Work Search Stratgies

DEIRDRE A. PICKERELL
Life Strategies Ltd.

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

As you begin, reflect on your own work search experiences:
1. How did you find your last job?
2. How did you research the career development sector?
3. When was the last time you updated your résumé?

Introduction and Learning Objectives

An important part of the career development process involves understanding various work search strategies, including exploring the world of work, gaining relevant experience, identifying job leads, and preparing work search documents such as résumés and cover letters. Career practitioners, and their clients, need to understand the opportunities available now, trends for the future, and how to quickly and efficiently source relevant and accurate career information. Once career opportunities are identified, clients need to gain relevant experience (if they don't already have it), prepare their work search documents, and be ready for job interviews and negotiations.

At the end of this chapter, you will be able to help clients:

1. Be alert to employment trends and new job opportunities.
2. Develop options for gaining experience.

3. Be able to analyze their skills and values.
4. Build a career portfolio.
5. Use several methods for identifying job leads.
6. Create a master application form.
7. Develop an effective résumé.
8. Write persuasive cover letters.
9. Prepare for job interviews.
10. Be prepared to negotiate compensation.

Ten Components of Work Search Strategies

There are 10 key components to any work search strategy. Some components are the responsibility of the client, others the responsibility of the practitioner, and some are actioned by both. In the sections that follow, a brief summary of the 10 key components is provided.

1. Exploring Opportunities

The Canadian workplace is in a constant state of flux. Gone are many of the more traditional forms of employment that offered secure, long-term opportunities with one organization, along with medical and dental benefits, regular salary increases, and a pension. Today's workers may be self-employed, juggle multiple part-time jobs, or work virtually. There may be a small contingent of Canadians working for a multi-national corporation; many others will be employed in one of Canada's one million small businesses (Industry Canada, 2012).

Exploring opportunities focuses on learning about the world of work by asking: What jobs are available in my community today? What jobs will be available in the future? As a career practitioner you will have an important role in helping clients learn more about the type of work available, current employment trends, and prospects for the future. There is a wide-range of resources designed to assist you and your clients in researching career information and employment opportunities. Each province and territory has a website (or section of a website) that focuses on local labour market

Look Before You Leap: Self-Employment Survival Strategies

by Deirdre A. Pickerell

Self-employment is a growing trend in many sectors, and increasingly an option for career practitioners and counsellors. CERIC and Life Strategies Ltd. partnered on a Look Before You Leap project. The book *Look Before You Leap: Self-Employment Survival Strategies* is freely available at <http://issuu.com/ceric_ca/docs/look_before_you_leap_full_book_2011/1?e=2937234/3571913>.

information. This list is available at the end of the chapter. As with any research, check that the resources identified are relevant, reliable, and up to date.

2. Gaining Relevant Experience

Before making a firm commitment to enroll in an education program or to begin a focused job search, it may be important to gain relevant experience. This experience may be as brief as a visit to a job site while exploring work opportunities, or a longer commitment designed to develop required skills for a specific position. There are many ways for clients to gain relevant work experience, including volunteering, job shadowing, internships, and co-op terms.

Volunteering involves working without pay. Sometimes experience as a volunteer in an organization is a prerequisite for employment or for admission into an educational program. Clients should approach volunteering with the same level of professional commitment as they would paid employment. There are many benefits from volunteering:

- demonstrating skills and abilities to prospective employers,
- developing skills and knowledge,
- exploring and learning more about potential careers,
- giving back to the community,
- expanding professional networks.

When used as a work search strategy, clients should look for volunteer opportunities with organizations that match their career interests and values.

Job shadowing involves observing someone at work for a few hours or a few days. Some job shadowing is informal, such as simply observing people as they go about their tasks (e.g., restaurant server, bus driver, or teacher). A formal job shadow program allows clients to truly experience the position, ask questions, develop a relationship with the employer, and demonstrate skills and talents. When setting up a formal job shadow placement be sure to identify any workers' compensation or liability insurance requirements for your jurisdiction; that is, who covers your client should he/she suffer a workplace injury?

A work internship, practicum, or co-op term offers clients practical, hands-on experience in a specific job. These types of placements are usually unpaid, or paid below industry standard, and may last from one week to several months. Individuals are usually given the tasks and responsibilities of an employee in that same position with varying levels of supervision. Many such placements are completed as part of an educational program. *As with job shadowing, ensure clients are covered under workers' compensation and liability insurance.*

❖ *Stop and Reflect*

Workers' compensation programs are administered by provincial and territorial governments. As each geographical region may have different requirements, it will be important to contact the local office for information regarding coverage. See the following website for provincial links: <http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/information/wcb_canada.html>.

