

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

A Guide To Finding Employment Opportunities In Northwest Michigan

**Northwestern Michigan College
Career & Employment Services**

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

Get Ready to Search

Before you begin your job search you need to get prepared. Use the guides provided by NMC's Career and Employment Services to identify your most marketable skills and prepare for your interview. Also prepare the written tools you will need and are listed below.

- Resume: A factual account of your past experience, education, and skills
- Cover Letter: A personal letter to introduce your resume and give you the opportunity to express who you are and why the potential employer should interview you.
- Prospect Letter: Similar to the cover letter although it is written as a tool to see if a prospective employer has or is considering a position you may be able to fill.
- Follow-up letter: Used to "follow-up" on an interview, telephone call, or a prospect letter.

Details and assistance preparing any of these "tools" is available from Career & Employment Services or refer to NMC's Web page <http://www.nmc.edu/%7Ecareers/jobsearch.html>.

Job Search Strategies

Your Job Search should have three components. When using the first two, you need to determine what level of activity you should devote to each. The third component, entrepreneurial ideas, is something each person should consider before, during and after your job search. It is not for everyone.

STRATEGY 1.

Apply for posted positions. There are numerous places where employment opportunities are posted. You should check each at least weekly. Pick out positions you feel you may be qualified for. Do not disqualify a position because of perceived pay, opportunity for advancement or other reasons. Those factors can only be determined after you have interviewed for the position and have specific information about the position and associated factors. Apply for the positions in the manner the employer has requested. Always send a resume along with other requirements such as an application. Cover letters are also highly recommended. They give you an opportunity to tell the employer about who you are in addition to your factual information on your resume. The kind of person you are and how you will fit into a business is extremely important to prospective employers.

Here is a short list of employment opportunity listings you should check weekly.

Source	World Wide Web Address
Traverse City Record Eagle	WWW.NorthernMichiganJobMatch.com
Michigan Talent Bank	http://www.michworks.org/mtb/user/MTB_EMPL.EntryMainPage
Northwestern MI College	www.nmc.edu/careers/joblist.htm

USA Jobs (Federal Employment)	http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/
Munson Medical Center	http://www.munsonhealthcare.org/ (Click on Employment/Volunteer)
G.T. Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians	http://www.casino2win.com/ (Click on "Employment Opportunities")
Traverse City Schools	http://www.tcaps.net/hr.shtml/
Grand Traverse Resort	http://www.grandtraverseresort.com/general_info/general_information.html (Click other choices and Employment)
Michigan Job Shop	http://www.michiganjobshop.com/
Jobs in Traverse City	http://www.jobsintc.com/
Kirtland Comm. College	http://k2.kirtland.cc.mi.us/~employ/ (Community newspaper resources)
WGTU TV's JobSpot.	http://www.wgtu.com/
Cadillac News, Cadillac, MI	http://www.cadillacnews.com/classifieds/index.inn?loc=detail&main=Employment
Petoskey News-Review	http://www.adquest3d.com/adquest20/search.asp?BRD=410&PAG=87

STRATEGY 2.

Prospect for employment opportunities. It has been said that more than 75 % of the employment opportunities in our area are not posted anywhere. These employers hire people they know personally or are referred to them by a trusted friend or colleague. Many believe that this is a good assumption and that the percentages could be higher although no good statistical data is available to prove or disprove this figure. Assuming this is true, we must have a job search strategy that will allow us to seek or "Prospect" for jobs in this market. This is how this strategy works.

One of the greatest challenges to this strategy is knowing the "Job Market." Where are the potential jobs and how do I apply for them. To do this successfully you must think of yourself as a sales person and your product is you, your skills, abilities, education and experience. You must know your product but more importantly you must know your market. Where and who are the employers who have the potential of hiring me. The first method is to identify companies in our area that you may want to work for. Three very good resources you should use are:

Traverse City Record Eagle. The Record Eagle has more than job postings. They have numerous advertisements from business who are selling their services or goods and it has a business section that talks about business related issues and companies in our area. Also look for the announcements pertaining to people who are being promoted or hired. This often signals movement and potential openings in businesses. The Record Eagle Business section often highlights a company.

