

JobStart Part 2: The Right Job - Just for You¹

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JobStart is a series of publications that contain information about the skills and attitudes needed to find and maintain employment. This is the second publication in the eight-part series outlining the steps required to achieve these goals. The series includes the following:

- JobStart Part 1: Getting to Know Yourself (FY345)
- JobStart Part 2: The Right Job, Just for You (FY346)
- JobStart Part 3: Marketing Yourself (FY347)
- JobStart Part 4: Preparing Your Résumé (FY348)
- JobStart Part 5: Writing the Cover Letter (FY349)
- JobStart Part 6: Planning the Interview (FY350)
- JobStart Part 7: Job-Seeking Strategies (FY351)
- JobStart Part 8: Staying on the Job Once You Are Hired (FY352)

Determining Your Ideal Job

Okay, so you are unemployed, or maybe you are just unhappy with the job you currently have and want to find a better one. You have heard all the news from the media about how tough it is to find a good job, about how companies aren't hiring, or if they are hiring it is through temporary agencies that don't pay as much and have little or no benefits. Further, the unemployment rate is high and the

economy is growing at a very slow pace, which means not many new jobs are being created by either large corporations or small business entities. Finding a job may be the real challenge, but the process should begin with knowing what your ideal job might be and start with that as a goal. While it may be harder to find your ideal job, opportunities still exist and your job is to find them.

In order to begin the search for your ideal job, you must first understand that a job search can be easier if we look at it in parts. Harty and Harty (1984), authors of *Finding A Job After Fifty*, describe a job search triad. Viewing the process of looking for a job in three parts will make the task easier and more logical. The three parts of the triad will directly influence the success of your search. The three parts are (1) Your Personal Preferences, (2) Your Qualifications, and (3) The Job Marketplace. Most people consider the first two the most important and think that it is what they bring to the marketplace that counts the most; that is a mistake.

A picture of the overlapping circles illustrates the relationship of the circles to each other. The more these circles overlap, the better chance you will have to find your ideal job. The place where all three circles overlap is where your prime opportunity lies.

Now let's look at what each circle means. The Personal Preference circle represents everything that you want from a job. This list could include salary, benefits, work environment, distance to work, hours, job satisfaction, upward mobility, etc. Naturally we would all like to have

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THE JOB SEARCH MODEL

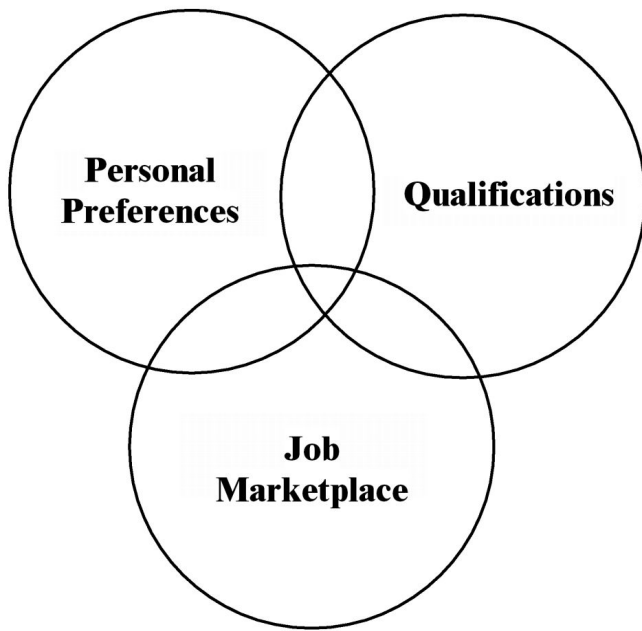


Figure 1.

a job that meets every one of our wants, but rarely does this happen. What you will have to do is decide which of your wants are absolutes and which are not. The more you are willing to give up as absolutes, the greater your opportunity for employment will be. For instance, if you are interested in retail sales as a career and you are not willing to work evenings or weekends, you have just narrowed your opportunities dramatically, because the vast majority of retail stores do most of their business in the evenings and on weekends. Naturally retail employers would not be encouraged to hire someone that could not work during their prime money-making hours.

The Qualifications circle represents the job-related skills you bring to the employer. As you expect, the more qualifications you have, the more job opportunities will be available to you. There are many ways to increase your qualifications. The federal and state governments have funded programs specifically earmarked to train workers for specific vocations. In addition, most community colleges and vocational schools have short-term vocational certification programs. Fees for these programs are usually small, and tuition assistance is available.

The Job Marketplace circle represents the jobs in your area. Of course, if you are willing to commute or relocate to another area, you greatly increase the size of your job marketplace and thus the number of opportunities available to you. To understand the job marketplace in your area, you will need to use several different sources. Some of these

sources could be the Help Wanted section of the classified ads in your newspaper, your local state employment service office, trade associations, or the Occupational Outlook Handbook, available in your public library, as well as the many resources available on the Internet (e.g. Monster, CareerBuilder, Indeed.com, USAjobs).

