CAREER SERVICES
~ Navigating Your Success

UW River Falls

Job & Internship Search Strategies

Your career is a journey, not a destination, and you do not have to decide what you want to do for the rest of your life, just what you want to do first. Your degree from UW-River Falls will serve you exceptionally well in any number of chosen career fields. Chances are you will not stay in the same job, or even the same field, for your entire career; however, your degree will give you fundamental skills to help you for a lifetime.

Steps to a Successful Job/Internship Search

STEP 1: Self-Assessment

The job/internship search process begins with an identification of your values, interests, skills, personality preferences, accomplishments, experience, and goals. Self-assessment provides invaluable information to facilitate career decisions and prepare you to market your background effectively.

Values
A value is a quality that is important or desirable in your life. An awareness of what you value in a career will aid you in exploring career goals and attaining greater satisfaction in your work. Examples include a flexible schedule, advancement opportunities, professional growth, and an attractive wage.

Interests
An interest is an area that grabs your attention and increases enthusiasm. Interests relate closely to values and frequently trigger skill and expertise development. You can identify interests by looking at themes in your life that persist over time, consistent choices, dreams, or the way you spend your time.

Skills
A skill refers to something you do well. One key component to a successful job/internship search is recognizing these skills and communicating their usefulness verbally and in writing to a prospective employer. Some of the most marketable skills are those that are useful in a wide variety of work environments, known as transferable skills. For example, the ability to write effectively, communicate verbally, and utilize technology are skills valued in a variety of work environments.

Personality
Different personalities will lead to different preferences within work environments. It is important to explore how your personality will fit within a position, work environment, and company to determine if there is a "fit" with the job.

STEP 2: Research and Explore Career Options

The next step in the job/internship search process is to explore commonalities between your identified skills, interests, values, personality and common requirements of career fields. Researching career options and completing informational interviews are excellent tools for this exploration process. The purpose of informational interviews is to gain current, regional, and/or specialized information about a specific organization, position, or an academic or career area. Conducting an informational interview may also increase your network, which could also generate job prospects. Unlike job interviews, however, informational interviews are for gathering information, not for obtaining a job. Contact Career Services if you are interested in conducting informational interviews and we will assist you with brainstorming questions and identifying faculty members, professionals, and companies to contact.

Perhaps the best way to explore career options is to try out intended jobs through internships, part-time or seasonal jobs, or volunteer opportunities. Visit Career Services' website for resources to help you research career and internship opportunities.

STEP 3: Choose a Career Field, then Target Employers

After targeting a career field that will satisfy your high-priority values, interests, skills, and personality, and thoroughly researching possible jobs/internships, several options may emerge as attractive and realistic. You will want to target specific employers who commonly hire within this designated career field. Researching employers will not only give you a competitive edge, but will also help you decide which employers you want to reach.

Researching Employers

Two primary reasons to research employers are: 1) to aid you in your job/internship search; and 2) to help prepare you for your interview. Researching an employer during your job/internship search can help you determine more about that organization and your potential place in it. Some important information to look for includes what they do; how they do it; what types of jobs exist; their financial state (if they are expanding or downsizing); expectations of potential employees in terms of skill, education, and previous experience; and what you can offer them.

Where to Research Employers?

- **MonsterTRAK Company Profiles** – Provides detailed descriptions on an organization's history, services, and products.
- **Lexis Nexis –** A large collection of public records, unpublished opinions, forms, legal, news, and business information.
- **Hoovers Company Profiles –** Provides profiles of national and international companies including contact information, competitors, executives, and financial information.
- **LinkedIn -** Contains company profiles, which include a general description and employee information with links to employee profiles.
- **Reference USA -** Contains detailed information on more than 14 million U.S. businesses.
- **Annual Reports -** Reports and other materials present an outline of the organization's successes, growth, history, goals, and financial status. These reports are typically accessible on company websites.
- **Directories** - Geographic, business, occupational, professional, industry, and financial status directories available at the library. These directories may provide information about an organization's products or services, number of employees, principal executives, and location(s).
- **Trade/Professional Associations** – Associations produce membership directories and journals, which provide information about trends, issues in the field, and information briefs. They also hold annual conferences for your networking, information gathering, and professional development purposes.
- **Colleagues -** Provide "word-of-mouth" information about organizations of interest and valuable information about their field.
- **Competitors -** Offer excellent insight about the inner working of that organization.

