

Job Searching During the Pandemic

CHRIS MILLER: Yeah, I am the career advisor for the WSU Global Campus. Jump over here to the next one, so-- my email address is there, cmiller66@wsu.edu. That's the easiest way to get a hold of me. So for any Global Campus student, alumni, or prospective Global Campus student, that's the best way to start the process if you're interested in some career advising.

So like I said, in a little bit, I'd like to do just a quick, simple job search strategies exercise, where I want you to think about all the jobs you've had in the past 15 years, and think about how you came to obtain those jobs, specifically breaking it down into just some three general-- or some three smaller areas. Did you find that job by applying to an open listing that you found? That's one. Or did you find it through someone else that you-- someone that you knew? So that's the second one.

Or some other method for the third one. It could have been you were recruited, or you used an agency, or something like that. So think about those three areas. And so in the last 15 years, how did you obtain the jobs that you have had?

And so once-- it'll be a little bit further down this webinar where I'll ask you to pop that in the chat box, or to do it again if you already did. I'm not sure. I see some activity there. But just think about that, and then I'll kind of tally that up later to see how that kind of plays out with just general job search strategies, what has worked for people in the past, and what's currently working. OK, let's go ahead and move along.

So I always start my webinars with a snapshot look at the career development process. We are fairly firmly entrenched in the orange section here, the Take Action section. And so ideally, if you're embarking on a job search, you've already gone through the assessment, self-assessment phase of finding out more about yourself, what you're interested in, what you're good at, what's important to you. You've explored the options. You've started goal-setting and getting focused, and now you're taking action.

So in thinking about job searching, it's important to know what employers are saying that they want. And these come from a focus group that WSU did with employers that were recruiting WSU students. So these are specifically employers looking to hire all WSU students, Global Campus included. And so they identified these nine areas of genuine interest. You need to be truly interested in the company, what it does, and the position for which you are applying.

Interpersonal skills-- you need to work well with others, maintain a good relationship with your boss and co-workers. To listen properly to those around you, taking time to comprehend fully what is said, and assimilate the requests and instruction into your approach to tasks and projects. To be caring, confident, and assertive.

They also addressed competence. So a supervisor looking for employees who can make prepared decisions and clearly state what they believe are the appropriate pathways or solutions. To create positive first impressions, admit and learn from mistakes, and accept suggestions for improvement, and to show leadership potential. They all identified those as parts of competence.

Dependability-- employers want employees who are organized and manage their time well, who are prompt in getting reports or assignments finished, arrive on time for work, meetings, and appointments, show examples of timely project management. They're looking for compatibility. Employers want employees who work well with others, participate in social activities so that others can get to know you better, maintain discretion in amount of socializing on work time, value your role as an effective team player. Also, initiative. Employers want an employee who is self-motivated, take extra courses or training outside of work, master technology, keep skills current.

Volunteering for committees or projects to become noticed and recognized. They identified communication skills. Obviously, employers are going to want employees who have good communication skills, both written and verbal. Nearly all positions require a college degree. I should say, nearly all positions requiring a college degree require employees to write and do presentations from time to time. So clarity and, in many cases, brevity are strong indicators of clear business communication.

A customer focus-- so as it's relevant to that company or industry, employers build their success on their interactions with customers, and it's critical that you also understand the need for excellent customer-focused skills, and also commitment. So when you use your strengths and your natural talents, you're doing your best work. And when you use your strengths with purpose, you connect more strongly with your work and you take responsibility for developing work satisfaction.

Broadening out a little bit more, so not just what employers are saying who are hiring WSU students, but just general what employers are looking for-- independent learning, the ability to learn and recognize opportunities to learn. Research skills-- ability to find information and ideas, and the ability to critically distinguish between various sources of ideas. Writing skills and reading-- the ability to structure your thoughts coherently and express yourself in ways that are appropriate to the occasion.