3. Identifying Skills and Values

Once clients have explored the world of work and identified what type of position they might be interested in, they need to focus on their skills, interests, values, and personality, and think about how the sum of who they are connects to the work they are interested in doing. Amundson and Poehnell (2008) introduced The Wheel (Figure 1), a useful career-planning model that comprises eight areas to consider when contemplating career goals.
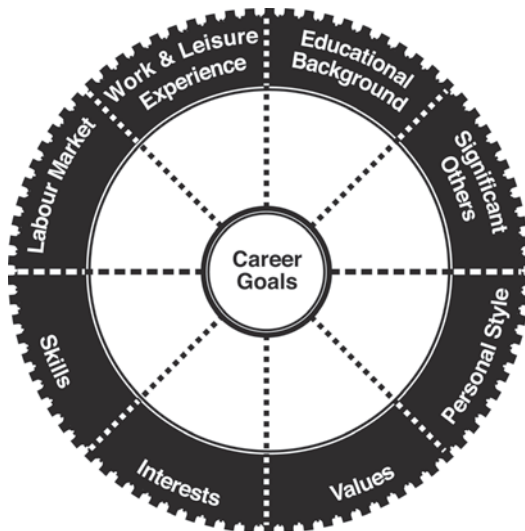

Figure 1: The Wheel. From N. Amundson & G. Poehnell, 2008, *Career Pathways* (2nd ed.). Richmond, BC: Ergon. Reproduced with permission.

The top half of The Wheel considers external factors (e.g., labour market or career opportunities, work experience, education, significant others, etc.), while the bottom relates to personal characteristics (e.g., skills, interests, values, style). The bottom half identifies what clients have to offer employers. Career assessments, whether formal psychometric tools (e.g., **Majors Personality Type Indicator** to measure personal style) or informal checklists (e.g., a proprietary tool developed by

an organization for their clients), are a great way to quickly and efficiently identify a client's skills, interests, values, and personal style.

❖ *Did You Know?*

The Canadian government offers a series of career quizzes designed to link abilities, learning styles, and work values to various occupations. Check <http://www.jobsetc.gc.ca/toolbox/quizzes/quizzes_home.do> (requires registration).

Vignette: About Jason

Jason is 28 years old, single, and living in downtown Vancouver, BC. He recently completed his bachelor's degree in Computer Science at Dalhousie University, with a specialization in Graphics, Gaming, and Media. His degree program had a co-op component that allowed him to alternate study terms with paid, full-time employment. This created opportunities for Jason to apply his learning to real-world situations, gain valuable work experience, and build his career portfolio. Jason has come to Vancouver looking for employment as a video game designer.

Jason's Wheel would look like Table 1 below.

JASON'S PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS	
Skills	Computer animation, various programs related to video game design, demonstrated ability to work under pressure, team player.
Values	Fast-paced environments, creative expression.
Personal Style	Outgoing, change-seeking, competitive.
EXTERNAL FACTORS	
Career Opportunities	Vancouver, BC, has a thriving video game design industry with some of the top firms (e.g., Electronic Arts) located in the Greater Vancouver area.
Work/Life Experiences	Won local and provincial arts awards; co-op terms provided valuable experience; has letters of reference from host employers.
Learning Experiences	Bachelor of Computer Science degree with a specialization in Graphics, Gaming, and Media.
Significant Others	Having recently relocated, Jason doesn't have any significant others in Vancouver but is developing a wide circle of friends.

Table 1: Jason's Completed Wheel.

❖ *Did You Know?*

- Amundson and Poehnell (1998, 2008) introduce The Wheel and provide some structure for moving through each of the eight sections in the two great resources, *Career Pathways* and *Career Pathways: Quick Trip*. Both are available from the publisher at <http://www.ergoncommunications.com/>.
- Check "10 Tips for Selecting Career Assessments" at <http://www.lifestrategies.ca/docs/10-Tips-for-selecting-assessments.pdf>.

4. Creating a Portfolio

A **career portfolio** is a collection of artifacts that demonstrate a client's unique skills and talents. Through their portfolio, clients can showcase their academic achievements, employment experience, accomplishments, skills, and awards. A portfolio might include:

- certificates, diplomas, transcripts,
- thank-you letters, accolades, awards,
- references from supervisors and clients,
- performance reviews / evaluations,
- résumé, biography, or brochure,
- work samples or photographs.