STEP 4: Prepare Marketing Materials and Develop Job/Internship Searching Skills

Once your career and employer search goals have been targeted, resumes and cover letters may be tailored to reflect your qualifications as they relate to the interests of prospective employers and specific positions. It is very important to spend time creating a well-prepared resume, cover letter and professional portfolio. Career Services offers individual appointments and events that will help you learn which job/internship search strategies are productive, how to market yourself well, how to interview effectively, and how to handle salary and benefit negotiations once an offer is made.

STEP 5: Plan and Conduct Job/Internship Search Campaign

Next, establish a target date for getting a job/internship and decide how much time you can devote to your search. Keep in mind job/internship searching needs to be a top priority and will take time and effort. Get organized early by setting aside time each week to work on your search. Networking and searching for posted job vacancies are primary techniques. Use a calendar and weekly planner to manage your contacts and the jobs to which you have applied.

Find Advertised Job Vacancies

The most commonly used job search technique is to respond to advertised vacancies, both in print and electronically. If you apply to advertised vacancies, to increase the odds of obtaining an interview among the hundreds of applicants, target your resume and cover letter to the job. Focus a majority of your energies on networking to build professional contacts and so recruiters remember your name. Keep these tips in mind:

- Do not waste time applying to positions if you do not meet the qualifications.
- Use your cover letter to discuss every requirement in the advertisement that you meet.
- Personalize your response as much as possible. Direct your materials to specific individuals, not "To Whom It May Concern," unless the advertisements are blind newspaper ads where the name of the organization is withheld. A quick phone call can provide appropriate names. In a blind ad, address your letter to a specific position title, (e.g., Dear "Marketing Manager")
- After a week or two of submitting your application, follow-up to ensure they have received your materials, clear-up any questions and ask about the hiring timeline.

UWRF Hire-a-Falcon System

The Hire-a-Falcon system (www.uwrf.edu/jobs) is a free on-line recruitment tool to assist students and alumni with career planning and job search related needs and includes:

1. Jobs & Internships
   Work-study, student assistance, part-time jobs, and hundreds of professional job and internship listings either submitted directly to UWRF by employers or compiled by UWRF Career Services from local, state, and national job boards are listed. All positions are targeted to college students and degree holders.
2. Job Search Agent
   Set-up your account to receive a daily email list of all jobs Career Services receives which match the types of jobs you are seeking (full-time, part-time, internship, and on-campus student jobs).
3. Resume Critique
   If you upload a resume to your account, you can elect to have it critiqued electronically. It will be printed and critiqued by Career Services with suggestions for improvement and emailed directly to you.
4. On-Campus Interviews
   Sign-up for interviews with employers coming to campus to interview for full-time positions and internships.
5. Resume Referrals to Open Jobs (Seniors & Grads Only)
   When employers contact UWRF Career Services asking for resumes of students who are qualified for their open full-time positions, we will refer your resume to them if you are a senior/graduate and qualify.

Your Personal Network

According to a recent article in the Harvard Business Review, nearly 80% of the openings available at any one time are never advertised. Networking is a job search strategy to help you uncover these opportunities.

Networking is the planned process by which one becomes known, through in-person meetings in business and social settings, to people who can provide information about job openings, leads, personal contacts and start-up companies, and who have the power to hire. Keep these objectives in mind when networking:

- Inform people that you are available for hire
- Uncover hidden jobs and career opportunities
- Open up channels of communication
- Increase your knowledge of companies and the industry
- Create a positive impression with an individual, especially if they have the power to hire

Networking requires initiative and assertiveness on your part; however, the time and effort is well worth the results. Your personal network is limited only by your willingness to contact individuals, therefore begin with parents and relatives, professors, supervisors, Career Services staff, friends, classmates, informational interview contacts, UW-River Falls' alumni/ae, and community members.

Using Social Media in Your Job Search

Social media has become a new trend in the job and internship search process. Research has found that some recruiters report over half of their placements were connected to online social network use in some way. Considering this, if you are not on a social networking site you could be overlooked.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the most widely used online social network by professionals. In fact, executives from all Fortune 500 companies use LinkedIn. LinkedIn can be beneficial for completing many of the steps within the job and internship search. By creating a profile (see page 8) on LinkedIn, you build a professional brand and credible reputation while searching for jobs, conducting industry research, and researching specific companies. To use LinkedIn, connect to others you know and then ask for referrals to their connections. This leads to a large professional network in a small amount of time. Some ideas to begin making connections include alumni, career center staff, parents, relatives, friends/peers, internship supervisors, former supervisors, professional association members, and volunteer connections. Your goal as a professional is to grow your LinkedIn network with individuals within your field.