Traverse City Business News. The Traverse City Business News has no job postings. What it does have is information about various companies and what they are doing. This is a great source to find out what companies are in the area and what they are doing.

America's Career Information Network (www.acinet.org). This web page, produced by the Federal Government, will identify specific companies that employ specific occupations. You enter an occupation, the state you are seeking work in, and then the part of the individual state

and it will return specific company names. The information also includes names of principles within the company, addresses, telephone numbers, and even a map to show you how to get to their location. This resource is also an excellent resource for wage, trend and other occupational information.

Other things you may try are to take a ride through area industrial parks to see what companies are there then research information on those companies. Today many companies have WWW pages that offer a wealth of information and even job postings. Use your local library to research newspaper articles about the company. Northwest Michigan has some very successful companies who are on the cutting edge of technology and leaders in their industry. Also, do not forget to tell all of your friends and acquaintances that you are seeking employment. The key is to keep people aware that you are looking so that when they hear of an opportunity, they will let you know about it.

Now that you have identified some potential prospects it is time to contact them. One of the most common ways to do this is by mail.

A prospect letter is similar to a cover letter except for the opening and the closing. You will write companies and open your letter by telling them that you are writing in search of an employment opportunity and the type of work you are looking for. You will then tell them briefly what kind of person you are and what you can do. The closure is a proposal that simply says, "If you are looking for a person with my qualifications now or in the near future, you look forward to an opportunity to meet with them and discuss your qualifications and how you may benefit the potential employer. You can enclose a copy of your resume or state that you will be happy to forward a copy of your resume to them and how they can contact you.

Before we get too excited about this strategy, let's put it into perspective. If I open our local telephone book's business pages and pick 100 businesses at random, the chances they are looking for someone with my qualifications at this time is very remote. However, the chances they will hire someone with my qualifications within the next 6 months increase significantly and as time goes on it increases even more. Let's look at another analogy. If I am a business and send you an advertisement for my product or service, the chance that you will hire me immediately is very small. However, in the event you need my services in the future I want you to think of and choose me. Therefore, a good advertisement is run a number of times to keep reminding the prospective customer that I am out there in the event he or she needs me. Prospecting for jobs is no different. You send a prospect letter as an introduction and then you follow-up on it on a regular basis telling the prospective employer that you are still interested and would like to work for them. The follow-up is where most people fall down on this process. To do this you need to keep a record of your job search actions for each person you contact and follow up on a regular basis. You simply let them know you are still interested in working for them.

One important point, the prospect letter is meant to convince the employer that you are worth his or her time to speak to you. Therefore, give the prospective employer the information they need (nothing more and nothing less) in a convincing manner. This is where you will have to work at

composing a convincing prospect letter. The better your letter the better your chances are of getting an interview. Learn to write with conviction.

STRATEGY 3.

The third strategy is not for everyone but is something each of us should consider in our job search. It is not a short-term solution but something you can be planning for the day you are ready for the risk and commitment of starting your own business.

The first consideration is the two factors mentioned previously, risk and commitment. We must minimize risk and understand what we are committing to in order to be successful. Therefore the first thing you should do (no exceptions) is to write a comprehensive business plan that will include every facet of your business. This plan should include a study of your market area to insure your product or service is marketable, overhead cost, marketing strategies and much more.

The reason the business plan is so important is that it: (1) tells you what challenges you are facing and gives you the opportunity to decide how you will overcome these, (2) identifies the level of commitment it will take to be successful, and (3) lays out the process you will take to establish your business.

One of the best sources in our area for the entrepreneur is the Senior Core of Retired Executives. This volunteer service can be contacted through the Traverse City Chamber of Commerce and give no cost assistance to people seeking to start a business. I recommend that all prospective new business owners at least have a member of score review their business plan.

The State of Michigan web pages at <http://www.michigan.gov/businessstartup>, offers a wealth of information pertaining to starting your business and resources available to you.

The U.S. Small Business Administration at <http://www.sba.gov/> has numerous informational web pages and regional offices in Michigan that provide assistance including financing, start up requirements, management techniques, training, and much more.

Summary

These three strategies are not intended to be the only way to seek employment but will help you establish a process of what you need to do, on a continuing basis, to find employment. Assistance with your job search is always available from the NMC Career and Employment Services.