Your Job Search

Defining the Position You Want
You may have a hard time looking for employment opportunities if you have not defined your target - the type of position you are seeking. It is quite difficult to find something if you do not know what you are looking for. In defining your target, some factors to consider include geographic location, industry, skills you want to develop, pay, relevance to your major, etc. Also, you may have limited geographic choices if you want to work in a particular industry.

Uncovering Leads
Once you have defined what you are seeking, you need to identify the group of employers that fits into that definition so that you can contact them directly. In this endeavor, you will need to use both written and people resources.

Written Resources - Look for directories that index employers according to some of the criteria you defined. For example, geographic location, majors hired, industry, etc. Some particularly helpful directories or resources available online through the CCPD website are:

- **On-campus Recruiting**
- **JobLink**: Use this on campus recruiting site to look up employer profiles and job postings.
- **CareerShift**: CareerShift is a job search resource available to RPI students. Search by key word and/or geographic location for a list of job opportunities from a company’s human resource/careers page and other job posting sites. Access CareerShift by logging on to JobLink; a link is on the dashboard.
- **LinkedIn**: Create a LinkedIn profile and make sure to keep your information current. Explore opportunities via LinkedIn “Jobs” site.
- **Chambers of Commerce (CoC) Directory**: Look up local CoC’s, which are the center for economic activity in a given geographical area, to locate a list of employers to research. There are multiple CoC’s in a region, so make sure to check them all out.
- **Book of Lists**: List of top rated companies by industry or discipline in a given geographic area.
- **Newspapers**: Use for classified sections, business section and to read and learn more about certain companies that may be hiring.

People Resources - Networking is a valuable tool in looking for any job! Ask everyone that you know if they are aware of companies that fit your criteria. Or, if you have already identified companies, use your network to try to get the name of someone inside the organization to whom you can direct your resume and cover letter. Some of the best people resources include:

- The 3 F's - friends, family and faculty
- Fellow Students
- Former Employers
- Career Fairs
- Alumni - use the RPI Alumni website to look up local chapters and get in touch with the President to find out about activities happening and local alumni who you can talk to about your job search and get advice from.
- Employer Information Sessions - Over 300 companies recruit on campus each year. Attend their information session, introduce yourself to the employer representative, and ask about available positions. Schedules for Employer Informational Meetings are available in the JobLink Calendar.

Contacting Employers
You can begin contacting employers as early as September to apply for positions. Employers who recruit on campus may do the majority of their college recruiting in the fall for full-time, co-op and summer positions. Plan ahead for school breaks - try to set up interviews while you are in that geographic area. Use the following suggested approach when contacting an organization:

**Step One**: Identify an appropriate contact person within the organization. An ideal contact person is a manager within the area you want to work. The next best contact person is someone in Human Resources or Personnel who works with the organization’s co-op or internship program. If all your people contacts fail you, then simply call the organization, and ask for an appropriate contact person.

**Step Two**: Send a resume and cover letter. Compose a targeted cover letter addressing why you are particularly interested in that organization and what makes you a good fit for the position. Try to show your knowledge of the organization. If you are going to be in the area over a break, mention that in your letter and request an interview.
Step Three: Follow-up with a phone call. About a week after you send your resume and cover letter, call to see if it has arrived and ask about the application process for positions.

Plan of Action
You need to be organized and diligent in your job search in order to be successful. Make a plan of action and stick to it! The following is a sample plan:

Preparatory Steps
- Prepare a resume and have it critiqued at the CCPD.
- Attend CCPD workshops or view online handouts on the CCPD website to fine tune your job search skills.
- Conduct research to identify your target companies (see a counselor if having difficulty).

Weekly Task List
- Check for new postings on JobLink.
- Apply to at least 5 targeted companies each week by sending a resume and cover letter.
- Make follow-up phone calls to the companies to whom you sent resumes the previous week.
- Sign up for any campus interviews that interest you and you qualify for.

Follow-up Steps
- Write thank you notes within 48 hours after any interview.
- Keep notes of all phone calls and emails.
- If a company says they will not be starting to hire until a later date, make a note to call them again after that date.

CCPD Services to Help You
Resume and Cover Letter Critiques – Stop by for walk-in hours and have a CCPD counselor critique your resume or cover letter. If desired, you can also make an individual appointment for help.

Workshops - Check out the CCPD Calendar on your JobLink Dashboard for dates and times of workshops.

On-Campus Recruiting – Companies begin their recruiting for full-time, co-op and summer hiring during the fall semester. Don’t miss out on the opportunity to speak with companies while they are on campus.

JobLink – The Center’s online recruiting and job posting site.

Employer Informational Meetings - Most of the companies that recruit on campus have an information session prior to their interview day. This is a great chance to meet with company representatives to ask about employment opportunities. Consult the CCPD Calendar or JobLink for more information.

Individual Appointments - At anytime during your search, if you are frustrated or need some guidance, please make an appointment to see a counselor in the CCPD.