Ability to understand language and systems of meaning. Critical thinking-- the ability to tell better ideas from worse, the ability to test ideas by subjecting them to relevant criteria. Adaptability, which is the ability to apply knowledge and skills to a wide variety of contexts. Time and resource management-- working under pressure and maximizing resources to produce a desired outcome.

Electricacy is basically digital literacy. It was a term coined by Gregory Ulmer. So the ability to read, navigate, and create the digital environment. You know, electricacy-- electracy-- I keep saying it wrong, so maybe that's the reason it didn't catch on. He was trying to make fetch happen. So digital literacy is really the way to think of that. Problem-solving skills-- the ability to understand and express a problem that needs to be solved, and the knowledge of various methods of analysis that might be relevant to the problem.

Interdisciplinary skills-- that's a huge thing for a lot of Global Campus students, those especially that are, say, social sciences or humanities students. So the ability to work at the borders of traditional forms of knowledge using the resources from more than one area to help define a problem or ask a question, and suggest approaches to addressing the problem or question. Global understanding and cultural sensitivity-- the ability to appreciate culture and traditions outside of your own. Historical understanding-- so the

ability to see how and why things came to be as they are, and how they might be different. And perspective-- the ability to understand how other people or groups think, and to value the difference.

So to be a successful online student, what are some of the skills you need? You need to be self-motivated. You need to work well on a team. You need excellent communication skills, collaboration, and exposure to technology, understanding and using data, critically thinking, complexity and flexibility, and interpersonal skills.

So your WSU Global Campus education gives you an academic foundation and opportunity to develop both technical and social skills that employers value, so like communication skills, analytics, teamwork, organizational problem-solving, interpersonal skills. So what do I mean by interpersonal skills? I'm talking about accepting feedback, conflict resolution, social awareness, self-awareness, self-management, and etiquette, those kinds of things.

What else do Global Campus students bring? Interests that cut across departmental boundaries. So many students-- I mean, the vast majority of our students are transfer students. So you're coming in with a lot of pieces from different places already. So that's a huge one. Multidisciplinary skills, adaptability, analytical skills, creativity, curiosity, communication skills, cultural awareness, imagination, sense of context.

So you can see how it's a little bit repetitive because I'm trying to highlight the fact that these are the things that employers are asking for, and these are things that you're currently working on. I think it's sometimes very helpful to kind of reflect on what you're doing with your education that you do use as a transferable skill or experience to bring to the table in a job search and an employment situation. So you have to learn how to write well, and potentially in different styles. You have to organize your work and life balance and do that to meet deadlines.

You have to convey meaning precisely. You have to summarize, make arguments, draw conclusions, research, analyze, and present data logically. All these things you're already doing as a student. Familiarity with history, reading and listening comprehension, organizational ability, ability to work independently, to work in teams, and time management.

So as I mentioned, quick job search exercise. In the past 15 years, how many jobs have you worked? Think about that. How did you find those opportunities? Was it through an open listing? So internet and newspaper-- and I'm putting newspaper on the air because 2006 is 15 years ago, and people were still finding jobs in the classifieds then. Even though a lot of that had moved online, some of it was still physical. Through someone you knew, or some other method. And I'll take a second to kind of pause and tally that. And I'll throw my own in there, too.

Five open listings, seven someone you knew, and one other. And yeah, that pretty much is what I see most of the time. Not as many open listings. That's fairly impressive. But it's going to vary a lot. And I'll talk about some of the results here from just general job search strategies. Some industries, you'll get a lot more success with searching through open listings than others.

But generally, this does show that networking through someone you knew is the way that most people are finding jobs. That hasn't changed at all from last year to now. So from this whole last year plus of COVID-19 employment disruption in the world, that hasn't changed. Networking is still going to be the number one way to find work.

So some effective job search strategies that I'm going to highlight here are from the iconic career development book *What Color Is Your Parachute?* The 50th anniversary publication just came out in December. It's by Richard Bolles. And this year there is a co-author, Katharine Brooks. And you know, I've always used this book as a way to highlight effective job search strategies. And I was really curious to see how it would change from last year's edition to this one, given COVID-19's impact.