Even if never shown to a prospective employer, a career portfolio can provide the best method for storing career-related documents. The initial design and set-up of any portfolio will take time and effort but maintenance will be relatively simple. As each client is unique, each portfolio will also be unique in terms of its content; however, the overall structure can likely be similar. To begin, have clients gather and sort information into relevant themes (e.g., job descriptions, résumés, certificates, and reference letters). Then, have clients select a storage system such as an accordion file folder or binder with tabbed sections. Some clients may prefer to create and store their portfolios online. Online portfolios save paper, are environmentally friendly, and can support multi-media formats (e.g., videos, links to articles, and photographs). Clients have many options to choose from, including using sites designed specifically for portfolios (e.g., <http://

Guerrilla Marketing

by Lara Shepard

Guerrilla marketing is the use of unconventional tactics to get noticed and hired. It calls for energy, imagination, and creativity and requires one to thoroughly understand target employers, their products, and their competition, before approaching them for a job.

For more information read *Guerrilla Marketing for Job Hunters 3.0* by David Perry (<http://www.gm4jh.com/>) or listen to the audio Guerilla Job Search Secrets at <http://www.gm4jh.com/freecd/>.

www.carbonmade.com>), or creating a simple, user-friendly website where navigation relates to the sections of their portfolio.

As Jason is looking for work as a video game designer, an online portfolio is a great option. It will allow him to showcase school and work projects, demonstrate his design skills, and make effective use of available multi-media options. The following sites are examples of online portfolios by game designers: SSFusion (<http://ssfusion. com>), Devil's Garage (<http://www.devilsgarage.com/>), and Geneticeye (<http:// geneticeye-arts.com/>).

5. Identifying Job Leads

To identify job leads, clients often use online work search sites (see list at end of chapter; e.g., Monster.ca, Workopolis, Craigslist), and various newspapers that might advertise available positions. Other sources of leads might be government job banks, signs in windows, union halls, and even community bulletin boards. However, because all of these sources lead to advertised jobs, clients will need to compete with other job seekers.

As a career practitioner, try to help clients uncover the **hidden job market** (i.e., those jobs currently available, or about to become available, that aren't yet advertised). It is estimated that only about 10–25% of jobs are advertised, resulting in 75–90% being found through the hidden job market. As clients are likely to encounter less competition for unadvertised jobs, it is worth searching for them.

Networking is an important work search strategy and can be very useful in exploring the hidden job market. Networking is defined as "a proactive behaviour that helps develop one's relationship constellation with others who have the potential to assist them in their work or career" (Forret & Dougherty, 2004, p. 403). In working with clients, it is important to have them identify everyone who might be in their network (e.g., peers, family members, teachers, past employers, neighbours, professionals, and community leaders) regardless of whether or not they believe that contact will be able to help. Clients can use members of their network to learn more about a specific occupation or industry, to become connected with others who may offer assistance/advice, provide referrals, or act as references. Regardless of the method (e.g., phone, email, and/or career fair) it is important to ensure clients understand networking etiquette:

- keeping contacts informed of your skills, abilities, and education;
- being specific with your requests;
- nurturing your network;
- identifying what help you may be able to provide;
- going beyond "schmoozing" or collecting business cards — seeking to build relationships;
- thanking your contacts for any assistance provided.

Some clients might be interested in using social media (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn) to network, identify job leads, and research potential employers. It is important, however, that clients follow some simple rules to ensure their use of social media doesn't harm future opportunities. At minimum, clients should set account privacy levels to the highest, most secure setting, upload only those photos suitable for prospective employers to view, and watch whom they accept as friends/contacts.

As Jason is new to Vancouver, he doesn't have many contacts in his network. To help explore the hidden job market, and to expand his network, Jason joins the International Game Developers Association's Vancouver chapter, regularly visits his local employment centre, and contacts relevant local organizations to request an informational interview. In preparing to cold call local employers, Jason first prepares a list of employers and key staff to contact. He then develops the following 30-second summary (also referred to as an "elevator pitch").

Hello, my name is Jason Matthews. I recently relocated to Vancouver after completing my bachelor's in Computer Science degree at Dalhousie University where I specialized in Graphics, Gaming, and Media. I am highly skilled in Maya, Z Brush, Nuke, and the full range of Adobe arts tools as demonstrated by my 3.8 GPA. I'm interested in learning more about the industry here in Vancouver and where you feel the industry is headed. I'd also love to learn more about what your organization is doing. Do you have time for an informational interview, either over the phone or in-person?

In supporting clients to create their elevator statement, it is a good idea to have one of your own as a sample. To begin, reflect on the points in the sample below:

Introduction:
Hi, my name is _____

Educational background:
This June, I'll be graduating from _____ university with a degree in _____

Three or four key strengths to include:
accomplished facilitator – consistently evaluated at 4.5/5,
ability to provide exceptional client-centred career services,
certified Personality Dimensions™ facilitator.

