

## HOW TO ADOPT A SEARCH STRATEGY THAT GRABS EMPLOYERS

**Summary:** Follow this advice about how to grab the attention of employers and secure a competitive job to support you through your college education.



**Question:** I'm a junior at a state university who is in desperate need of employment. I need a part-time job with moderately competitive pay so that I can cover my bills until I can begin a career as an industrial psychologist. It is becoming increasingly difficult to remain in school. Do you have some ideas on what I could do?

**Answer:** With your strong commitment to your education and a little more than a year remaining, pull out all the stops before putting college on hold. In a competitive job field characterized by a lull in hiring activity and many qualified candidates for hire, you must frame yourself in exactly the picture that employers are seeking. "A part-time job with moderately competitive pay" is a modest request that understandably reflects your needs, but it doesn't address employers' needs.

First, develop a "right on" objective and description of the value you would add to an employer, based on the demands of the position and your qualifications. This means you have to do some homework on your potential employer to understand and communicate how you can meet the organization's needs.

Next, practice your presentation. Work with your college career-center staff to develop a one-minute "commercial" about yourself for networking and a targeted resume and cover letter for print and e-mail communication. Role-play interviews until you're ready to gracefully highlight your strengths and address potential objections.

Finally, tap your resources and make sure you have all of your contacts working for you. Family, friends, colleagues, and bosses from summer jobs are excellent prospects for job leads and advice. But, don't stop there. Alumni, professors, fellow students and the financial-aid representatives of the college may have ideas or leads to contribute. Demonstrate your commitment, explain your situation and seek assistance from your sources. As you are networking with these folks, be sure that you also are promoting your longer-term goal of becoming an industrial psychologist. The more legwork you can do now to position yourself for that role, the more likely you'll be successful in securing your desired job when you graduate.

Simultaneous to this frenzy of activity, develop a "plan B" which would include a strategy for securing a full-time position now and continuing your schooling one course at a time or at a later date. If you do decide to leave school, be sure to keep the door open with your contacts at your university and map out a plan for your eventual graduation.

See **What Does It Take to Land a Job Today?** for more information.