I was surprised to find there wasn't a huge change. One of these is going to stick out big time as something that you can't really do right now. And I'll tell you why I left it in. But to highlight some of the effective job search strategies that are from *What Color Is Your Parachute?* and really to get it all in detail, I'd really recommend checking the book out. They highlight now kind of the traditional approach to job searching, and that's kind of what I'm highlighting, versus what they call the parachute approach, which is using *What Color Is Your Parachute?* and essentially doing an in-depth career self-assessment of yourself and what's available.

And I highly recommend that for anyone who is really stuck in their job search, or stuck in their career decision making. So *What Color Is Your Parachute?* 2021 edition is out now. But some of these things that I identified are researching target employers and making contact by phone, so really doing your research ahead of time, making contact, trying to arrange things through email, through LinkedIn, whether you're just doing an informational interview for the purposes of gathering more info about a place or a career, or if you're really contacting them because you are job searching, and trying to see what openings they have, or find out more about the company. Basically networking, doing your research ahead of time, trying to connect with people-- LinkedIn really is the best tool to use for that.

Introducing yourself in person when possible, so this is the one that really sticks out. And I was surprised that it was still in the book for this newest edition, which was published in December of 2020.

And the reason that it's in there is because it's always been one of the most effective job search strategies. And it will come back. It's not a good option right now. You don't want to show up to an employer's place of business now. But eventually, you will, once things improve. And there are positive signs now. We're not there yet, but things are getting better, and they will slowly continue to improve, and we will get there.

Understanding which companies are easier to network with-- with which to network, I should say. So smaller companies are the easiest ones to network with. So any time you can target-- especially for information gathering, informational interviews. And this is something I will go into more detail in in my next webinar next month, which I'll mention at the very end here. I'll talk about that more in depth. But for networking purposes, for information gathering, smaller companies of 25 employees or fewer are the easiest ones to network with. And then it just-- it gets more difficult as the companies get larger.

But it's still a good idea to target those that are 100 and fewer, 50 and fewer, 25 and fewer if that's relevant to what you're trying to accomplish. Activating your network-- like we've talked about, that is such a successful strategy to employ and finding employment. And so activating your network is one thing, and that's asking people that you know. But also, building your network network, which is something I will cover in the next webinar.

Gig economy is a huge thing now, or kind of stopgap employment. And just to read a little bit about that from *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, they say the modern day version of pick up work is the gig economy, also called sharing economy, or access economy. So if you have a particular talent that others would value, there are so many resources available to look for work-- to look for the short term work.

So they highlight FlexJobs, Freelancer guru.com, LinkedIn Profinder, Sologig, Upwork, and Fivver. So if you want to explore this kind of work, try putting sharing-- the term sharing economy jobs in your search engine to find the latest opportunities. And obviously, like I said, these are short term stopgap ideas. But it's always possible you'll meet someone who can help you find a better opportunity in the future. And that's just a growing trend. And it has been before COVID-19, and it just boomed.

State and Federal employment offices, so knowing what your state and federal employment offices, knowing where they are, knowing what the services are, it can really be helpful for your job search. So it's WorkSource for Washington. You know, tapping into their resources, tapping into the staff there to help you with your job search is something I also highly recommend.

So if I'm going to take a step back and look at some of the effective job search strategies that they highlighted, or they at least provided data about in prior years-- so this is before the 2021 version, the 2020 version of the book actually provided data. And I don't know if they will or not in the future. They took it out of this newer one, because some of the information is a little bit convoluted, because there are sometimes significant ranges of effective job search strategies based on what you're trying to target.

But looking at from least effective to most effective, I think this will-- helpful for me to highlight them. So just so you know, there are a lot of different things you may not have thought about employing in your job search.

So looking for open listings on the internet, that's the biggest one that people do. It's also the least effective. It has about a 4% success rate. And these percentages, again, can fluctuate. And these are percentages of getting a job offer based on utilizing that strategy alone. And so if you were in IT, or engineering, or finance, or health care, it's going to jump from 4% to 10% looking at those online listings on the internet. So it's double, 2 and 1/2 times about as much success there.

