

Job Search Strategies

Career Development

Room M120

Monday–Friday: 7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Appointments Available Upon Request

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Job Searching Online

- Start with broad terms like “design,” “graphic,” “creative,” “multimedia,” “production,” “Minnesota,” and then narrow your search by job title as necessary.
- If a position has a close match to your skill set, apply.
- Look carefully at the type of resume request: plain text, upload, attachment, or email. If it does not indicate otherwise, send materials as a PDF.
- Check your email as often as possible.
- Search every day—new job opportunities appear daily.

Job Search Engines

www.indeed.com

www.springboardforthearts.org

www.upwork.com

www.mima.org/jobs

www.mn.gov/deed/job-seekers

www.adfed.org/com

www.freelancer.com

www.minnesotajobs.com

www.linkedin.com/jobs

www.careerwise.minnstate.edu/jobs/index.html

www.google.com/search

- Discover niche job boards (Dribbble, Creative Hotlist)
- Join industry-specific sites (Behance, GitHub, Medium, Flickr)
- Glassdoor—find reviews

Websites

- The Muse.com—detailed profiles of companies
- Reference AIGA: Design Portfolio Tips

Utilizing Social Media for Your Job Search

Why utilize social media to job search?

- Positions are posted online
- You are demonstrating your social media savviness through the process
- Gain networking skills
- See what others in your industry are doing

What employers look for:

- Your professionalism
- Your communication skills
- Your work history
- Your educational training and degrees
- Your industry knowledge and skills
- Your use of alcohol and/or illegal substances
- Your use of profanity
- What you do with your time off work

What you should look for in employers:

- Their social media presence
- Their company culture
- Glimpses inside the office—use location tags whenever possible
- Their industry status

Leveraging Different Social Media Platforms

Twitter

- Choose a professional handle, and craft an excellent bio, focusing on your skills
- Follow recruiters
- Stay engaged with industry-related news
- Advanced Search > Enter [This Exact Phrase] > Enter City Name
- Advanced Search > Hashtags > jobs

Instagram

- Display your work and personality
- Find and follow companies or individuals in your industry
- Look for the hashtags #hiring, #nowhiring, #werehiring

Facebook

- Find opportunities on employer pages

General Tips:

- Add appropriate social media links to your email signature
- Create consistent and professional branding across all platforms
- Crowdfund—let people in your networks know that you are job searching
- Based on what you see online, generate questions to ask during an interview

How to Build Your Network

In a highly competitive job market, it is necessary to foster relationships with professional contacts. By getting to know more people in your field, you can open yourself up to career growth and development, expanding your knowledge base. According to a 2016 study conducted by LinkedIn and The Adler Group, “85% of critical jobs are filled via networking of some sort.” Thus, being highly networked is essential for both the job seekers and for those recruiters seeking employees. Ask each person you meet to tell you more about their career paths and objectives.

Alumni, Faculty, Class Speakers, Or Visiting Artists

Start with the MCAD resources closest to you—alumni, faculty members, class speakers, panelists, and visiting artists. Contacting someone when you have something to reference, such as, “I heard you present in my Typography class at MCAD last month and really enjoyed it,” gives the professional some reference as to who you are. Also, they are more likely to respond positively with this type of connection. Find MCAD alumni through the MCAD Directory, Handshake, or the MCAD Alumni Office.

First, Second, and Third-Degree Connections

In addition to MCAD connections, think about the other people close to you. Reach out to friends, family, friends of family, and acquaintances. They all have skills you may not be aware of and they each have their own networks. Ask to be introduced.

Professional Associations

Professional associations can help you get connected, stay informed, and provide a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas. It can also be a resource for up-to-date industry information to help you with your career development.

Arts Organizations

Local and/or national arts organizations serve artists by providing career-related information and services. Arts organizations may provide exhibition opportunities, career counseling, access to lawyers who support the arts and offer sliding scale fees to counsel artists, and opportunities to interact with arts community members. Most people join these groups to meet others.

Online Professional Groups

Find other professionals in your field through online groups aimed at connecting professionals and resources. You may not work directly with them, but you share the same career. They can advise you and support you over common issues related to your field.

10 Job Search Tips

Cover letters should go out with all resumes that are sent. Make sure the cover letter is specific to each job for which you apply—you should work from a template that you rewrite for each job opportunity based upon the job description.

Make sure your resume is always up to date. Up to date means keeping your address (if included), cell phone number, email address, and website/portfolio link current. It also includes work history, education, and freelance work.

