

Career Search Guide

Congratulations – you are ready to embark on your career search. It’s an exciting time – your career search is a critical piece of your graduate school experience and will be one of the most rewarding endeavors. You will learn a great deal about yourself and the options available to you.

The goal of the search is to match your skills, experience and future interests with the needs of a company and position. The more you know about yourself and the options available to you, the more successful you will be. It requires diligence, persistence and confidence. The Office of Career Management is here to help you develop your strategy and provide the tools necessary to execute your search.

The purpose of this document is to provide **a step-by-step guide to help you find a job that interests you and leverages your skills and experience.** While everyone will have a different pace and direction to their search, this provides the basic tools you will need to effectively conduct your career search. The steps should be followed chronologically; however, during the search process, you will return to earlier steps to refine and develop your strategy. Refer to this guide as you progress in your search and leverage the resources identified within.

Ownership and Timing:

You are responsible for driving your career search and it is strongly advised that you begin the search up to a year before you plan to take a position. It takes time to assess yourself, research companies and positions, fine-tune your resume and interviewing skills and most importantly, develop a network of contacts. When doing this in addition to your class work and extracurricular activities, you will quickly realize that an early start is critical.

Role of Career Management:

The Office of Career Management is your partner in the career search process. Your Career Consultants will guide you through the process to help ensure your success. Your consultant can give feedback on your career search strategy, provide tips on your resume, conduct mock interviews, help identify contacts in companies, and help develop a negotiation strategy for offers. Meet with your consultant to get guidance on your search during every step of the process. Come to your appointments with a summary of the work you have completed so your consultant can provide feedback and help you identify action steps to help you progress in your search.

Your Career Management Team:

Jeff Rice:	Consulting
Kara Albert:	Finance, Investment Banking, Real Estate, Risk Management
Jamie Mathews-Mead:	Operations & Logistics / Supply Chain
Steve Singer:	MLHR, MAcc, and MBLE
Jenny Heckscher:	Marketing

To schedule an appointment with any of the consultants, call 614-292-6024 or stop by Gerlach 150.

Career Search Steps - Overview:

- 1. Create Your Action Plan**
 - Conduct a Self-Assessment
 - Identify Career Opportunities
 - Create a Career Marketing Plan
- 2. Develop Communications**
 - Prepare Resume
 - Prepare Effective Communications
- 3. Build Networks/Relationships**
- 4. Conduct Interviews**
 - Develop Interviewing Skills
 - Generate Interviews
- 5. Accept Position**
 - Negotiate Terms

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If you are just starting your two-year graduate program, you should begin steps 1-3 before arriving on campus. If you are entering your second year, revisit steps 1-4 during your summer internship so you are ready to interview when you arrive back on campus.

Career Search Steps - Detailed:

1. Create Your Action Plan

Objective: Develop a strategy for your job search – your Career Marketing Plan.

Think of yourself as a branded product that is being marketed to companies. Just as a company develops a product marketing plan, you will develop a personal marketing plan.

The **Career Marketing Plan** includes:

- Description of your personal brand
- Key attributes that make your brand unique and relevant to employers
- Target position and target market (industry, company, geography)
- Promotion plan to reach that target

Review the Marketing Plan now (on Career Management website*) to help you with the next steps.

Key Steps:

- Conduct a Self-Assessment:** Knowing yourself in depth will enable you to identify the best future path and guide your marketing strategy. This step helps you identify the skills you want to leverage in the future, what you want to develop and what your priorities are. Resources to help you:
 - Complete a Career Assessment via **Career Leader** (see Career Management website*). This is a web-based tool specifically designed for **MBA** students consisting of three on-line modules that measure your interests, work values and abilities. MLHR, MAcc, MBLE and other graduate business students can learn more about their chosen career path using Wetfeet and Vault resources on the Career Management website.
 - Review your resume and performance appraisals from previous jobs to identify common themes.
 - Use career assessment books/guides found at library and bookstores.
 - Begin filling out the last page of the **Career Marketing Plan**.
- Identify a Target Career:** Research various career opportunities (industries, companies and positions) to find a strong fit with your strengths and future goals. When interviewing for a position, you must clearly articulate why you are interested and why you are the best candidate, so this is the time to begin thinking about that.

Resources to help you:

- Career search guides** such as those found on Wet Feet and Vault, provide industry, company and career information. These resources can be found on the Career Management website*. Contact a Career Management consultant for username/password information.
- The Business Library** (www.fisher.osu.edu/library) and the **OSU library** (www.library.osu.edu) have career resources and additional online search tools.
- Fall events on campus** sponsored by Career Management include the Career Boot Camps, Fall Career Fair, Fisher Fridays, and Company Information Sessions.
- Fellow students and alumni** can provide a wealth of information on career paths. Informational interviews are a great way to gain information (*see Networking*).
- You can learn about companies that recruit Fisher students by searching **Fisher Connect**, reviewing the **Annual Report** or speaking to your **Career Management Consultant**.
- Career sections of company websites** provide information on companies and specific positions. Read job descriptions to truly understand what you would do and how you would fit that position.

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- c. **Create a Career Marketing Plan:** You can now pull everything into a focused strategy, your Career Marketing Plan (see Career Management website for the framework). When you first create your plan, fill out as much of it as possible. Work with your consultant to help you complete the plan and continue to refine it throughout the search process.

2. Develop Communications

Prepare Resume

Objective: Create a resume that highlights the skills and achievements that *uniquely qualify you for the position you are seeking*.

A resume should go beyond summarizing your background -- it must convince the employer that you are a great fit by exhibiting your relevant skills and experience, and showing a track record of achievement.