Interest in the employer:
I see your team was recently honoured with the Career Development Award of Excellence. After reviewing your website I'm amazed at the breadth of work that you do.

Specific request:
Informational interview to learn more about your organization.

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6. Creating a Master Application Form

Application forms are common screening tools that allow employers to gather con-sistent information from all job applicants. Although some employers use paper applications, many have transitioned to online versions. The key to successfully completing any application form is preparation. As most application forms will require the same information, it is relatively easy for clients to prepare in advance.
Most application forms have the following sections:

1. Contact information: generally full name, mailing address, phone number, and email. Clients should ensure their voicemail message and email address convey the right image. A silly phone greeting (e.g., "I listen to ABC Radio") or unpro-fessional email address (e.g., ilovedogs@email.com) may result in the employer screening them out. Clients can easily update their phone message and get a work-related email address through a free email service (e.g., GMail, Yahoo).
2. Employment history: clients can expect to provide job title, employer name, and dates (month and year) of their last three to five positions. Application forms may also ask for special duties/accomplishments, supervisor name, and contact information. Some forms will also ask the reason for leaving each prior position. This might be a difficult section for some clients, as the space provided may not allow for detailed explanations.
3. Education: similar to employment history, clients can expect to provide the course or program name, credential earned (e.g., certificate, degree), and dates (month and year). It is fine to list education as "in progress" or "22 credits towards bachelor's degree" for any education that has been started but not completed.
4. Relevant skills: some application forms will provide space to list skills. Many online application forms will ask for a skills summary or list of key words that allows employers to search their database of qualified applicants. In these instances, if key words are not listed, the application will not come up in a search.

Social insurance numbers, passport numbers, and similar personal information should never be requested on an application form. Coach your clients on appropriate ways to handle requests for sensitive information (i.e., it is okay to add a note stating social insurance number will be provided if hired). When completing any application form, clients should print neatly and follow all instructions, ensuring the information they have provided is legible and accurate. Any special requests (i.e., please attach your résumé) should also be accommodated. In instances where a client cannot complete an application form, it is best to take it away and return with all the necessary information.

Online application forms can be a bit challenging to complete due to time and space limitations, "required" fields that your client may prefer not to fill out, or drop down menus that do not quite fit. Coach clients to highlight, copy, and paste the online application into a Word document whenever possible. This process will allow them to save a record of their form, and also guard against losing everything they have typed due to an Internet interruption. Word will also highlight any obvious typing mistakes (i.e., spelling and grammatical errors) that clients may not notice when proofreading their submission. In choosing this method, however, clients must carefully check the completed online application as copying and pasting from Word to the Internet might insert unexpected codes or symbols.

7. Developing Effective Résumés

Résumés continue to be a crucial work search document. Yet, with many employers spending less than five seconds to initially screen a résumé, it is crucial for clients to prepare documents that are clear, compelling, and present only information the employer will want to know. Although there are several types of résumés, as noted in Table 2, it is important to help clients choose the format that will best highlight their knowledge, experience, and skills.

Most résumés will include the following sections:

1. Job/Career Objective: Following contact information, an objective is a simple statement that clarifies what job the candidate is seeking.
2. Profile or Career Highlights: Key accomplishments, skills, awards, and traits designed to grab the employer's attention.
3. Skills and Experience: Detailed list of skills and experience, called skill statements, usually sorted in clusters of similar skills (e.g., Administration, Facilitation, Computer). Every skill statement should be presented using the SAR format of situation — action — result (sometimes referred to as STAR format where T stands for task):

   a) *Situation* — the problem, challenge, or situation; may also include who was involved (i.e., client, co-worker, and customer) and how the problem surfaced.
   b) *Action* — the steps the client took to resolve the situation; may include who the client had to speak with.
   c) *Result* — outcome of the situation or what was accomplished; if the outcome wasn't positive, clients should focus on what they would do differently next time. The result is the key component of each SAR statement; examples include "increased sales by 15% in the 3rd quarter."

TYPE AND DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Chronological: lists most recent job experience first.	Highlights strong, consistent work history.	Highlights gaps in employment and irrelevant experience.
Functional or skills: strong section on skill.	Highlights strengths / hides weaknesses.	Employers may not like.
Combination: hybrid chronological and functional.	Highlights skills but presents details in chronological format.	Gaps in employment history are still apparent.

Table 2: Formats for Résumés.

