

Finding a Great Job in Tough Times – Nine Successful Strategies

Human Services Job Search

- 1) Register with Career Services at 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.
 - d. Search for employer contacts based on your major or field of choice – there are over 1700 contacts (click employer in upper right hand corner and then employers search)

- 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 select “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 in the past.
 - 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. If your major has limited graduates, consider looking at similar majors for more leads.
 - f. Once you find the list of organizations, use LinkedIn, scsucareers.com (See #1d above) and/or the job fair websites (see #3 below) to identify contact people.
 - i. LinkedIn has 13,000+ SCSU alumni on their site. Just register at www.linkedin.com and utilize their advanced search option to find SCSU alumni contacts at organizations you are interested in.

- 3) Job Fairs – most resumes posted online with organizations 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 -- all SCSU students and alumni can attend. There are typically 15-25 human service, non-profit, government agencies in attendance and over 50% of all the employers will hire students with any major.
- b. U of MN Job Fair – www.umjobfair.org -- SCSU candidates can use this site to identify job postings and employer contacts.
- c. Private College Job Fair – www.mnpcfair.org – similar to U of MN but often more non-profits.
- d. Government Job Fair – for SCSU students interested in internships or jobs in government agencies.
- e. Idealist.org Career Fair - www.idealists.org/fairs - Career fair for non-profit jobs.
- 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>

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
- 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 and 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.
- 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 organizations who have been willing to sponsor international candidates in the past.
- i. Diversity Sites and Differently Abled Sites

5) Job Specific Sites – includes links to a number of social services and non-profit job sites, many of which include job postings. See our website at:

<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/careerservices/jobintern/careerarea.asp>

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 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 for a non-profit organization in Minnesota.
 - ii. Another example of a key niche site would be www.minnesotainfo.org – it doesn’t include job postings but is a great site to identify organizations who provide the services or assist the populations that fit your career interests, for example “housing” or “adoption” or “refugees” or “autistic children.”
- b. 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 openings for social work.
- c. Professional Association’s 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 “human services associations” OR “social services organizations”)
 - iv. Use “Directory of Associations” in the Miller Center or ask Reference Librarian.
 - v. “National Trade and Professional Associations” book in Career Services.

- vi. Examples of associations for human services professionals include:
 1. National Association of Social Workers – Minnesota Chapter
www.naswmn.org/
 2. Minnesota Counseling Association - www.mncounseling.org
 3. Minnesota Corrections Association - www.mn-ca.org/

- 7) Employment Agencies – They have been one of the top industries 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 that could be an option for Human Services professionals are:
 - i. GradStaff, Career Professional, Fahrenheit 360.com
 - ii. Other agencies active in college recruiting include: Career Professionals, Pro Staff, Robert Half, Aerotek and Lab Support
 - b. To find the agencies with specialties that fit your interests, research Employment Agencies online or in the “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. Colleges in your areas of geographic interest or ones who have large programs like your major are the best place to start. Be sure to check out their Career Services websites as well as network with students.

- 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 by 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 organization.
 - 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 organization)."
 - iii. "I am looking for some advice."
 - a. 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 organization 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 you 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.