Company Research: One of the best ways to use LinkedIn is for company research, especially if you are preparing for an upcoming interview or looking to conduct an informational interview! LinkedIn will show you if any of your connections work at that company, if anyone in your network is connected with anyone at that company, and who is working in human resources at the company. Many companies also have their own page on LinkedIn, which displays employee and company statistics, new hire information, stock information, and other general company information. Using LinkedIn, you can search for specific companies, related companies, and career paths of people who work within an organization.

Job searching: LinkedIn has its own job board. Members can post open positions using this tool. You can also check recruiter's profiles at companies of interest, as some may post open positions as a status update.

Join groups: Joining groups connects you to even more people. Groups contain discussion board pages, and answering questions on these boards demonstrates your expertise and gets your name "out-there" in the field.

Facebook

Facebook has shifted from being an online social network of personal use, to also being used within companies and industries. Although there is still debate as to whether Facebook should be used for professional reasons, many companies have started using it. Some ways Facebook can be beneficial to your job search includes company and company culture research, searching for company events, networking, and posting updates on your job search. Many companies have started using Facebook for intern blogging, company marketing, event advertising, outreach, and for branding purposes. Their profile pages can help you learn more about the company and its culture. Remember to keep your profile updated and keep your settings private if you do not want employers to see your personal information. See page 5 for more information on privacy settings.

Twitter

Twitter can be used in the job search by following recruiters at companies of interest to check for tweets about job openings. This is also a helpful tool for learning more about companies and industries by following professionals working in the field. One idea is to follow industry leaders to learn where and how they spend their professional time (conferences, with whom, what they are reading). You can use Twitter proactively by tweeting that you are looking for a position and tweeting about professional interests, links, ideas, or articles. Remember to use a professional name when using Twitter.

Best Practices for Social Media Use

- Combine online and face-to-face networking
- Build relationships gradually instead of selling oneself; approach as a giver instead of a taker
- Use it as a learning tool: learn about industries, companies, and professionals in your field of interest

Adapted from http://jobsearch.about.com/od/networking/a/socialmedia.htm?p=1

Managing Your Online Presence

Unflattering personal information drifting around the Internet, known by some as "digital dirt," can doom a job and internship search before it even gets started. Recruiters can, and often do, read much of what is posted about candidates on the web. There is still debate on if screening candidates using social media is ethical and legal. According to a 2009 survey of employers by Microsoft, 79% of recruiters and hiring managers view online information about potential hires, and 44% of employers have cited the posting of inappropriate content on social networking websites as reasons for turning down a job applicant. Search engines are not going away, so here are some tips to help job and internship seekers clean up their digital dirt.

Search Yourself:

Go to a popular search engine (Google.com, Yahoo.com, or MSN.com) and type your name in quotation marks. If you find something you rather the world did not see, contact the site's owner and ask that it be removed. If you have a popular name, narrow your search using varied combinations with your name, like the state and/or city you live in. You should also search for yourself on Facebook and LinkedIn to make sure your privacy settings are set correctly and no one has entered false information about you.

Bury Your Dirt:

You may be able to cover up your digital dirt by crowding it out with positive information. Search engines typically rank their results based on the number of sites that link to those pages. The more links, the higher the search ranking. Make sure the pages you want recruiters to see have more links to them than the pages you would rather keep hidden.

Adapted from: http://www.careerjournal.com/jobhunting/usingnet/20060112-flesher.html and http://www.usnews.com/articles/education/best-colleges//2010/05/12/5-dos-and-donts-for-college-students-using-social-media

Privacy Settings

Be aware; companies may be using online social networks for screening potential employees. To keep your personal information concealed, make sure to use privacy tools on social media sites such as Facebook.

The following are Facebook privacy settings of which to be aware:

- Categorize your friends into different groups with different privacy settings. This is a great idea for keeping professional contacts separate from personal contacts.
- Limit the visibility of your contact information so only close friends have access to your phone number, email, or address. You can set custom privacy settings for each contact item you have in your profile.
- Remove yourself from Facebook and Google search results if you do not want others to see you have a profile on the site. You can do this by visiting the *search privacy settings* page. For Google, uncheck the box next to “Public Search Results” which says “Allow Indexing”. Select the “Only Friends” privacy setting next to “Facebook Search Results” to remove yourself from Facebook search results.
- Restrict tagged photos of you and your photo albums from the public if you do not want others to see pictures of you.
- Keep your friendships private if you do not want others to see your Facebook friends or if you want to stop others from browsing through your friends to determine relevant clients for marketing purposes.
- Restrict your wall posts if you want to control what information is visible to others. You can block all friends from posting to your wall or customize who can view wall posts made by friends.
- Privatize your relationship status if you do not want others to know about changes in your relationships from news feed stories.