The situation for most beginning job seekers is that their circles don't overlap as much as they should because they haven't assessed their job marketplace well enough, they haven't updated their qualifications, or they aren't willing to give up any of their personal preferences in order to obtain a job.

Study the job search model and see how much you can make the circles overlap. List your qualifications on a piece of paper. Then list the available jobs in your area. Finally, list your preferences for the kind of job you want. Is there any relationship? Are there connections between one list and the other? Are the qualifications you have appropriate for the jobs that are available? Think carefully about the job search model and how you can make it work for you.

Once you have seen what the overlaps are in the job search circles, there are some additional questions you will want to consider. If you have found a match between qualifications, personal preferences, and available jobs, consider the suitability of the career suggested in the overlap.

- Do you enjoy this kind of work, or would you take this kind of job just for the money? For example, you may have clerical skills but hate being inside an office building all day. This is the enjoyment versus money factor.
- Is this a job or career that would keep your interest for a number of years? Do you really want to work at this job for the next several years? Three to five years is the average length of most jobs in the present, and this may be the situation in the future. Although the job setting may change, there may be related jobs to which your interests and qualifications would relate.
- How is this field going to change in the next five years? You will not be able to answer this question completely, but you should be aware of what is happening in the field or industry. For example, in the communications field, the technology changes are happening very rapidly and it is very important to keep pace with the changes. On the other hand, childcare does not change a great deal except for the state regulations childcare providers must follow.

The information in this publication is designed to help you clarify what your personal preferences are and to give you some ideas about how to get your circles to overlap more. Once you have done this, the opportunity for you to find the ideal job will be greater than ever.

Questions to Ask Yourself

Money is an important factor in a job decision, but there are other considerations that also count in the long and the short term. The kind and quality of life you want to have also deserve consideration.

1. **Experience.** Are you willing to obtain the necessary experience for career advancement or better paying jobs by working at a lower paying job? Many jobs require new employees to learn various jobs at a lower level of service or pay. For example, a waiter may have to start out bussing tables before becoming a waiter; a secretary may have to be a word processor before being promoted.

2. **Education.** Are you willing to continue to seek training and education in order to stay current or even to advance in your job? Practically every job requires some kind of training to build new skills or learn new policies and regulations. If you expect to continue to educate yourself, you will be in a good position to take advantage of opportunities before and after you are hired.

3. **Location.** Are you willing to move to a different place in order to work or in order to advance yourself within the company? If you are tied to one location, you will miss many opportunities. However, if you are tied to a location for some specific reason, it is important to know this. For example, do you have to be responsible for elderly parents?

4. **Work Conditions.** Are there work conditions that are essential to your desired job? Do you like to work around people or do you prefer to work alone? Do you need flexible hours or is an 8 to 5 work schedule your preference? Are you comfortable in a suit and a tie, or is casual dress your desired mode?

Characteristics of Successful People

There is no magic formula for creating a successful person; however, there are some ingredients that are found in all successful people. They are as follows:

1. **Successful people are responsible.**

How much time, planning, and effort you put into your work search will drastically affect the amount of success you will have. Studies have shown that among the most successful people there is a common denominator, and that is that they accept full responsibility for the circumstances in their lives. They don't blame other people for their misfortunes, nor do they deny the blame when things go wrong. They fully understand that life is what you make it, and they in turn devote themselves completely to overcoming every obstacle in their way until they are satisfied with the outcome.

How many of us know someone who never accepts responsibility for what is going on in their life? That person is usually someone who is very bitter about their situation. They tend to point the finger at employers and the rest of society, crying foul play. How many of us know someone who is looking to get rich by every means other than hard work? These types of people have zillions of ideas, but never lift a finger to make them come true. They want to take the shortcut to the land of success.

Unfortunately, there are many Americans who behave this way to some sort of degree. We are spoiled with quick fixes. Technology has taken most of the hard work out of living. This is evident when you look at how many lottery tickets are sold each week across the country. However, this job search is going to require plenty of hard work in order to be successful. Winning the job you want will be directly proportionate to the time and energy you put into your individual work search.

2. **Successful people are confident.**

If you were an employer and approached by a job candidate who felt that he or she was not worthy of being employed by your company, why would you have any reason to disagree? If you as the job candidate don't think you are worthy of the job, then your potential employer won't think you are worthy either. On the other hand, if you believe that you are someone with the right combination of experience, knowledge, and skill to win a job, then you stand a better chance of convincing an employer of this.

It is simply the power of expectation. People tend to live either up to or down to the expectations placed upon them. Children who are constantly told that they are smart, well mannered, or talented tend to live up to those expectations. Conversely, children who are told that they are slow learners, badly behaved, or lacking in any special skills or talents tend to live down to these expectations.

We must constantly tell ourselves that we are capable of anything that we set our mind to do. Otherwise we will more than likely perform at the lower expectations we place upon ourselves. Set your expectations in the stars and you will surely reach the sky.

3. Successful people confront adversity.

No one ever said life is a bowl of cherries. Very few are born with that silver spoon in their mouths. Most of us have to work for every ounce of success in our lives.