4. Employment History: List of recent employment history in reverse chrono-logical order (i.e., most recent first). Include job title, employer name, and dates. On some résumés, three to five key skills statements will be listed for each position.
5. Education: Relevant education listed in reverse chronological order.
6. Additional sections might include memberships in professional associations, volunteer activities, and hobbies or interests. In deciding what sections to put on a résumé, clients must ensure each statement adds value (i.e., the employer might not need to know your client likes to read mysteries). Clients should target each résumé to a specific position, rather than having one generic résumé they send to every employer. Résumés must never be sent out with inaccurate information or spelling/grammar errors. Each résumé should have an attractive format with no redundancy.

❖ *Did You Know?*
A wide range of résumé builders/templates are available online:

- The Resume Builder <www.theresumebuilder.com/>,
- How to Write a Resume.net <www.howtowritearesume.net>,
- Resume Builder Template.com <www.resumebuildertemplate.com>,
- Certified Résumé Strategist certification, available from Career Profes-sionals of Canada; learn more at <http://www.careerprocanada.ca/>.

8. Writing Cover Letters

A targeted cover letter provides clients with an opportunity to introduce themselves to potential employers, offer information not contained in their résumé, highlight key skills and attributes, and show their interest in the position and the employer's

organization. Cover letters should be clear, concise, and targeted to a specific position. Cover letters should follow a standard format:

1. The first paragraph should outline the reason for applying. It often describes how the applicant heard about the opening (i.e., via an advertisement or referral) and why he/she is interested in the position. This is an opportunity for the applicant to also demonstrate some knowledge about the organization. Inform your clients that it can be risky to mention a friend or colleague by name, in case that person is not respected by the employer. If the client is confident that his or her contact is in a position of respect, it can strengthen the cover letter. However, if there are any doubts, the client should avoid making that connection.
2. The second paragraph should provide a clear link between the job advertisement and the client's skills and experience. Ensure key points from the job ad or elements from the job description are sufficiently covered. Encourage clients to also highlight how the organization would benefit from hiring them.
3. The third and closing paragraph should express appreciation for the employer's time and attention, show interest in meeting the employer, and outline the best way to be reached. Encourage clients to follow up on their cover letters.

As with any business letter, cover letters must include contact information for both the sender (client) and receiver (employer). When addressing cover letters, ensure that the employer's name and title are correct. If a name is not available, *Dear Hiring Manager* would be more appropriate than *Dear Sir or Madam*. Encourage clients to produce cover letters with the same format or look as their résumés (e.g., font, colour, paper) to keep both documents consistent. Together, a résumé and cover letter represent a client's "personal brand" and allow his or her creativity to shine through. However, it is important to not sacrifice quality of content for a good "look."

When writing any document, clients should use active rather than passive voice (i.e., speak about things *they* did). It is also important to adopt a style that is clear, concise, and professional; to include only key points the employer might need to know; and to avoid unfamiliar words or technical jargon. For more tips on writing professional documents, see <http://www.lifestrategies.ca/docs/10-Tips-for-Writing-Professional-Documents.pdf>.

Most importantly, caution clients to proofread carefully for overall readability and proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Errors on work search documents may result in a qualified applicant being screened out. Career practitioners can play a huge role helping clients develop their work search documents and may include acting as proofreader or editor. For tips on editing professional documents see <http://www.lifestrategies.ca/docs/10-Tips-for-Editing-Professional-Documents.pdf>.

9. Preparing for Interviews

Job interviews can be stressful events for many clients. Career practitioners can help alleviate part of that stress by ensuring clients are well prepared for job interviews. To begin, clients need to know the different types of interviews they may experience. Table 3 below is an overview of the types of interviews. For more detailed information on the various types of interviews, please see Types of Resumes at JobSkills.info (<http://www.jobskills.info/resume_edge/types_of_interview.htm>).

TYPE OF INTERVIEW	DESCRIPTION
Screening	Brief Goal is to ensure candidate meets job's basic criteria
One-on-One Interview	Most common Involves one interviewer and one applicant
Panel or Committee Interview	More than one interviewer Each interviewer helps make the hiring decision
Group Interview	More than one candidate Might involve direct questions and group activities
Telephone Interview	Used to screen applicants, minimize interview costs, or bridge a distance gap
Informal Lunch/Coffee Interview	Often more casual than other types of interviews Candidate must manage eating and drinking
Stress	Seeks to measure candidate's ability to respond to stressful situations
Peer	Uses potential co-workers to interview candidate

Table 3: Steps to Career Decision Making.