Posting and mailing out resumes, so posting to job sites that aren't necessarily just listings, but posting a resume, and then mailing them out to companies, regardless of whether or not they have openings, yielded about a 7% success rate. Using private employment agency or search firm had a significant range of 5% to 28%.

And some of that is from higher success rate for jobs where college education is not required. There is less skill requirements for the position. There was a higher success rate for that, and then much lower for more of those college educated positions. And also in the quality of the search firms.

Ads in professional and trade journals. So if you can look in any kind of a publication or organizational website, where they're posting job specific to that area or industry, it jumps to 7%. So definitely higher target, a higher percentage than just looking at open postings online. A job support group, about 10% And this is an interesting one, because job support groups used to be highly effective in the book. And then over the last few years, the research has shown that the efficacy has dropped quite a bit, but 10% is still good.

And the idea here is that you gather-- previously in person, but they're still doing these virtually. You gather with other people that are looking for work. So you build a network that way, a support group that way. You know, ideally, you'll find someone who can provide job leads. And you get to hear about other people's job search difficulties, and you help them strategize, and, you know, it's just a really cool thing when it does work well. You can look for these kinds of things at your local library.

The book talks about meetup.com. I've never used it myself, so I don't have a personal endorsement for it. But also chamber-- your chamber of commerce is a good place to find this kind of job search support groups.

State and federal employment office, like I talked, about a 22% rate there. So that's really good. Asking for job leads, 33%, so that-- activating your network. And showing up and introducing yourself formally, 47%. So we'll get back to that. That will return.

So the important conclusions here of these job search strategies is a lot of this hasn't changed in the last year with so much that has changed. Availability of jobs has definitely changed quite a bit. Structure of jobs has changed quite a bit. But a lot of the strategies to obtain employment has not. There are many ways to search for a job. Some ways are more popular than others.

Obviously, looking for open listings on the internet, some are more effective than others. So really think about where you're dedicating your time and your energy. Job hunting is an art, not a science. There are no always wrong or always right ways to search for work. Job hunting always depends on some kind of luck, always, always, always.

And most importantly, combinations of different methods will produce more successful results. So try to do as many different things as you can with your job search. Try to use your time effectively.

So how do you stand apart from the others in the candidacy pool? So what are you thinking about for competitive differentiation? So how are you standing apart? Are you doing the little things that other job seekers aren't doing, or not always remembering to do?

So are you tailoring your resume for every application? Do you have a professional summary on your resume that really highlights all your selling points? And you know, I go into more detail on that on my

previous resume webinars, and I'll do more in the future. So you can find information about that on the video vault, videovault.wsu.edu.

Are you really hitting on the keywords from the job posting? And there's a resource called Resume Worded that you have to have access to as a WSU student. And I'll show that off in a minute here pretty briefly. But I'll show you where to find it and show you what it does.

Are you utilizing data on your resume? So are you quantifying your experience by thinking about the quantity of your work experience, the quality of your work experience, the scope of your work environment, and the impact of your work. So yeah, let me take a moment to do just a little jump over and show you where Resume Worded is. I think it's helpful to know where that is and to know it's there.

So I'm going to go over to ascc.wsu.edu. Make sure that worked. This is the Academic Advising and Career Center for the Pullman Campus. There's a lot of great material here for all WSU students, including Resume Worded. So on the Career Services menu-- dropdown menu here on the left hand side, click on that. And you could go to overview. You can go to Resume and Cover Letters. It makes the most where I'm showing off-- Resume Worded.

And you click on Resume Worded here on the side. Once you to create an account and sign in, it'll look like this. And you can upload your resume just to do a general score to get some feedback on your resume. But really, I think the most useful thing for Resume Worded is the targeted resume, where you are comparing and contrasting your resume to a job posting.

So you'd click on Targeted Resume here. As you can see, there's a LinkedIn review section also. It might make me sign back in. Nope. So you would just paste the info from the job description here. You would submit it. You would copy and paste your resume.

