

Starting Your Job Search

Take Stock

- Review your current situation, your personal and financial needs and priorities.
 - Think about your abilities, skills and past experiences. Make a list of all your skills and note which are strong and which need improvement; which ones you like and those you would prefer not to use on a daily basis.
 - Decide what aspects of your prior work experiences have been the most satisfying.
 - Determine what direction appears harmonious with your interests and abilities.
 - Contrast environments—like corporate, agency, non-profit, or self-employed—and functions, such as media, new business, etc. Then define your preferred industry/organization, positions, location, and working atmosphere. These questions may help:
 - Should I stay in same industry?
 - Should I look into new fields, into a career change?
 - What kind of organization do I like best?
 - Where do I think I want to be in five years from now?
 - What do I really want? Security, less pressure, or a fast track and tough competition?
 - What are my long-term goals?
 - Has my previous experience helped develop the tools to achieve my goals?
 - What does my family want?
 - Collect your work samples, names and addresses of former employers, and other references.
 - Make a chronological list, including dates and organizations, of every job you have held.
 - Prepare a list of accomplishments, at least 25. Try to include accomplishments for each of your past assignments, although most of them should be from your most recent assignments. Include some from your personal life if you consider these accomplishments important in defining your ability and skills (e.g., volunteer work).
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- List 10 major influences in your life.
 - List 10 specific strengths you feel you have.
 - Explain why you view each of these as strengths.
 - Identify 10 weaknesses you think you have.

- Why do you think each weakness is a weakness.
 - Name 10 things you like to do in your spare time and 10 things you dislike doing. Why?
 - Name 10 things that you do well and poorly.
 - Select five of the things you do well and identify the skills you use doing them.
 - Analyze your experience and identify 10 skills you feel you have developed from studies and/or outside activities.
 - Summarize your responses and specifically list your five strongest skills.
 - Make a list of the types of jobs you want. Review this list against your list of skills.
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