A good motto to live by is this: *Success is not measured by heights attained, but by obstacles overcome. Treat every obstacle as just another step toward your personal success.*

Adversity is something everyone experiences. Even the successful people you might see on the street, the ones who look like they have had everything handed to them on a platter, has experienced adversity. It is what they did with that adversity that has helped them to become successful. They didn't run from it; they tackled it head on and conquered it.

The famous owner of Kentucky Fried Chicken was 72 years old when he began his company. All he had going for him was a great recipe and a method for frying chicken. He also believed in himself. Without any money to start a business, he approached restaurants with a deal that would pay him royalties if they cooked and sold chicken with his recipe. He approached 964 restaurants before one agreed to the deal. The rest is history.

There is no fairy godmother waving her wand and granting us our hearts' desires. Chances are we will never hit the lottery either. Have you ever heard the saying, "If it is to be, it is up to me"? This is definitely true in the work world. If you want the ideal job, you are going to have to earn it yourself. No one can give it to you.

Setting Goals

Studies have proven that the most successful people in America have one thing in common. They have written goals. Does this sound strange to you? What is goal setting? Goal setting is the process of identifying what you want to happen in your life. It is a means of determining a target and setting your sights on that target. And we all know that it is much easier to hit a target when you don't get distracted by all the other things that will get in your way.

We should set goals for every aspect of our lives: work, family, spiritual, health, leisure, community, etc. When we do this, we are more likely to achieve the things that we want.

There are two types of goals. There are long-term goals and there are short-term goals. A long-term goal is something that requires several steps in order to achieve your objective. It could be something like wanting to become a surgeon by the time you are 35 years of age or wanting to write a novel. Both of these require multiple steps in order to accomplish the final result. A short-term goal is one of the little steps along the way, like passing a chemistry class, getting into medical school, or completing a residency program, if your long-term goal is to become a surgeon. Each time you achieve a short-term goal, you are one step closer to reaching your long-term goal.

When setting goals there are four criteria that must be met.

1. Goals must be written.

If goals are not written down, they tend to become just dreams that are never realized.

2. Goals must be specific.

To say "I want to get a job as a manager" is not specific enough. It is better to say "I want a job managing 12 to 15 people in a quality assurance department of a chemical processing plant." When the goal is more specific, it is more manageable.

3. Goals must be realistic.

If you are 40 years old, five-feet two-inches, and 200 pounds, it is unrealistic for you to set your sights on winning a starting job as the new Chicago Bulls center.

4. Goals must be measurable.

Goals must be written so that they can be measured as to whether you achieved them or not. The best way to do this is to put a date on them. Give yourself a set time to reach your goal; otherwise you will put it off as long as you can.

Sitting down and writing goals can be a boring task, but if you take just a little time and write good quality goals, you will find that it is one of the most helpful things you can do in your job search.

Steps to a Successful Search

The best way to begin looking for a new job is to treat the search process as if it were a job itself. In fact, if you look at it this way, you are already employed: your job is to find another job. With this in mind, we would like to give you some hints on how to go about this job of finding another job.

1. Know your skills.

This is probably the most important thing you can do to aid you in your job search. It is very important throughout the job search. It will be required on your resume, it will be a question asked of you in the interview, and it helps you focus on the type of job for which to search. In a previous publication we talked about personal skills and transferable skills, but what you also need to do is take an inventory of your job-specific skills. These are skills like cooking, computer programming, wiring a home for electricity, masonry, operating heavy machinery, etc. Knowing what these skills are will help you answer a potential employer's question: "Why should I hire you?"

2. Have a specific job goal.

Sometimes this can be a very difficult task. Those who know precisely what they want to do in life are fortunate because most of us do not. However, in order to make the job search more successful, we must figure out what will best suit us and make us happy.

Even if you haven't figured out what it is that you want to do as a long-term career, you need to decide on what your next job should be. This is also a very important part of your resume, which will be covered in a later publication.

3. Know where and how to look.

The vast majority of employers don't use advertising to fill the vacancies they have. Those that do often do so because of federal or state government requirements, and rarely hire applicants found through this method. Most employers find their applicants by word of mouth and people who are in the right place at the right time. Luck plays a significant role in who is hired and who is not. But luck is just being well prepared when opportunities come your way. This publication is aimed at making you better prepared, while at the same time increasing your opportunities.

In a later publication we will look at some ways to market yourself using networks and other non-traditional job search methods.

4. Choose a set number of hours to job-search each week and stick to it.

The average unemployed job seeker spends just 5 hours per week looking for work and is without work for 3 or more months. This time without work could be cut in half with proper time management.

The first thing you should do is decide how many hours per week you plan to look for work. As a minimum you should start with 20 hours per week and increase this if you find you are able to do so. Next you should write out a schedule of how you are going to look for work and stick to it. Are you going to look for work on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday or are you going to look for work every morning until noon?

Decide what is best for you and write it down. Take some time now to begin writing the schedule you will use in your job search.

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