And it would just do a compare and contrast, and it'll give you a score on how you did. And it'll tell you why you're scoring low or why you're scoring really high. Are you hitting on those keywords, the things that they are putting in their posting for a reason? One, to find qualified candidates. And two, for a lot of mid-sized, larger companies, for their ATS system. So their applicant tracking software is just filtering out people based on keywords popping up through your resume being scanned. So you really want to make sure you're just hitting on those.

While I'm here also, I'll jump back to ascc.wsu.edu, again, under career services on the left hand menu. You can go to Overview here. There's Resume Worded. If you scroll down, there's information packets. So I'm going to click on information packets. There's a resume packet. There's a job and internship packet, interviewing, and grad school search packet.

So for this topic, job and internship searching, if you click on that, you'll get the search packet here, which has some really nice sections to help you organize your job search, set goals, analyze your skills, talk about the steps, and where to find information, where to find resources on your job search. So postings, be it a job or internship. So that's-- the WC resume packet-- it's important to know about that, as well.

So what are other things for competitive differentiation? What else are you doing? Are you networking? Are you coping? Do you have a positive attitude? Coping is super important right now.

Networking, we've mentioned how successful it is. I will talk about it more in my next webinar. But are you maintaining your job search momentum here? So this is really about coping and attitude.

Persistence is a key element for a successful job search. So it's important to remember, even the most optimistic people can find it difficult to remain committed to spending the time and energy that the job hunting requires. It should be a full time job whenever it can be. So it's important to learn to cope with rejection.

Every positive response-- for every one, you'll receive a number of negative responses. Receptionists may be unhelpful. Employers may not return your calls. Companies may insist they can't use you. So it's important to be prepared for negative responses, and learn not to take the rejection personally. As identified by Tom Jackson in his book, *Guerrilla Tactics in the Job Market*, you should really have the mindset that each no is bringing you closer to a yes.

Finding ways to handle the stress is very important. It can obviously be tiring, stressful, and frustrating, which can bring on fatigue and burnout. So take time to renew yourself through activities and hobbies, exercise. And taking that time out will renew your energy.

Develop a support group. So there will be times when you feel discouraged, and you will need the support of others. So find a few people who support your goals. Give them a call when you need to to get that encouragement and support. And share your progress and ideas with them, as well.

Set short term goals focusing on the-- the overall goal can be overwhelming, so breaking your job search down into a series of small steps will help you monitor your progress and provide a sense of satisfaction as you complete each task. So if your goal is to find a job within the next five months, your short term goals could be reach out to at least two or three employers this week, setting several small goals at a time.

And then reassess your job search progress as you're going. Occasionally, you'll need to reassess your goals. Are there any unforeseen difficulties, any obstacles? Do you need certain skills? Do you need to brush up on certain skills? Do you need more information? A hurdle or an obstacle does not have to put an end to your job search.

Are you cultivating strong working relationships? If you're currently working while you're job searching, you want to think about those references that you'll be getting.

What qualities make for a successful working relationship? So if you were reviewed by a customer, or a coworker, or a manager, would they say things like-- will they use words for you like trust, respect, empathy, resilience, tenacity, perspective, integrity, accountability, and competence? So people respond to someone who's genuine much more often than someone who persuades.

What is the formula for success? This was something identified by Shawn Achor, a Ted Talk speaker, psychologist, CEO of Goodthink Incorporated, who teaches positive psychology. He says that most people believe that the formula for success is that how hard you work directly affects how successful you become, and how successful you become defines how happy you will be.

And he wants you to reverse that formula. So raising your level of positivity in the present physically releases dopamine. There's a physiological change in your body, which makes you feel happy and turns on different learning centers in your brain, allowing you to adapt to your surroundings in a different way. He says your intelligence rises. Your creativity rises. Your energy level rises, and every business outcome improves.

