

## Finding a Great Job in Tough Times – Nine Successful Strategies

- 1) Register with Career Services at [www.scsucareers.com](http://www.scsucareers.com). After taking 5-10 minutes to register, you can:
  - a. Sign up for on-campus interviews.
  - b. Access job postings -- 100,000+ nationally, hundreds in MN.
  - c. Publish your resume in program specific resume books and put your resume in front of 1500+ employers seeking to hire SCSU grads.
  
- 2) SCSU Graduate Follow-Up reports -- the employers most likely to hire your major in the future are employers who have hired it in the past. You can find this at:  
<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/careerservices/studentalum/gradstats.asp#reports> – scroll down to search “Data Compiled by College” – then “By Major” -- then select the year you want and scroll through the list to find your major. Use the reports to:
  - a. Find lists of employers who have hired your major.
  - b. Find what job titles people with your major have obtained.
  - c. Use the job titles for “keyword” searches on job posting sites.
  - d. Use the list of employers to give you ideas of what types of employers to look for elsewhere.
  - e. Once you find the list of companies, check out our employer database resources and/or job fair websites to identify contact people.
  - f. If your major has limited graduates, consider looking at similar majors for more leads.
  
- 3) Job Fairs – most resumes posted online with companies are NEVER seen, so the key to getting noticed by an employer in such a competitive job market is to make DIRECT contact. The fastest and easiest way to do this is by going to Job Fairs. Even if you missed going to the Job Fair, you can access the Job Fair websites to get a list of employers, job postings and perhaps most importantly, names and contact information for each employer. Keep in mind that different employers attend different fairs, so check out all of them to get the maximum number of employer contacts.

The job fair websites are generally active from October until early June.

- a. State U Job Fair – [www.mnsujobfair.org](http://www.mnsujobfair.org) -- all SCSU students and alum can attend. Advanced registration is required and students must attend an orientation session to register.
  - b. U of MN Job Fair – [www.umjobfair.org](http://www.umjobfair.org) -- SCSU candidates can use to identify job postings and employer contacts.
  - c. Private College Job Fair – [www.mnpcfair.org](http://www.mnpcfair.org) - same benefits as U of MN Job Fair.
  - d. Career Day – typically in October and hosted by the College of Business. Check with Career Services in late September for a list of participating employers.
  - e. Science and Engineering Job and Internship Fair – typically in early October. Check with Career Services for a list of participating employers.
  - f. Lists and links to other job fairs can be found on the Career Services website at:  
<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/careerservices/studentalum/OtherJobFairNotices.asp>
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- 4) Job Board/Job Posting Sites – check out the “General Employment Sites” section of our website at:  
<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/careerservices/jobintern/moresites.asp>. Key sites to consider are:

- a. The “Posts” – find links to JobPost, InternPost, EdPost and Student Employment at:  
<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/careerservices/jobintern/> (scroll down to find links)
- b. MN Workforce Center – one of largest sites for jobs in MN: [www.minnesotaworks.net](http://www.minnesotaworks.net)
- c. The “big” job boards, Monster, CareerBuilder, HotJobs, Craig’s list, etc.
- d. Try search engines that search across the web for job postings such as [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com) and [www.simplyhired.com](http://www.simplyhired.com)

Additional sites listed in the “General Employment Sites” section of our website include:

- e. Classifieds -- Star Tribune, Pioneer Press, St. Cloud Times and other major papers
    - i. Keep in mind that many small business owners, which represents most jobs, may only advertise in their small local paper, e.g., in the Maple Grove newspaper instead of Minneapolis Star Tribune.
  - f. Internship Sites
  - g. International Job Search Sites
  - h. Job Search Sites for International Students
    - i. Pay particular attention to the Department of Labor H1 B database (will need to download it) if you are looking for companies who have been willing to sponsor international candidates in the past
  - i. Diversity Sites and Differently Abled Sites
- 5) Job Specific Sites – “Search by Career Area” section of our website at:  
<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/careerservices/jobintern/careerarea.asp>
- a. Wide range of major or career specific job posting and career information sites including a very good “Social Sciences (human services) and Non-Profits” section.
- 6) Other “Niche” Job Posting Sites – those specific to a certain career area
- a. Many sites are listed in the aforementioned “Search by Career Area” section but this is also a strategy candidates should be using to find more sites specific to their career interests. Research has shown that a higher percentage of job seekers found their jobs through “niche” sites (e.g., PRSA.org for PR majors or IEEE.org for engineers) than through the big job boards.
    - i. Perhaps the best example of a great “niche” site is the MN Council of Non-Profits, <http://www.mncn.org/jobs/default.asp>. Typically more than 500 postings at any given time. A “must use” site for social science majors and/or folks who want to work in “helping” professions. But also a great site for others, for example, there are often more marketing and PR jobs posted on this site than on PRSA.org or AMA.org.
  - b. Professional Associations sites and other career specific sites. What are the largest professional associations for your career areas of interest? What are the best websites for people interested in your profession? Find these by:
    - i. Asking professors
    - ii. Networking with people who work in your areas of interest
    - iii. Google (for example “marketing professional associations” OR “communications professional organizations”)
    - iv. Use “Directory of Associations” in the Miller Center or ask Reference Librarian

