



Navigating the Job and Internship Market: Effective Search Strategies

MIT Careers Office

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/>

Rm 12-170, 253-4733



Plan and Organize Your Search:

1. What kind of job / internship do you want?
2. How do you look for a job / internship?
3. What are the elements of a job search?
4. How do you decide if you want a job?

The Career Planning Process



Job Search/ Action Plan

Resumes, interviews,
researching options

Focusing

Which organizations are a good fit? What do I need to be competitive? Who can connect me to these organizations?

Exploration

What's out there? What options do I have? What jobs fit my skills? What careers and industries can use them?

Self Assessment

Who am I? What are my interests? What kinds of skills do I have? What are my work-related values? What is my work style?

Adapted from Peter Fiske: To Boldly Go: Practice Career Advice for Scientists, Workshop at MIT, April 1998

Modified from Stanford University Career Planning and Placement Office

What Kind of Job Would You Like?

Imagine your ideal job:

- What is the environment like?
- What responsibilities do you have?
- What kind of people do you work with and/or for?
- What products or services do you provide?
- What are you wearing?
- What is your work schedule?

Do We Ever Find Ideal Jobs?

- Most jobs involve some compromise on both sides – employer and potential employee
- Employers seek candidates with skills and experience that they imagine would make an ideal employee – that ideal employee probably doesn't exist
- Develop a sense of your priorities and look for a good fit



Ways to Look for a Job/Internship

- **Traditional**
- **Hidden Job Market**
- **Networking**

Job Search: Traditional

Send a resume and cover letter in response to an advertised vacancy

Where to find Advertised Vacancies:

- On-campus Recruiting – MonsterTrak
- Newspapers, journals, publications
- Company websites, professional associations
- Online job sites, Internet bulletin boards
- List-servs, departmental notices
- Employment agencies

Job Search: Hidden Job Market

Target employers of interest, approach them

- Make contacts in the industry of your choice.
 - Do any MIT alumni/ae work for the company?
 - Does your network know anyone in the company?
 - Do library/online/news research to find people.
- Conduct informational interviews and network.
- Send a letter of inquiry to a company even if you don't know of an advertised position.

Job Search: Networking

Networking : discovering and utilizing connections between people

- Networking is the **most successful method** of searching for a job or internship!
- Move beyond your own network of acquaintances, tap into other people's networks.
- Talk to people about your job search. Ask for advice, suggestions, other people to talk to.
- Networking is a two-way street - offer to help them!

Who to Network With:

List people you know who you might talk to:

- Family
- Friends
- Classmates / Housemates
- Co-workers
- Faculty
- Staff
- Members of organizations to which you belong
- ICAN – alumni/ae of MIT
- Service professionals

How to Make Contact:

- Make a list of a questions you'd like to ask
- Write a brief script to introduce yourself:
 - Your name
 - How you heard about them/who referred you
 - Why you are calling or writing
 - A brief summary of your related skills/experience
- Rehearse your script
- Set up a brief meeting (15-30 minutes) to ask your questions.

Example

- Hello, Mr./Ms. _____, this is Susan Smith.
- Gary Jones suggested that I call you, because he thought that you would be an excellent source of information and advice for me as I explore a career in finance.
- I am graduating this June with a degree from MIT in Chemical Engineering, with additional coursework in finance.
- I would really appreciate an opportunity to meet with you briefly to talk about your experiences in finance and to hear your perspective on the field.
- Would that be possible?

Long Distance Job Search

For your desired location:

- Search for/talk to alumni in your industry
 - ICAN, alumni clubs
- Study newspapers, job postings
- Check reference materials for companies
- Visit, learn employment trends, opportunities
- Contact national, regional, local professional associations
- Network and conduct informational interviews – consult your networking list
- See our website for more information:
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/workshops/online/geographical.htm>

Plan for Your Job Search

- Timeline – when do you want to start your job?
- Hours per week for job search
- Budget for job search
- System of record keeping

Record Keeping

Ring binder, file folders, computer folder, database:

- Job / internship search ideas
- Your networking contacts:
 - Who, contact information, dates of all actions, referred by whom, phone calls, emails/letters, notes about conversations, additional contacts offered, ideas to pursue
- Interesting companies and/or advertised jobs:
 - Research findings, dates of all actions, people you have contacted, letters/emails you send, phone calls and notes, ideas, next steps

People Resources

- Support system
 - Friends
 - Family
 - Career counselor
 - Faculty
- People to network with – keep enlarging this list
- References for employers to contact

Company Research

Develop a target list of companies and organizations, learn about each of them.

Where can you learn about a company?

