individual or group conferences, staff development activities, or parent educational workshops. Provide crisis intervention addressing specific concerns of students at risk or with identified needs consulting with parents and/or teachers as appropriate. Assess needs of students and staff, evaluate programs and make changes in the school counseling program to increase effectiveness. Act as liaison between teachers, parents/guardians, support personnel, and community resources to facilitate successful student development. Be an advocate ensuring equitable access to programs and services for all students.

To Apply: E-mail resume and cover letter to aford@fcps.edu by August 15, 2012.

Source: George Mason University, "Moving On: A Guide for Career Planning and Job Searching"

MODULE 6: INTERVIEWING

Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests know to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:6-7

Your resume has gotten your foot in the door. Congratulations! Now, you need to demonstrate that you are the best person for the job. Your success now hinges on the 3 P's: **P**reparation, **P**resentation and **P**assion.

Why “**p**repare”? It will quiet your nerves and enable you to demonstrate confidence.

How can you be confident with your **p**resentation? Smile, make eye contact, use a firm handshake, and exhibit good posture. Give strategic answers: Tell the interviewer what (s)he wants to know *and* tell the interviewer what you want him/her to know.

Use each response as an opportunity to demonstrate your value and how well you “fit” with the company. Focus on showing your **p**assion for the job. “Passion” is the key to distinguishing yourself.

Remember: The interviewer wants you to have a successful interview. If you are called for an interview, the company already thinks that you could be a “fit” for the position. They *want* you to convince them that you are the “best” fit, so that they can hire you. So, don't be modest. This is your chance to sell yourself. Do it.

Finally, you are not in this alone! Through **p**rayer, put your concerns in God's hands and ask for guidance, strength and courage!

Give Me the Opportunity, Lord....

Dear God, I place my humble needs before you: My need to meet my responsibilities, in the world. My need to use my God-given talents and abilities, and my need to fulfill my place here on earth. I pray for Your Guidance now to show me the way to the perfect opportunity to do what I love, to do what I can do well, and what will fulfill my needs mentally, spiritually, and financially. Help me to walk in faith as You show me the way! Thank you, Lord. Amen

Preparing for an Interview

There are differing opinions on how to prepare for an interview. But all agree that preparation is the key. Following are suggestions for how to prepare for an interview.

Know yourself and your “story” to give the best answers to interviewer’s questions. Organize your talents and skills with **ST-A-R STATEMENTS** in mind.

- ❖ What was the situation or task?
- ❖ What did you do?
- ❖ What was the result of your actions?

The STAR Statements were described in Module 2. The work you did drafting your resume is relevant to interview preparation as well.

Other good points to include in an interview are:

- ❖ How are your skills relevant to the company?
- ❖ Make a list of your successes and failures and be able to discuss what you would do differently.
- ❖ What do you want the company to know about you?

Know the company. What are their products and services? Who are the customers? Who are their competitors? What is the role of the job you applied for? Use this information to communicate your passion for the position/company.

Reread the original job advertisement. Identify the personal attributes and accomplishments needed for this job. Figure out ways you would succeed in this position.

Re-familiarize yourself with your resume. Be prepared to describe and discuss each entry.

Practice your answers aloud. When you’re ready, ask someone to do a mock interview with you. Don’t memorize them -- just be comfortable with their content. Be as expressive, open and concise about each experience as possible. Listen to their feedback. **Try to limit yourself to 2 minute answers.** The interviewer will probe, if additional information is desired.

Interviewing Blunders –The Do Not’s of Interviewing

Do not:

1. ...be late. Arrive 10-15 minutes early.
2. ...be defensive.
3. ...use jargon, slang or profanity.
4. ...interrupt the interviewer.
5. ...become too familiar with the interviewer.
6. ...talk about your lifestyle or personal life.
7. ...let your responses exceed two minutes.
8. ...bad mouth past employers or bosses.
9.leave your cell phone turned on.
10. ...refer to the interviewer by his/her first name, unless asked to do so.
11. ...ask about salary or benefits.
12. ...ask for days off for scheduled events.

Role Play. Exhibit 6.1 provides a list of sample interview questions. Draft responses. Keep your responses short, vivid, on point, positive and business-related. When possible, demonstrate your active problem-solving ability, using your experiences and accomplishments.

