Soft Skills #4 – Job Search Strategies

01/09/23

4:30 PM – 6:30 PM

**Lead By:** Shauna Strickler

**Slides:** Job Search Strategies

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1CwFOgPY1lWV6C8GVd1OtWdIMxQKbuqg2DV6olo0N4w4/edit>

**3 Phases** to your Job Search:

* Planning Phase: Research, Self-Prep, Self-Awareness, Projects
* Search Phase: Networking, Self-Branding, Applications, Follow Up
* Execute Phase: Interview, Impress, Secure Offer

How to find **Good Fit Jobs**:

* Remember: most developer job descriptions are written by people who’ve never touched code, like Human Resource professionals.
* Aim for roles that you feel you hit at least 50-60% of the qualifications listed.
* GC grads are usually qualified for roles asking up to 3 years of development experience (on a job description, years of experience doesn’t necessarily mean the company is looking for the total amount of days/weeks/years you’ve been coding).
* DIVERSIFY your search and use multiple job boards/tools/resources
* Focus on quality vs. quantity, while still keeping a healthy pipeline
* Entry level developer roles are competitive. You can’t rely solely on your technical skills!

**Jobs Titles** to look for after Bootcamp:

* WEB DEVELOPER
* SOFTWARE ENGINEER
* APPLICATION PROGRAMMER
* QUALITY ASSURANCE TESTER
* BUSINESS ANALYST
* FULL STACK ENGINEER
* TECHNICAL CONSULTANT
* PRODUCT OWNER/MANAGER
* UI/UX DESIGNER
* APPRENTICE

Here are some **Job Boards**, considered Tier 1:

* Indeed
* LinkedIn
* Glassdoor
* Google for Jobs
* LinkUp
* BootUp

Be aware that job descriptions on these are frequently written by HR professionals and not necessarily by someone with as in-depth technical knowledge. Also, be aware that you don’t need to have experience in all the qualifications listed – they are more of a wish list. If you can meet 50-60% of the job qualifications, then consider applying.

When a posting is looking for 3 years’ experience, then you could consider yourself meeting that requirement based on the intensity of training received within the Bootcamp.

When going through this process it is better to tailor your application for a specific job versus just mass applying for jobs with the same generic application.

Other sources for job searching includes Grand Circus graduates (Google Doc with [Mentorship Opportunities](https://docs.google.com/document/d/11n1l3bShUTU9rWuaWaXDpaeGrnapgNUbeALXYdbipB0/edit)), YouTube videos providing info from people who have gone through the process, company websites, 20 Dev Related [Podcasts](https://designmodo.com/podcasts-web-designers/), etc.

Another resource is the Grand Circus [Employer Network Database](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/111tmLd8mPNYHEdf9YkdIxEkgZevY7y75iBPOV3WvZ2k/edit#gid=1941717785):

* Visit Airtable.com + Create Account
* Go to <http://bit.ly/GCdatabase>
* Click on ‘Employer Network’
* Select ‘Duplicate Base’

**How to find companies that align with your values:**

* Explore the company’s social medias, primarily LinkedIn
* Check out reports from:
  + the Business for Social Responsibility (BSR)
  + The Human Rights Campaign (Corporate Equality Index)
* Review company annual reports to find out things like environmental sustainability, their vendors/suppliers, water usage, etc.
* Do they have partnerships with non-profit organizations or support social causes
* Do they offer Employee Resources Groups (ERGs) - ERGS are similar to the affinity groups at Grand Circus

**Create a Target Company List:**

* Find around 15-25 companies that you’re interested in working for
  + Use Grand Circus’ Employer Database
  + Check out Grand Circus alumni on LinkedIn
  + Search for industry, regional, and best company to work for lists
* Find 3-5 contacts at each company
  + You can see if they are listed on LinkedIn and add them as a connection

**Consider your Former / Current Industry:**

* It may be easier to translate your current experience with the skills you have learned in your Bootcamp.
* For example, let’s say you are currently a teacher. Consider looking for jobs in the EdTech space as the skills, knowledge, and connections you have in your current position may help translate over to a new position in tech that focuses on education.

**Volunteering:**

* Pros
  + Can be a great way to ease into the industry with minimal pushback
  + More direct experience that you can list on your Resume / LinkedIn profile
  + Boost your network connections
* Cons
  + Unpaid
  + May take away from time that you can spend doing job searching, making other networking connections

**Informational Interviews** – not a **job** interview, these can be part of exploring a new career path or establishing a connection within a target company. These are casual conversations between a job applicant and someone who works at the company you want to be a part of.

Things to consider when searching for / setting up informational interviews:

* Determine what you are trying to accomplish
  + Insight into a particular industry?
  + Info about company culture at a specific organization?
    - Once you have this, then make a list of job titles and companies you want to research
* Find people to chat with:
  + Friends, family members, former colleagues, current classmates, Grand Circus alumni, and instructors
* Plan for your conversation. Focus on advice / insights / recommendations rather than asking for a job.

**Job Search Formula (3 x 5 x 7):**

A good level for job searching is 3 activities, 5 days a week, with 7 promising leads in the pipeline at all times. Activities can include applying for a job, a networking call with a former colleague, messaging a recruiter on LinkedIn, etc. This doesn’t just mean random applications. The promising leads pipeline means you have applied for a job and let’s say you get a rejection letter, then remove that from the pipeline and add another one. It can be frustrating because rejection sucks, but having a concrete number in mind keeps you focused on that, not the specific opportunity.

Part of this also includes tracking your job search history with online tools, Microsoft Excel, etc. Keep track of job listings, dates applied, any contacts you have, and the result. Even keeping track of rejections is positive because you continue building up contacts.

**Post-Grand Circus Bootcamp employment statistics:**

2021 Daytime Job Seeking Graduates (67):

* 0-30 days: 41.8%
* 31-60 days: 19.4%
* 61-90 days: 11.9%
* 91-180 days: 13.4%
* Beyond 180 days: 4.5%
* Missing employment data: 9%

2021 After Hours Job Seeking Graduates (70):

* 0-30 days: 35.7%
* 31-60 days: 15.7%
* 61-90 days: 11.4%
* 91-180 days: 17.1%
* Beyond 180 days: 7.1%%
* Missing employment data: 13%

Keep in mind the realities of job searching. There will be rejection. It’s not you, it’s not personal, it’s a numbers game. You can say the right things and it can still take longer than you’d like. For some people they may take longer as they are searching for something more specific that is the right fit for them.

That said, when tracking your job search history keep track of when a rejection comes. Is your resume getting kicked back by the tracking software? Are you getting rejected after the first phone screening? Paying attention to this can help you tweak your approach and refine your job application skills.

To help deal with job search frustration:

* Create a plan for rejection
* Keep perspective
* Ask for help – Career Services is here to help you!
* Take time for yourself away from the job search
* Revisit your strategy / career goals
* Keep coding – continue building your skills / portfolio / confidence

When you do get rejected during the interview stage, consider asking for feedback. If you got rejected at the application stage, then requesting feedback isn’t recommended. That’s not to say you don’t respond back to a rejection email with a response thanking them for consideration and requesting they keep you in mind for the future. This is still an opportunity to build your network. What if their preferred application changes their mind / takes a different offer / etc. This, or another opening, may come around and you want to leave them with the good impression.