Regardless of the type of interview, employers will often use a targeted behaviour approach, which is based on the belief that past behaviour can predict future behaviour. These types of questions ask interviewees to describe specific incidents or experiences. Targeted behavioural questions are very difficult to "fake," so clients should be encouraged to be well prepared and, if they truly haven't experienced the situation being discussed, to be honest with the employer. It is better to say *"I haven't had to deal with that type of situation, but believe I would_____."* Being prepared for interviews will help clients respond to these types of questions with confidence. To begin, clients can research the types of questions common to the job they are applying for (e.g., customer service positions might focus on dealing with customer complaints; sales positions might focus on strategies to

increase sales). As clients prepare for interviews, it is important that they consider what types of questions they might wish to ask the employer. Ensure questions are appropriate to the interview stage (e.g., at first interview ask about job content/corporate culture, or upcoming projects; do not ask about salary, benefits, or vacation).

Clients also need to be aware that employers will sometimes ask illegal or unethical questions. These are questions that ask about race, ethnicity, gender, marital status, sexual preference, family status, age, and religious or political beliefs. Clients can choose to answer the question, which may make a good impression but leave them feeling violated. They can also choose to not answer, which may or may not impact their chance of getting the job. Clients could also redirect the question (e.g., "I think you may be asking about my availability for work in emergencies; we have an amazing support system within our extended family, so it's never an issue for me to adjust my hours as needed").

After the interview, clients should be encouraged to send a thank-you note to each interviewer. In 2009, Career Builder (www.careerbuilder.com) conducted a survey that found that "5 percent of hiring managers say they would not hire someone who failed to send a thank-you letter after the interview. Thirty-two percent say they would still consider the candidate, but would think less of him or her." For more tips of postinterview follow-up, please see <http://www.lifestrategies .ca/docs/10-Tips-for-Job-Interview-Follow-Up.pdf>.

❖ *Did You Know?*

Career Professionals of Canada offers certification as a Certified Interview Strategist. Learn more at <http://www.careerprocanada.ca/>.

10. Understanding Negotiation Strategies

Regardless of the position, clients should be prepared to speak to prospective employers regarding wages, benefits, and other work-related issues (e.g., tuition allowance, vacation, etc.). While negotiation might not always be possible (i.e., sometimes the employer's terms will be clear), it is important that clients carefully consider what they might need and/or want from a position. The first, and perhaps most important step, is to understand what the position is really worth. Ensure clients have researched:

- *Wages*: Use salary surveys and informational interviews to discover the salary range common to the position. Clients need to realize that education, years of experience, and location can make a big difference in wage rates (i.e., someone relatively new to a position or working in a rural

community can probably expect to earn less than a someone with several years of experience working in downtown Toronto).

- *Benefits*: Extended health, dental, eye care, and a multitude of other benefits might be available. Larger employers can often offer more extensive options, due to volume cost savings, but many small employers have access to plans. Health and dental benefits might be very important to some clients (i.e., single parent with children), but not matter a great deal to others (i.e., individual who is covered under a spouse's plan). In exploring benefits, clients need to know if any part of the cost is recovered from the employee via payroll deductions.
- *Pension/RRSP*: Does the employer have an established pension or contribute to RRSPs on behalf of employees?
- *Vacation*: Each province or territory will have some form of legislation covering vacation time allowed. Clients can research what the minimum amount is in their region and use that as a guide when talking with employers.
- *Tuition allowance*: Does the employer support ongoing education, with either time off or some form of tuition reimbursement?

When comparing offers, clients should look at the total compensation package (i.e., wages plus benefits). In some cases, compensation packages can add up to several thousand dollars per year in non-cash items; or, conversely, add 15–30% of value to a base salary. Regardless of the total compensation, clients need to know (a) what wage they need to take home in order to make ends meet, and (b) what other benefits they consider "must haves."

Jason has established a realistic budget based on his rent, utilities, food, other personal items, transit costs, entertainment, and remaining student loans. At minimum, Jason needs to earn $2,800 per month, or $33,600 per year. When looking for work, Jason turns down any opportunity that comes in lower than that figure. While he recognizes the need to find work and the value of getting established, he also knows he has to earn enough to pay his bills.

Summary

Career practitioners have an important role to play in supporting clients with various work search strategies. Clients might need assistance researching occupational information, developing résumés, or preparing for interviews. Effective work search strategies can go a long way in helping to obtain a person's ideal job as well as build confidence in a job seeker's ability to find the job that fits. Although this chapter provided a brief overview of the 10 key components

of work search strategies, career practitioners are encouraged to engage in additional research and learning in order to be well prepared to support clients as they prepare for the world of work.

Importance of Volunteering

by Lara Shepard

Volunteering is an excellent strategy for building skills, meeting people, contributing to the community, and extending a résumé. Non-profit organizations depend on volunteer help to survive and offer many opportunities in all manner of capacities. Many non-profits have lots of ideas that they would like to accomplish for the community but don't have the resources, which means that volunteers are often relied upon to make this happen.

Check Volunteer Canada (<http://www.volunteer.ca>).