Exhibit 6.1 – Sample Interview Questions

Potential Interview Questions

Employers may ask you the following:

- Tell me about yourself. (This often is the first question/ “stress interview.”)
- Do you consider yourself a leader or a follower?
- Describe your perfect job.
- Why do you want to work for us?
- What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives, when and why did you establish these goals, and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
- What goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself for the next ten years?
- What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
- What do you really want to do in life?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
- What do you expect to be earning in five years?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
- Which is more important to you—the money or the type of job? Why? What motivates you?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses? Give examples.
- How would you describe yourself?
- How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- How has your education/experience prepared you for a career in _____?
- Why should I hire you?
- What qualifications do you have that make you think that you will be successful in _____ (your field)?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in an organization like ours?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
- What qualities should a successful _____ (manager, teacher, etc.) possess?
- Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him or her.
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
- Describe your most rewarding professional experience.
- If you were hiring someone for this position, what qualities would you look for?
- Why did you select this company?
- What led you to choose your field?
- What areas of your previous position did you like best? Why?
- What areas of your previous position did you like least? Why?
- If you could do so, how would you plan your career differently? Why?
- What changes would you make in your present company? Why?
- Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
- What have you learned from participation in volunteer activities?
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- How do you work under pressure?
- In what part-time or full-time jobs have you been most interested? Why?
- How would you describe the ideal job for you?
- Why did you decide to seek this position?
- What do you know about our company?

- What two or three things are most important to you in your job?

Behavioral Interview - Sample Questions

- Describe a time when you had to motivate a person who was experiencing difficulty in their work environment. What action did you take?
- Tell me about a time you provided excellent customer service. What did you do?
- Give an example of when you had to communicate an unpopular decision. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about the most stressful day you had in the last six months and how you dealt with it. What made it stressful for you?
- Think about a time you arrived at work expecting to do certain projects but instead were given new projects and had to drop everything to work on them. What steps did you follow to organize and prioritize?
- Describe a time when you addressed a difficult situation with a co-worker. What was the outcome?
- Give an example of a time you were not satisfied with a procedure, policy or process. What did you do? What was the outcome? Tell me about a time you were proud of your decision-making skills. Pick a technical problem you had to solve, give the details involved in it, and tell me about what you did to create the solution to that problem.
- Give an example from your current job that would reflect on your ability to deal with pressure.
- Describe a situation in your job that has successfully tapped into your creative skills. Be specific.

Frequently Asked Interview Questions

- What exactly do you want from us? (also known as describe your job.)
- Why did you leave your last job?
- What's your best accomplishment? (Tell me about the highlight of your career.)
- What are you good at? (What are your strengths? What's your strong suit? Sell yourself.)
- What's wrong with you? (What are your weaknesses? What's the one thing about yourself that you would improve? What's the one piece of advice you wish you had coming into your last job?)
- Describe a time you failed.

Your PRESENTATION in the Interview:

- ❖ Practice your **handshake** and **eye contact**.
- ❖ Have good posture to show your confidence and energy.
- ❖ Be animated in conversation, be vibrant, enthusiastic, spirited!
- ❖ Wear clothing that is clean and fits. Select a professional outfit appropriate for the industry.
- ❖ Bring paper and pen to the interview.
- ❖ Bring additional copies of your resume.
- ❖ Stay in contact with your references.
- ❖ Be on time and bring identification.
- ❖ Collect business cards from everyone performing the interview.
- ❖ Ask about timeframes for filling the position, how and when you will be notified of the hiring decision.

Introduce yourself to the receptionist and others that come into contact with you. Never underestimate the influence of "silent interviewers" (receptionists, secretaries, maintenance, employees). Your interviewer may speak with these individuals to get feedback on how you acted, your preparedness, and your treatment of others.

Peace begins with a smile. ~ Mother Teresa

In the interview...

- ❖ Listen carefully to the questions and answer the query; ask for clarification if necessary.
- ❖ Use the STAR model in your answers (See Module 2).
- ❖ Be brief and be specific in your answers. Remember the 2 minute rule.
- ❖ Prepare a list of questions to ask the interviewer. You *will* be asked if you have any questions. Answering, “No” conveys a lack of interest in the position. Only ask a few. Exhibit 6.2 provides a listing of potential questions.

Exhibit 6.2 – Sample Questions for Interviewer

Questions for the Interviewer
<p>Always:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Ask about timeframes for filling the position, how and when you will be notified of the hiring decision
<p>Possible Interview Questions to Ask the Interviewer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ What do you like about working here?❖ How would you describe the working environment?❖ How can I make an immediate impact on the bottom line of the department/company, etc.?❖ If you could change or take back any previous decisions, how would you change these?
<p>Possible Questions about the Job</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ What will be the scope of my responsibilities?❖ How would I spend my day?❖ Where does this job fit in the overall organization? How does this department interact with the organization?❖ What qualifications are important?❖ What are future growth plans for the company and what role will this job have in the plans/❖ What are the immediate job priorities?

What *Not* to Do in the Interview...