Although less commonly used, LinkedIn also has privacy settings you can utilize. Some prefer to separate their personal from professional social media life by choosing to keep their personal contacts on Facebook and professional contacts only on LinkedIn.

Adapted from: http://www.allfacebook.com/2009/12/facebook-privacy-new/

The Relocation Job Search

Factors to Consider

Cost of living:

- Can you afford to live in the area(s) you are considering?
- What is the average starting salary for the career fields you are considering? Plug those numbers into a salary calculator, visit Career Services' website at http://www.uwrf.edu/career/salary-calculators.htm for a list of available salary calculators.
- Ask yourself: Can I afford to live the lifestyle I want in this city or am I willing to adjust my lifestyle as needed (get a part-time job, live with a roommate, use public transportation, or go to fewer movies)?

The environment:

- Climate-Does the weather suit you?
- Economics-What does the economy look like in this area? Is the region growing? What are the industries in the area? If you do not have a job, will you be able to find a job in your field in the area, and how long will it take you to afford a home, or to support a family?
- Social/cultural-Are there things to do that match your interests: outdoor activities, book clubs, movie theatres, restaurants, volunteer opportunities, etc.? Are there people your age moving and living there?

Transportation:

- Is public transportation convenient?
- What might your commute time be to and from your office?
- What travel options are available if you want to get out of town (bus, train, airplane)?

Your network:

1. **Friends and family-**Have you told people your plans to relocate? Can they put you in touch with people who can offer information for your relocation?
2. **Alumni-** Contact alums located in the region where you want to live by utilizing the UWRF Alumni Association (www.uwrf.edu/alumni) or LinkedIn.
3. **Professional Associations-**Professional associations or societies serve as a great informational source. They also have local chapters or clubs that you can use as a resource for information on your new location, for an "instant" network.

Read the Newspapers

Get to know the region you plan to call home. What industries are growing in the area? Which companies are staples of the community? Are any companies planning to move to the area? Visit newspapers.com to access online newspapers from around the country.

Explore the Colleges/Universities

Visit UWRF Career Services to see if we have contacts at colleges or universities in the area you are moving. You may have a built-in pipeline to information regarding industries and organizations in the area, potential places to find job listings, and other resources you can call on for help.

Research the Chambers of Commerce

A Chamber of Commerce is an organization that promotes the economic development of the particular region it represents and often has information you can use to locate potential employers and learn about the city or area. Check out the web site www.uschamber.com to locate the chamber in your choice city.

Adapted from: www.jobweb.com/resources/library/Career_Pursuit/Career_Tips_for_Road_232_01.htm

Pros and Cons of Job Search Methods

Method	Pros	Cons
Networking	It really works because most jobs are never advertised; networking is how you find them. This is the most effective way to find a job and have your name remembered by recruiters, so a majority of your time should be spent utilizing this method.	If you are shy, it could be somewhat uncomfortable. You need to demonstrate good interpersonal skills and strong motivation.
Social Media	It is becoming a very popular and highly utilized networking tool. It can be beneficial for networking for those who are shy. Allows you to conduct detailed research on companies and industries. Some also contain private job board tools. Use professionally and in conjunction with face-to-face networking.	Requires access to technology and internet. Can be challenging to use effectively as a professional networking tool. Can have a negative impact if profiles display unprofessional images.
UWRF On-Campus Interviewing	Employers come to UWRF Career Services to interview for internships and jobs.	Not every industry or type of job is represented.
UWRF Hire-a-Falcon System	Employers list jobs specifically for college students. A posted job means the employer needs it filled soon. You can also set up a job agent to have newly posted positions emailed directly to you in an email list.	Most jobs are targeted to college students and recent graduates, not individuals with extensive experience.
Job Listings Online	You can view them at your own convenience and from the comfort of your own home. Set-up a job agent at each site to have relevant jobs emailed directly to you.	Web hunting is not about finding jobs instantly. You need patience to navigate a variety of sites and read listings.
Career/Job Fairs	Opportunities to speak with many employers at one time in one place. UWRF hosts a Career Fair every October for students and alumni.	You are not learning about every opportunity in each organization, you are learning which employers would want to hire you.
Going Global	If you are looking to broaden your horizons overseas, this is a great place to start. Information includes international job postings and tips on interviewing customs and relocating to a new country. Visit www.uwrf.edu/career/research_employers.htm to access this web site.	There are many details to pay attention to! Takes time and patience.
Posting Resume Online	It never hurts to get your resume out where it can potentially be seen. This is a possibility in the UWRF Hire-a-Falcon system at www.uwrf.edu/jobs. Industry specific sites should be a first stop.	Both of these options are passive job search methods. You wait to be called or sent jobs. If your credentials are in extremely high demand, you may get more calls than you want. If your credentials are not in high demand, you will have to choose more active job search methods.
Using a Job Agent	Using a Job Agent to have relevant job postings emailed directly to you is an effective time saving technique for searching multiple web sites with minimal effort.	