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Glossary

Career portfolio is a collection of artifacts that demonstrate a client's unique skills and talents.

Hidden job market refers to job openings that are not advertised or publicly listed. It also applies to situations where a job can be created, adapted, or modified for particular individuals. The most effective means for accessing this market are by word of mouth, active networking, social online networking, and unsolicited approaches to potential employers.

Majors Personality Type Indicator is an assessment tool consisting of 52 items and is a self-scoring questionnaire. The Indicator is designed to uncover information on how clients make decisions, direct their energy, take in information, and how they orient themselves to their environment. The result is a four-letter personality type code based on Jungian Type Theory (16 Personality Types):
- Introvert-Extrovert,
- Sensing-Intuition,

- Thinking-Feeling,
- Judging-Perceiving.

Networking is a process in which the client develops long-term relationships with others for mutual benefit.

Volunteering involves performing a service without pay in order to obtain work experiences, learn new skills, meet people, contribute to community, and help those less fortunate.

Discussion and Activities

Discussion

Questions

1. Career planning starts with the questions: "Who am I?" "What do I want?" and 'What am I capable of?" An honest and thorough self-analysis will help you to decide which areas of the employment market you wish to explore. How can you assist a client through this process?
2. Imagine that a client comes into your agency and says that they are unhappy with their work. What types of activities might you engage in to help the client decide whether it is the work situation or the career the client has chosen?
3. What is the difference between a job search and a career change?

Personal Reflection Questions

1. Think back on how you have undertaken your own work search. Which of the 10 components of work search strategies would you say was the most important?
2. How did you ensure that you had right strategies in place to engage effectively in finding work? What tools would you have liked in your "toolkit"?

Career Practitioner Role Questions

1. What key networking strategies would be steps in the right direction for your gaining greater control of your career?
2. Research an industry or company in your city. Can you predict what lies ahead for the industry or company that you researched?

Activities

For the following activities, find a partner to take on the role of a client.

Exploring Opportunities

To help partners get started, send them on a webquest (i.e., a Web-based scavenger hunt) in which they do the following:

- select a job they wish to learn more about;
- find three separate sources of information to identify:
  — job duties/tasks (i.e., job description),
  — required education, certifications, or licenses,
  — wage range,
  — employment prospects/trends.

Building Your Network

To help classmates get started, have them engage in the following activities:

- create a list of all members of their network,
- identify three to five people they could ask for assistance,
- prepare a script for the initial contact,
- identify a relevant career fair or plan.

Developing a 30-Second Summary

Use the following to guide a classmate in developing a 30-second summary.

Introduction	
Relevant education	
3–4 Key strengths	
Goal	

SAR–Skills Statements

Write up your partner's skill/accomplishment statements in the SAR format:

What was the situation?	
What action did you take?	
What were the results?	

Establishing a Budget

Working with your partner, use the chart below to calculate monthly expenses/required income.

ITEM	COST PER MONTH
Shelter (i.e., rent, mortgage)	
Personal taxes (i.e., property tax if you own a home)	
Transportation (i.e., car payment, maintenance, and insurance or transit)	
Food	
Household operation (i.e., utilities, cable/Internet)	
Health care	
Recreation	
Clothing	
Other:	
Other:	
Other:	
Total monthly expenses:	

Resources and Readings

Resources

Web Resources

Government of Canada

Government of Canada Labour Market Information
     <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/lminfo/index.shtml>.
Government of Canada: Working in Canada <http://www.workingincanada.gc.ca/>.
The National Occupational Classification (NOC) tool that includes a self-directed
     tutorial <http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/noc/english/noc/2006/Tutorial.aspx> is a key
     resource for anyone who needs to explore work opportunities.

Provincial Labour Market Sites

Alberta Labour Market Information <http://eae.alberta.ca/labour-and-immigration
     /labour-market-information.aspx>.
Work BC <http://www.workbc.ca/>.
Manitoba Prospects <http://www.gov.mb.ca/tce/lmi/prospects/index.html>.
New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour
     <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/post-secondary_
     education_training_and_labour/Labour.html>.
     <http://www.gnb.ca/redirect/0105/0126/index.htm>.
Newfoundland and Labrador LMI Works <http://www.lmiworks.nl.ca/>.
Northwest Territories Career and Labour Market Information
     <http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/advanced-education/career-and-employment
     /career-labour-market-information>.
Careers Nova Scotia <http://careers.novascotia.ca/>.
Ontario Job Futures <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/labourmarket/>.
Saskatchewan NetWork <http://www.sasknetwork.gov.sk.ca/>.
Yukon WorkInfoNet <http://www.yuwin.ca/>.