- ❖ Do not lie or exaggerate your credentials.
- ❖ Do not ramble in your answers – edit and focus your message.
- ❖ Do not be afraid or uncomfortable with silencetake time to think through difficult questions. Ask to come back to a question, if necessary.
- ❖ Beware of putting a positive spin in your answers. Interviewers often ask for an example of a weakness or a criticism. The interviewer wants to understand how well you know yourself. BEWARE of making a weakness sound like strength, for example: “I work too many hours.” Or “I am a perfectionist.” These are common and ineffective answers. Everyone has flaws and areas for growth. Choose a detail where you learned something and corrected a flaw.
- ❖ Avoid the salary discussion, if possible. Exhibits 6.3 and 6.4 provide sample scripts for the salary discussion.

Exhibit 6.3 – Sample Scripts for Avoiding Salary Question

- ❖ I'm not exactly sure what the job is, so maybe we can talk more about that. I'm flexible, and I'm sure that when we come to some agreement on the job, we can work out the salary.
- ❖ I'm sure you have a figure in mind, what have you budgeted for the position?
- ❖ I understand the market is \$_____ to \$_____ range. What range are you thinking for this position?

Exhibit 6.4 – Sample Script for Discussing Your Current Salary

- ❖ I'm paid very fairly for my responsibilities in my present job, and I expect a fair salary with respect to my responsibilities here.

Be prepared, however, if you **MUST** address the salary issue. Have an idea of the position's salary. Following are internet sites that may provide guidance.

www.glassdoor.com
www.payscale.com

www.rileyguide.com
www.salary.com

Types of Interviews

There are several types of interviews:

- ❖ *Screening/Telephone.* This is a screening interview that's become an increasingly common method, as it is a more efficient use of time and reduces interviewing costs. Be prepared for this call. If not prepared, schedule it for another time. Don't allow distractions. Be prepared for salary questions. Make sure to have your resume in front of you and be prepared with your elevator speech. HINT: Standing up increases your energy level and presentation focus.
- ❖ *One-to-One.* This is the most typical style of interview. It is characterized by broad questions (e.g., Tell me about yourself. What are your strengths? Weaknesses?)
- ❖ *Panel.* This is when a team or panel of people (between 3-6 people) interviews one individual. Each generally focuses on one set of competencies.
- ❖ *Team.* Serial one-on-one interviews conducted by various members of the organization. A structured evaluation tool is often used in this environment.
- ❖ *Flash.* Normally, a spontaneous meeting with a top executive, who will give the candidate a quick "once over." This is a good sign – you are being presented to the executive for final approval. Your meeting will be brief; perhaps a minute or two. You may want to have a few questions prepared for this circumstance.

Be brave and steadfast; have no fear or dread of them, for it is the Lord, your God, who marches with you; He will never fail or forsake you. ~ Deuteronomy 31:6

Thank You Letters and Follow Up

Write and send a thank-you note to each interviewer, with expressing appreciation for their time (See Exhibit 6.5). If a staff person helped schedule the interview, send that person a thank you note as well.

Use thank you letters as a further marketing opportunity to:

- ❖ Ensure the employer is familiar with your name.
- ❖ Restate your enthusiasm and interest in the position.
- ❖ Stress your qualifications.
- ❖ Add or correct any significant information or relevant point that you may have forgotten to mention or turn around any objections that occurred during the interview.
- ❖ Remind them of the next step.

Thank you notes should be emailed or snail mailed within 24-48 hours of the interview/contact. Personalize the letters to each person. Do this whether or not you are interested pursuing the job.

Exhibit 6.5 – Sample Thank You Letter

(Date)
(Your address)
(Person's name)
(Person's title)
(Company name)
(Company address)
Dear (Name):
Thank you for the time you spent with me on (date/date) describing the activities of the (section) and your requirements for additional staff.
I am enthusiastic about the prospects of working for (company name) and believe my experience is relevant to your needs, especially my most recent work as a (position) with (company name). I have enclosed a copy of (any supporting documents) that I developed for (whomever). From this, you can see (general details).
Please contact me if you want more information about my education or experience. (If appropriate) I will be out of town between (dates), but otherwise you can reach me at the telephone numbers I gave you at our meeting. I look forward to being in touch.
Sincerely,
(Signature)
(Your typed name)
Enclosure

Source: Fairfax Job Service Professional Resource Center

Remember: Contact the employer even if you are no longer interested in the position.

Place a call to the hiring manager about 10-14 days after the interview to follow-up on the status of the position. This re-emphasizes your interest in the position and reminds them of you.

Rejection

If you're rejected, don't be discouraged. Ask the interviewer to suggest how you could improve your resume/interview skills. If your resume and interview skills are fine, you might ask about other opportunities either within the organization.

Look at a stone cutter hammering away at his rock, perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack in it. Yet, at the hundred and first blow it will split in two, and I know it was not the last blow that did it, but all that had gone before. ~ Jacob A. Riis

MODULE 7: NEGOTIATING OFFERS

Introduction

Let's hope that you never have to negotiate a job offer – that the compensation package offered by your prospective employer contains everything that you have been praying for and more. If this is the case, great. Go ahead and accept the offer. Congratulations and give thanks to God.