- v. “National Trade and Professional Associations” book in Career Services
  - c. Use job listings to give you ideas of the types of jobs and types of employers who might also consider hiring you. For example, if you find a social work job with one county, then you should consider checking with other counties to see if they also have social work jobs.
- 7) Employment Agencies – they have been one of the top two industries (retail the other) for hiring new college graduates in recent years, which makes them a viable resource for finding a job. But since working with them likely requires signed contracts that can be restrictive, candidates need to read the “fine print” carefully before signing a contract. Make sure you work ONLY with agencies that are 100% free to candidates, i.e., the employer pays the fee!
- a. Employment agencies most active in recruiting new college grads include:
    - i. Pro Staff – have multiple “specialty” divisions including science and technical
    - ii. Aerotek – specialize in technical and science
    - iii. GradStaff – specialize in placing liberal arts but work with variety of majors
    - iv. Robert Half – have several specialty divisions including Accountemps
    - v. Lab Support – specializes in the sciences
    - vi. Career Professionals
    - vii. Fahrenheit 360
  - b. To find the agencies with specialties that fit your interests, research Employment Agencies online or in “Yellow Pages.” Networking with professionals in your fields of interest can be another way to find these specialty agencies.
- 8) Other Colleges and Career Services offices
- a. Network to find students who attend other colleges as they can access job postings, employer lists and job fairs which you may not otherwise be able to utilize.
- 9) Networking -- the NUMBER ONE way that most people find their jobs -- and it is even more critical in a tight job market when employers cut back on college recruiting, job fairs and job postings.
- a. Step One – know what you are seeking (what jobs/job titles/career areas)
  - b. Step Two – find out what it will take to get these jobs and where to look
  - c. Step Three – get this information talking to people who are doing what you want to do
  - d. Step Four -- how to find people who are working in career fields of interest? Network!!!
    - i. Ask your classmates. Almost a 100% chance that at least one person in every class you take knows someone who works in your career area of interest. Ask the professor if you can ask the class and be surprised at how many contacts you find.
    - ii. Ask your professors – especially ALL of them in your major. Each one will have different contacts. All should know of at least one or two recent grads who got jobs and some know 50+ people in your “world of work”.
    - iii. Ask the people you identify in your profession(s) of interest who they know. This should lead to a never ending list of contacts as everyone who works in a profession should know at least one other person in the profession.
    - iv. Ask Career Services about our various employer lists, job fairs and employer database.

- v. Ask friends, relations, friends of parents and parents of friends. For all you know, your uncles' wife's cousin or a customer of your hair stylist may know someone really well who works in your career area or dream company.
  - vi. Use your social networks, e.g., Facebook, My Space, LinkedIn. Make sure you give them some idea of the career area you are seeking, e.g., "Do you know anyone who would know anything about \_\_\_\_\_ or someone who works in \_\_\_\_?" If you are too vague ("I'll take anything.") or too specific ("Do you know someone who works in marketing at Company X? ") you probably won't get a lot of leads.
- e. Step Five -- once you find them, say (and I quote)
- i. I got your name from ..... and they thought you could help me.
  - ii. My goal is to work in (their career area and/or company).
  - iii. I am looking for some advice.
    - 1. This is THE KEY -- ask for advice rather than if they have job openings because everyone can give you advice, very few can give you a job. If you ask the questions below, they are likely to tell you if their company has any openings anyway.
  - iv. Briefly give your background – 30 seconds max – major, graduation date, other key qualifications. Be sure to emphasize the skills and qualifications most sought after by employers in your fields of interest! For example, "I am graduating in May with a degree in \_\_\_\_\_. While in college I worked 20 hours per week while going to school full time. I am active in \_\_\_\_\_ organization and have worked as a \_\_\_\_\_ for the past two years where I developed strong communication skills assisting hundreds of customers." Then ask them questions like:
    - 1. If you were me (had my qualifications) and you wanted to have a job in this career field waiting for you when you graduated, what would you do?
    - 2. What positions would they be targeting? What are the entry level positions someone with your background would have the best chance of getting? (This helps determine job titles you should be searching for)
    - 3. Where would you look/what would you do to find openings for these positions?
    - 4. What companies/organizations would you target?
    - 5. What websites would you use?
    - 6. Where else would you look?
    - 7. Who would you talk to? How would you find them? What would you say?
  - v. Be sure to thank them for their help at the end of your conversation AND send them a hand written thank you note within the next day or two.
  - vi. If they were a good source of information helping you to find job openings, be sure to follow up with them periodically, maybe once a month.
  - vii. When you find a job, make sure to let all the folks who gave you advice know and thank them again for their help. This will help to solidify your network so you can go back to your network of contacts the NEXT time you look for a job.