- Company website
- Annual reports
- News articles (about company & executives)
- References: Wetfeet online (MonsterTrak)
- Employees (MIT alumni, others)
- MIT Library databases: see Locating Companies' Profiles and next few pages:
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/workshops/coresearch/locating.htm>

Company Research

Some things you should know about a company:

- Size and locations
- Number of years in business
- Products and services
- Competitors
- Financial condition
- Values
- Organizational climate
- Reputation
- Any recent developments
- Future outlook

Written Materials You Will Need

- Resumes
 - Targeted to specific companies
 - Reviewed by a counselor, other professionals
- Cover letters
 - Why you are a good candidate for a particular position
 - Why they should hire you
- “Thank You” letters
 - Whenever you meet/interview with someone regarding career path or a job
- Other possibilities
 - Transcript
 - Portfolio items

Interview Preparation

- Review your experiences
 - Academic
 - Work-related
 - Extracurricular
 - Personal interest
- Practice interview questions
 - (see our online Workbook, pp. 33-34: <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/handbook05.pdf>).
- Have a mock interview: MIT Careers Office
- Prepare for specialized interviews
 - E.g., technical, case-based
- Obtain appropriate clothing
 - (see <http://www.collegegrad.com/jobsearch/15-5.shtm>)

The Job Offer – Do You Want It?

Personal Factors to Consider

- Base salary
- Bonus/profit sharing stock options
- Benefits (tuition assistance, vacation)
- Perks (parking, car, etc.)
- Geographic location (cost of living in that location)
- Amount of travel
- Work schedule (set hours, flexible, etc.)

Do You Want the Job:

Career/Professional Factors to Consider

- Are your expectations of the position and company realistic?
- Will you be utilizing your technical skills?
- Will you be challenged in your position?
- How much decision-making authority will you have?
- Is there opportunity for advancement?

Do You Want the Job:

Company Factors to Consider

- Will you feel comfortable in the company's structure?
- Do you feel you can be productive in the environment?
- Is your philosophy compatible with the company's?
- Is the company financially sound?
- Does it have a profitable future?
- What is the company's reputation in the industry?
- Image?

Elements of a Job Search Checklist

MIT Careers Office ♦ 12-170 ♦ (617) 253-4733 ♦ <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/>

Self-Assessment

- Soul-searching - what kind of job/internship do you want?
- What are your interests, skills, values
- What industries/companies interest you?

Planning and Recordkeeping

- Timeline: when do you want to have a job by? Plan steps accordingly. Be realistic.
- How many hours a week can you dedicate to finding a job? Plan them!
- Budget: interview clothing, printing costs, travel expenses, transcript fees, etc.
- System of recordkeeping: job ideas, research, job finding actions, contacts, etc.

People Resources

- Support system: friends, family, career counselors, faculty, mentors, etc.
- People to network with regarding your professional interests and goals
- References contacted and on board for potential employers to call

Researching Industries and Companies/Organizations

- Develop a list of target companies and organizations
- Research company/organization websites
- Research Wetfeet online: available through MonsterTrak
- Research MIT Library databases – rich source of information!
- Informational interviews and networking: faculty, ICAN, MIT Clubs, FSILG's

Written Materials

- Resumes (reviewed by a counselor or other professional)
- Cover letters (reviewed by a counselor or other professional)
- Perhaps your transcript, additional portfolio items
- Thank you letters whenever you meet with someone about an industry, occupation or job!

Apply for Jobs

- Search MonsterTrak: see “Interview Trak” and “Jobs and Internships” sections; apply
- Understand how MonsterTrak online recruiting works: Preselects, Resume Drops
- Other sources of job postings: MIT listservs, company websites, job websites, etc.
- Network to find jobs, apply
- Send materials to companies not advertising jobs

Interview Preparation

- Obtain appropriate clothing
- Review experiences: academic, work-related, extracurricular, personal interest
- Practice: ask yourself questions
- Practice: have a mock interview or two (schedule with the MIT Careers Office)
- Prepare for specific types of interviews, e.g., technical/case interviews

Job Offer Savvy

- Learn how to negotiate job offers

Some Helpful Resources:

- MIT Careers Office online workshops
 - <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/services/workshops.html>
- MIT Alumni ICAN alumni database:
 - <http://alum.mit.edu/cs/ican/index.html>
- MIT MonsterTrak online recruiting
 - <http://www.monstertrak.monster.com/>

For Help With Your Job Search

Meet with a counselor at the

MIT Careers Office:

Room 12-170

253-4733

Appointments - Walk-in Hours - Workshops

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www>

Questions?