But chances are that you may not be offered everything you are hoping for. Rather than rejecting an employment opportunity that is close to your desired package, this module will assist you with negotiating your employment offer.

Remember: This is a business discussion. Potential employers will expect you to negotiate.

But be cautious: The hiring professional may not have a lot of flexibility. So, be prepared to make a decision based on the initial offer or your counter-offer.

Offers of Employment – What to Do?

Get clear about what is important:

What is most important to you in making this decision? What are your values? Are you interested in this job? Is the cultural fit important? What is your personality? What will you get out of this role?

I don't want to earn my living; I want to live. ~ Oscar Wilde

KNOW YOUR WORTH

If you have not already done so, check out the web for salary information and your worth in the market (See Module 6 for web sites).

Be realistic. Explore options. Take time to: research, investigate, and evaluate. Know what the salary ranges are for this position and industry. This can help bolster your request for a better offer -- or let you know when to say yes. Look at job websites that are advertising positions similar to yours and see what salary and benefits they are offering. Speak to others in the industry and ask them to help you find comparables.

You may also want to take a look at a few books:

- ❖ Moving Up: How to Get High Salaried Jobs by Eli Djiddah
- ❖ American Salaries & Wages Annual Survey by Gale Research, Inc.
- ❖ Negotiating Your Salary: How to Make \$ 1000 a Minute by Jack Chapman
- ❖ Is That Your Best Offer? Webfeet Press
- ❖ Get Paid What You Are Worth Pinkley and Northcroft

When to Negotiate

Negotiations should take place **BEFORE** you accept a position with a perspective employer. Once hired, it will be difficult (if not impossible) to renegotiate your package. Remember, for nondiscrimination reasons, employers generally adopt standard salary and compensation treatment for employees. Negotiating outside of these established parameters will be very challenging.

But equally important: Do **NOT** try to negotiate your compensation package before you have a solid employment offer. Doing so will limit your bargaining power and may very well negotiate you right out of an employment opportunity.

How Do I Know What Elements of A Job Offer are Negotiable?

Ask, “Is this offer (or compensation item) firm or are you flexible?”

Negotiation

Once you have decided what role you want to accept and organization you want to join, you will need to take steps to ensure an effective negotiation. Remember not to be star struck by the excitement of the offer. Give yourself time to think it over – at the very minimum, one day.

No one can figure out your worth but you. ~ Pearl Bailey

Be ready to negotiate when you can give the employer your decision, how long do you have to get back to them? Make sure you have considered all of the other factors **before** you begin negotiating the job you have decided on. Your decision to join a company should not be solely based on the best salary. Think about what is most important to you long before the actual negotiating begins. (For example, is a few thousand more dollars more important than time off or a later start date?)

Think broadly about compensation. Salary is one element in the total package. Other critical elements include job design, promotional opportunities, assistance for a spouse who needs to find another job, etc. Make a list of your needs and their priority to you.

Be Prepared for the Negotiation

Make sure you have done your research before you engage in any form of negotiation. At a minimum, make sure you are armed with the following:

- ❖ Know what is important to you.
- ❖ Have a range of salary in mind. But more importantly, know your bottom-line salary/compensation requirements.
- ❖ Find out as much as you can about the job opening and where the company is in filling the opening. Where do you compare with other candidates? How many other candidates have interviewed? How long has the position been vacant? How well do your qualifications match the job requirements?

Take your time while negotiating. You do not have to give an answer to a job offer immediately, and should take time to craft your negotiating strategy. Once an offer is made, determine the time frame for your response. Call any other companies that you are truly interested in to accelerate the interview/offer process.

Get your offer in writing, especially when it contains variances with other company policies. Writing it down helps avoid good faith misunderstandings. More importantly, it helps insure you against the many things that can happen between the date you agree on terms and the time an anticipated benefit is supposed to arrive.

Contingent Offers

Sometimes an offer will be contingent upon successfully completing background and reference checks, but some offers may contain other contingencies. If an offer is contingent for example on winning a contract or customer approval, make sure you understand the process and next steps.

If it is contingent on winning a contract and the company is using your resume to help in their efforts, make sure that if they win they will hire you.

If you accept a contingent offer, make sure you tell the company that you will still entertain other offers. Having a contingent offer may make you more attractive to other companies and convince them to speed up their hiring process.

Accepting/Declining Offers

Most employment offers will have a signature block for you to confirm your agreement to accept the offer. Should you have a need to write an acceptance letter, be sure to include your starting Salary, Starting date and time, and any perks, signing bonuses, etc. that were negotiated.

Declining an offer should be done in writing and as soon as you accept another position. This is an important step because you may need this contact later on, so never burn your bridges.