

# 11 Steps To Employment Success...Starting Now

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Let's get right to the point. I would like to suggest that students should concentrate on the job search preparation activities that are most likely to give them the results that lead to good jobs in their fields of interest.

College students must understand that the "The senior year job search actually starts in the Freshman year." That means that students who spend enough time following the eleven steps described below will give themselves the best chance for landing good paying jobs in their areas of interest. Waiting too long to get started is the biggest mistake that a student can make.

## Eleven Steps

**1. Select A Field Of Interest** - Many students already know their areas of interest when they enter college. Generally, they are the areas where students have had some previous experience, success and enjoyment. Nearly every student can tell us what they like and where they have experienced success. They can also tell us what they dislike and where they have done poorly.

By thinking about their natural strengths and previous experiences, many students will know if they are computer savvy, whether they are good with math and science, how well they read, write, speak and communicate, whether they have a thing for teaching, if they have an interest in business and whether they can act, sing and dance or something else. With some thought, most students can put themselves into a broad category. Those who do not have a general direction can be counseled and tested.

**2. Identify Jobs or Job Categories That Are of Interest to You** - Students must have a target. Without a target, their efforts and activities are likely to be all over the place. Students should try to identify jobs that will take advantage of their natural strengths and capabilities in areas they like.

**3. Select A Major And A Minor That Will Directly Support Your Targets** - Your primary academic courses should be as closely related to your employment direction as possible. Talk with former students, counselors, employers and people who are performing the jobs that are of interest. They can provide useful information.

**4. Identify Employers That Hire Students for Those Target Jobs** - It is important to identify as many employers as possible. Those are your target employers. Identify the names of the hiring managers for the jobs that are of interest to you. Try to obtain their phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Begin to follow them on LinkedIn and Twitter. Learn as much as possible about them and their companies. They may reveal information that you can use.

**5. Research The Employer Requirements For Your Target Jobs** - What education, skills, talents, experiences, accomplishments, successes and results do employers need, want and expect of employment candidates. Will candidates be expected to demonstrate communication and leadership skills? To what degree do these jobs require creativity, problem-solving, initiative, high productivity, accuracy and quality etc.? How much technical experience and what skills are needed?

**6. Develop A Semester-by-Semester Employment Plan Of Action** - Based on 5 above, wise students get started early to develop a plan that will meet or exceed the employer requirements for the jobs that are of interest to them. Each semester there should be a list of four or five items to be completed. In that way students will gradually move closer and closer to their employment goals each semester and greatly improve their chances for employment success. Students who do not give employers what they want will be eliminated from consideration.

**7. Obtain Good Grades In The Courses Related To Your Field Of Interest** - Employers expect you to do your best in courses related to your major and minor. If your grades are only average, you will have to excel in another area that the employer considers to be important. By the way, employers want more than good grades. They prefer students who have proved themselves on the job or in some other way.

**8. Obtain Some Work Experience in Areas That Interest Your Target Employers** - Internships, part-time and summer jobs can give you the experiences that will set you apart from other good candidates. Employers love to hear about your on the job experiences, accomplishments and contributions. Even if you do not work in your field of interest, you can demonstrate your leadership, creativity, problem-solving and communication skills. They are all important.

**9. Participate In Activities That Enable You To Demonstrate Your Capabilities** - Whenever you participate in on-campus or off-campus activities, you give yourself the opportunity to make a positive impression on employers. You can demonstrate your capabilities by taking on some responsibility, utilizing your knowledge and skills and accomplishing something positive. Students who do not get involved with the activities that are available will limit the number of places where they can impress employers.

**10. Create A Strong Employment Network** - The more people who know you and think highly of you the more likely you will obtain the information you will need to identify potential employers, people who work for them and the jobs that may be available. Your job is to expand your network and regularly communicate with the people who can help you. Keep in mind that whenever you help a member of your network, you increase the chances that they will help you.

**11. Build Relationships With People Who Will Serve As References** - Enthusiastic, influential and impressive references will help to ensure that you receive more and better job offers. However, you should realize that it takes a long time to build a solid relationship with someone who must place their reputation on the line to support you and your employment goals. Building relationships should not be a last minute thought.

A résumé which does not describe a substantial number of accomplishments, successes, positive results and examples of impressive experiences, will be quickly eliminated from the competition. However, when you carefully follow these eleven steps, you will be thoroughly considered by many more employers and are likely to increase the number of job offers you receive.