To be mindful also of technology's impact on writing skills, that texting, e-mailing, and social media can influence your writing and grammar skills, and cause them to slip. So skill for writing shows attention to detail, obviously. And if you write excellent communication skills on a resume that has a typo, that's an issue. You can be eliminated from consideration.

So some of my closing COVID comments-- I attended another relevant webinar put on by Going Global last week, or two weeks ago, presented by Marianne Thompson, the founder of Going Global, that identified some permanent changes and some global trends due to COVID. And the main one for permanent changes is that working virtually is here to stay, along with things like online education, entertainment, shopping, and wellness.

And obviously, online shopping had gained traction in the last 10, 15 years, anyway. But really cemented itself during the last year. The same thing for education. Online education has been around for a long time. WSU has offered distance education for a long time as a cohesive program since '92. Not online at that time, but distance education has been around for a long time.

But there are more brick and mortars that have been moved into the online spheres. And now they're finding their way through that and wanting to become more established in the online education space. With entertainment, and things like health care and wellness, those had a huge push in the last year with moving things virtually. And a lot of that is here to stay.

So while some industries you can't do virtually-- 30% of jobs are not remote adaptable-- a lot of them are. And a lot of companies will decide to let employees either work virtually, or do a blended offering of schedule and in person, while some will slowly transition employees back to physical campuses. But virtual work is here to stay.

In terms of global trends, a lot of these are also pre-COVID, but have really just been like fuel on the fire. Skilled worker shortages combined with aging and shrinking population, so a lot of countries are fast tracking foreign visa applications across the world to meet the needs. So there is that global impact of that skilled worker shortage. A lot of foreign professionals are returning home, because they can work virtually now.

A lot of things are happening in different governments internationally. There is startup funding that's being kind of reallocated to keep workers on payroll. There are government training centers for re-skilling and up-skilling. Those are some of the hot jargon terms in the career development world that you'll-- if you haven't heard, you'll definitely hear in the next year and two, or so.

There's more shift work, more gig economy work, more contract work, more micro internships, more virtual internships. Much more green technology-- solar, wind, thermal energy. So that's another example of something that has already been on the rise pre-COVID, but a huge growth in those areas in the last year.

Who is hiring? So who's been hiring over this last year? Where are the jobs when you think of just the demand aspect of it? So technology and cyber security, finance-- so banks finance and insurance. Health care-- so doctors, nurses, medical techs, safety workers, huge growth in the last year. E-commerce products and people, logistics, so supply chain management.

Education, so much online education, like I mentioned. Risk and data analytics, or risk analysis, data analytics. Advertising and marketing, digital literacy, so social media and communications. And then small and mid-sized companies have been growing and hiring.

Final job search tips, this is kind of like competitive differentiation, but thinking about those little things, remembering to do the little things, remember to do things that not everyone's doing. So sending thank you cards whenever you can. If you had an interview, you can send a thank you card, or note, or email. If you are in some kind of a virtual networking sphere, if you were conducting an informational interview, send a thank you.

I used to always say send a physical thank you card. Mail it every time. But now, that's shifted, because a lot of companies, they really think about sustainability and the value of paper usage. And some companies, it's about knowing your audience. Some companies don't want you to send cards. They'd prefer just you sending a thank you email.

Following up on your job search when you do an application. Following up with a networking lead. Being professionally visible, being on LinkedIn. And if you're job searching, being active on LinkedIn. Monitoring companies of interest on social media, following them. Monitoring your own online presence, making sure it's all professionally appropriate. Expanding your skill set when needed, re-skilling and up-skilling. And networking, networking, networking like crazy.

So yeah, so as you can see, a lot of that hasn't changed in the last year, which is surprising. It's just that so much of the world of work has changed. But some of those things that people have been doing for years are still the things that are getting the job done. So like I mentioned, in my next webinar, which is on April 21, I will be talking more about networking and getting more into detail about informational interviewing, and elevator pitches, and how you kind of conduct yourself in those worlds when you're trying to expand your network.

So thank you so much for attending. And I'll be around to answer any questions. And best of luck with your job search. Here's the rest of my contact info. And thanks again.