Key Pointers: The most effective resumes are:

- **Easy to read:** All information should be presented in a basic font with a good balance of white space using a clear, logical flow.
- **Relevant:** The skills and experiences you highlight in your resume should be relevant to the position for which you are applying. Identify the key skills needed in the position and show that you have those skills (i.e. leadership, analysis, teamwork).
- **Achievement oriented:** Summarize your achievements, don't just describe your job responsibilities. Show the employer that you have a track record of success and made valuable contributions in your professional and extracurricular experiences.

More information:

For more detailed guidance, see "*Resume Development Strategies*" and resume samples on the Career Management website*.

Prepare Effective Communications (emails, phone calls, letters)

Objective: Prepare clear, concise communication to effectively reach your target contacts and future employers.

Preparation is critical for emails, cover letters, phone calls and face-to-face conversations; and includes everyone you may interact with, such as HR representatives, hiring managers, administrative assistants and everyone in your network of contacts.

Getting Started: The Elevator Speech

A helpful tool is the Elevator Speech: in the time it takes to take an elevator ride (1-2 minutes), explain what makes you unique and why you are better than your competition. Essentially it is a short ad for yourself.

Each communication point is an opportunity to use your elevator speech to articulate your unique skills and experiences. You will use this when speaking to someone on the telephone or in person, it will serve as the framework for any written communication and it will be elaborated upon during interviews. You may tweak it slightly based on each situation, but you should always be prepared to use your elevator speech.

More Information:

For specific tips, see "*Communications That Get You Interviews and Offers*" and "*Convincing Correspondence*" on the Career Management website*.

3. Build Networks/Relationships.

Objective: Build *relationships* with a group of people who can guide and assist you in your career search.

The people within your network can help you by:

- Educating you on a career, company and industry.

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- Preparing you for your search and interviewing process.
- Building a list of potential companies and contacts.
- Guiding you to open positions.

How it Works:

Building relationships takes significant time: it takes time to find people who can assist you with your specific career path and it takes time to build a relationship. When networking, you want to first focus on finding others who can help educate and prepare you. Informational interviews can help with this. Then you can begin to hone in on specific job opportunities through those you have already established a relationship with.

Getting Started:

You may not know anyone personally who has the career you want. But you probably know someone or can easily meet someone who can eventually lead you there. Your network starts with people you already know (*friends, family, former colleagues, fellow students*) and people you can easily meet (*Fisher alumni, alumni from your undergrad institution and groups you belong to*). You can leverage and build relationships with these people to then meet others who can guide you in your career search.

More Information:

For more on networking and relationship building, see **“Building a Network to Guide Your Search”** and additional resources on the Career Management website*.

4. Conduct Interviews

Develop Interviewing Skills

Objective: Convince an employer in person that you are the best candidate.

Getting Started: MBA/graduate level interviews can be quite different from your past interviewing experiences. You will be faced with different types of questions and will be expected to know a lot about the company and position for which you are interviewing.

Be prepared to answer the following types of questions:

- **Tell me about yourself:** This should be a logical summary of your educational and career progression. Show a track record of achievement, highlight the skills you have that the employer is seeking and explain why you are interested in the position.
- **Behavioral questions:** These are based on the concept that past behavior is the best indicator of future behavior. When answering these questions, always use the **STAR** format: describe the **Situation** and the **Tasks** involved, explain the **Action** you took and the **Results** of your actions. Write down your answers and practice them aloud.
- **Case questions:** Case questions are asked to gauge your strategic thinking skills. While typically associated with Consulting, cases are used by all functions in interviews at the graduate level. The interviewer is looking for logic, inquisitiveness and the ability to draw conclusions from data. Become familiar with strategic frameworks (Cost/Benefit, 3C's, 5 Forces) and practice often. Wet Feet and Vault provides excellent guides for case interviewing (see Career Management website to access Wetfeet and Vault as well as our *Introduction to Case Interviews* guide).

A **mock interview** can help you practice for real interview situations. You should schedule at least one mock interview with Career Management prior to a real interview.

More Information:

For a list of additional questions and specific tips on interviews, see **“Strategic Preparation for Interviewing”** and other interview guides on the Career Management website*. Your Career Management consultant can also provide more function-specific guidance on interviewing.

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Generate Interviews

Overview: Identify job interviews for the positions you are seeking.

Interviews will be obtained through a variety of sources. Your strategy will depend on the type of position you are seeking, the type of company you want to work for and the geography in which you would like to work.

Getting Started:

Following are key resources for you to use in finding job postings and generating interviews:

i. FisherConnect:

Companies will post available positions for Fisher students on FisherConnect (<https://www.myinterfase.com/osu-fisher/student/home.aspx>). The posting will indicate whether there is an on-campus interview associated with the position. If not, the company will contact you for a phone or office interview.

ii. Online Resources:

- a) Company websites
- b) Job boards (Indeed.com, Monster.com, etc.)
- c) Websites of function-specific organizations:
 - Marketing: CPGjoblist.com, AMA.org
 - OLM / MBLE: CSCMP.org
 - Finance: careers-in-finance.com, efinancialcareers.com, jobsinthemoney.com
 - HR: SHRM.org, HRACO.org
- d) Organizations that host online job boards (e.g., NBMBA.org, NSHMBA.org).

iii. Continuous Networking and Relationship Building:

As you continue to build your personal network, others can help you identify open positions and even serve as an internal ambassador for you (see Networking).

5. Accept Position

You can finally relax! You have the offer and now comes the fun part – negotiating final terms and making a decision. For tips, see “**Evaluating and Negotiating Job Offers**” on the Career Management website*

* All resources can be found at <http://fisher.osu.edu/offices/career-management/graduate-students/career-resources/>. Your Career Management Consultant can also provide guidance and assistance on any aspect of your career search.

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