Adapted from: http://www.career.vt.edu/PrintPublications/CareerPlanningGuide2007-2008.pdf

How to Build a Professional Student LinkedIn Profile

Think of your LinkedIn profile as an interactive business card. It's a summary of your professional experience, interests, and capabilities that is designed to attract the attention of important people who are searching fore you online—recruiters, networking contracts, and grad school admissions officers. A strong profile is a key differentiator in the job market.

1. Craft an informative profile headline

Your profile headline gives people a short, memorable way to understand who you are in a professional context. Think of the headline as the slogan for your professional brand, such as "Student, National University" or "Recent honors grad seeking marketing position." Check out the profiles of students and recent alums you admire for ideas and inspiration.

2. Display an appropriate photo

Remember that LinkedIn is not Facebook or MySpace. If you choose to post a photograph— and we recommend that you do—select a professional, high-quality headshot of you alone. Party photos, cartoon avatars, and cute pics of your puppy do not fit in the professional environment of LinkedIn.

3. Show off your education

Include information about all institutions you have attended. Include your major and minor if you have one, as well as highlights of your activities. It is also appropriate to include study abroad programs and summer institutes. Do not be shy—your LinkedIn profile is an appropriate place to show off your strong GPA and any honors or awards you have won.

4. Develop a Professional Summary Statement

Your summary statement should resemble the first few paragraphs of your best-written cover letter—concise and confident about your goals and qualifications. Remember to include relevant internships, volunteer work, and extracurriculars. Present your summary statement in short blocks of text for easy reading. Bullet points are great, too.

5. Fill your "Specialties" section with keywords

"Specialties" is the place to include key words and phrases that a recruiter or hiring manager might type into a search engine to find a person like you. The best place to find relevant keywords is on the job listings that appeal to you and the LinkedIn profiles of people who currently hold the kinds of positions you want.

6. Update your status weekly

A great way to stay on other people's radar screens and enhance your professional image is to update your status at least once a week. Tell people about events you are attending, major projects you have completed, professional books you are reading, or any other news that you would tell someone at a networking reception or on a quick catch-up phone call.

7. Show your connections with LinkedIn Group badges

Joining groups and displaying group badges on your profile are the perfect ways to fill out the professionalism of your profile and show your desire to connect to people with whom you are something in common. Most students start by joining their university's LinkedIn group as well as the larger industry groups related to the career they want to pursue.

8. Collect diverse recommendations

Nothing builds credibility like third-party endorsements. The most impressive LinkedIn profiles have at least one recommendation associated with each position a person has held. Think about soliciting recommendations from professors, internship coordinators and colleagues, employers, and professional mentors.

9. Claim your unique LinkedIn URL

To increase the professional results that appear when people type your name into a search engine, set your LinkedIn profile to "public" and claim a unique URL for your profile (for example: www.linkedin.com/in/yourname). This also makes it easier to include your LinkedIn URL in your email signature, which is a great way to demonstrate your professionalism.

10. Share your work

A final way to enhance your LinkedIn profile is to add examples from your writing, design work, or other accomplishments by displaying URLs or adding LinkedIn Applications. By including URLs, you can direct people to your website, blog, or Twitter feed. Through Applications, you can share a PowerPoint or store a downloadable version of your resume.

Visit grads.linkedin.com for more information

Retrieved from http://careerservices.linkedin.com/Build-A-Professional-Profile.pdf