Interview Skills

Interview Skills #5: The "STAR" Technique to Answer Behavioral Interview Questions
     <http://www.rightattitudes.com/2008/07/15/star-technique-answer-interview
     -questions/>.

For Practitioners

Can Learn <http://www.canlearn.ca>.

Circuit Coach, although focused on youth, includes fabulous information and ready-to-use workshops on a wide range of work search topics. Read more at <http://www.ccdf.ca/ccdf/NewCoach/english>.
ContactPoint <http://www.contactpoint.ca>.
Ontario School Counsellors' Association Resources <http://www.osca.ca/>.

Networking

Adams, J. (2011). Assessing the hidden job market: How to find a SME job. Career Options <http://www.careeroptionsmagazine.com/4999 /accessing-the-hidden-job-market-how-to-find-an-sme-job/>.

Portfolios

A Self-Managed Career Portfolio Guide <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs /support/c_portfolio/index.html>.
Career portfolios: Telling your life/work story <http://www.blueprint4life.ca /blueprint/documents/BPAppE.pdf>.

Résumé Skills

Ten Tips for Crafting Compelling Résumés <http://www.lifestrategies.ca/docs/10-Tips-for-Crafting-Compelling-Resumes.pdf>.

Volunteering

Canadian Volunteering Contacts <http://www.canadiancareers.com /volunteering.html>.
Volunteer Canada <http://volunteer.ca>
Youth Canada <http://www.youth.gc.ca/eng/topics/jobs/volunteer.shtml>.

Work Search Sites

ALIS Career Shop <http://alis.alberta.ca/ep/careershop/main.html>.
Monster Job Search <http://www.monster.ca>
Job Bank <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca>.
Workopolis <http://www.workopolis.com/en/common/homepage.aspx>.
Youth Employment Strategy Programs <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/yi/yep/newprog/yesprograms.shtml>.

Supplementary Readings

Amundson, N. E. (2009). *Metaphor making: Your career, your life, your way*. Richmond, BC: Ergon Communications. Available at <http://www.ergoncommunications.com/>.

> **What Works:**
> **Career-Building Strategies for People from Diverse Groups**
>
> **by Lara Shepard**
>
> What Works is an online publication available for free from the Alberta Learning Information Service. Chapters cover Aboriginal Peoples; Ex-Offenders; Gender; Immigrants; Older Workers; Persons With Developmental Disabilities; Persons With Learning Disabilities; Persons With Low Income; Persons With Mental Health Disabilities; Sexual Minorities; and Youth.
> <http://alis.alberta.ca/ep/careershop /showproduct.html?DisplayCode =PRODUCT&EntityKey=6100>

A book, with accompanying card sort, introduces 40 metaphors for counsellors to use with clients — both individuals and groups — who are looking for work.

Amundson, N. E., & Poehnell, G. R. (2001). *Career Crossroads: A personal career positioning system.* Richmond, BC: Ergon Communications. Available at <http://www.ergoncommunications. com/>. This workbook guides readers through a series of steps related to managing their careers. Readers will explore options, evaluate current work and future possibilities, and consider whether to stay on their current career path or transition to something new.

Amundson, N., Poehnell, G., & Pattern, M. (2005). *Careerscope: Looking in, looking out, looking around.* Richmond, BC: Ergon Communications. Available at <http://www.ergoncommunications. com/>.

McCormick, R., Amundson, N. E., & Poehnell, G. R. (2002). *Guiding circles: An Aboriginal guide to finding career paths.* Richmond, BC: Ergon Communications. Available at <http://www. ergoncommunications.com/>. Similar to the popular Career Pathways book, but based on Aboriginal traditions and wisdom.

Neault, R. (2006). *Career strategies for a lifetime of success.* Coquitlam, BC: Life Strategies. Consists of six modules (also sold separately as e-books), including:

- Time to Reflect: Understanding Yourself,
- Time to Explore: Understanding the Workplace,
- Time to Choose: Identifying Career Possibilities,
- Time to Prepare: Developing Portfolios, Résumés, and Interview Skills,
- Time for Action: Successful Marketing Strategies,
- Time to Look Ahead: Proactive Career Management.

For adults of all ages, this workbook contains invaluable tips for successfully managing careers. Available at <https://www.lifestrategies.ca/store/proddetail. php?prod=Strategies>.

Niles, S. G., Amundson, N. E., & Neault, R. (2011). *Career flow: A hope-centered approach to career development.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. Using a

"career flow" metaphor, the authors outline several strategies for addressing career challenges in the 21st century.

O'Byrne, B. (1998). Discovering futures: Featuring the Career Compass Model. Toronto, ON: Guidance Centre.