When you email your resume, follow up in a few days with an email. Simply say that you are following up to ensure they received your application and to ask if they have any questions concerning your application, or if they would like to schedule an interview with you. When sending an email to inquire, be sure to resend your resume and cover letter as a convenience. If you do the contacting rather than waiting for them, you may get an interview that you otherwise would not have; be assertive, be **bold!**

Dress professionally for every interview. Give a firm handshake. Make eye contact. Use professional language. Be extra polite and professional, even if your potential employer responds casually.

Review every application and directions closely. Always follow the directions provided by the employer. If they say “no phone calls please,” do not call. If they say “no emails,” do not email.

Always follow up an interview with a thank you email within 24 hours of the interview. Reinforce why you should be the candidate of choice. Sometimes it is the follow up email that will get you the job, or that will clinch the job for you if they were wavering between you and someone else. Additionally, you may also send a handwritten thank you letter via the Postal Service. The extra thoughtfulness of a handwritten note reiterating why you are the best candidate may help.

Go to your interviews prepared with three references and their contact information on a separate document from your resume but with the same formatting (font, header). Ask three people ahead of time who will give you good references. Then, following your interview, call your references so they know they may be contacted and by whom. Ensure your references have received a copy of your most current resume—this should be the same resume you submitted to the job.

Keep track of who you interviewed with and how you followed up.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

An informational interview is used to gain firsthand impressions about work in a specific field. It has a very different focus than a job interview; the goal here is to learn more about a position, company or the industry in general. Informational interviews should be approached as a means of gathering information for your own career planning. An informational interview is not a way to 'sneak' into an interview for a position with the interviewer's company; as just stated, it is solely for learning about the industry, company, or job role in general. Many people in the community are willing to talk and share their experiences with someone seeking to enter the career field. If you feel uncomfortable at the thought of setting up an Informational Interview, you can practice your approach with a friend, advisor, faculty member, or Career Development.

Benefits from Informational Interviews

NETWORKING

Informational interviews give you a chance to connect with a professional in your career area of interest, and learn from them. This also helps you expand your professional network for future opportunities.

INTERVIEWING SKILLS

Informational interviews let you practice speaking about your skills and about the industry in general. You may get valuable feedback to help you with future interviews.

INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE

By speaking with a professional in the industry, you will gain valuable insight that you may not otherwise find. You may gain information about what makes their company stand out, who the competitors are, industry trends and projections, etc.

POSITION INFORMATION

Informational interviews allow you to find out the pros and cons of a position. How does this position contribute to the overall goals of the organization? What are some of the challenges? Having this information will give you more opportunities to point out how you are a great candidate during a job interview.

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

By having interviews with many different people and different companies, you will get a sense of the range of possible work environments in the industry that will inform you of where you want to be.

How to Set Up an Informational Interview

It is best to begin setting up informational interviews before you begin the job hunt or start sending out resumes. You can even do this before you have graduated. If you do not know anyone working in your area of interest, ask everyone you know for referrals.

When you set up the interview, be sure to explain that you would like to learn about the field and explore career options. Make it clear that your purpose is simply to gather information, and be specific about the kind of information you seek. Request a meeting in person so you can experience their working environment. With that in mind, be flexible about meeting times in accordance with their schedule.

During and After the Interview

It is important to follow interview etiquette even for an informational interview. This is your first impression of a new company, so be sure to be prepared, dress professionally, and arrive on time. Research the company and position ahead of time, so you are prepared with questions. You can jot down notes during the conversation or afterwards to help you remember what was discussed.

Bring a copy of your resume and portfolio. Towards the end of the interview, ask the professional to take a look at your work and offer you some feedback about what you can change or improve on. This is another way of letting them know your skills and accomplishments without asking them for a job, as well as getting an insider's view on what to change. Remember to get a business card so you have the person's full contact information.

After the interview, it is important to send a brief thank you note or email and follow up on your visit and conversation. You may want to keep the person updated on your career decisions if you found them particularly helpful and would like to maintain a professional relationship.

Sample Questions to Ask

- What are the responsibilities for the position?
- What background is necessary for this position?
- What are the most important skills for this field?
- What do you do in a typical day?
- How much creativity do you exercise in this position?
- What personal characteristics are helpful in this position?
- What are typical career paths for this position? What are the best ways to enter this field?
- Looking back, what would you have done differently regarding your career path?

- How would you characterize your working conditions? How does this compare to other industries?
- What are the exciting trends, changes or controversies currently in this field?
- What are some things to avoid or be aware of when pursuing a career in this field?
- What is the typical starting salary range? How does this vary with setting?
- Can you suggest other people I could talk with? Could I use your name as a referral?
- May I add you to my network on LinkedIn?

LinkedIn Overview

- Free professional social networking platform utilized by most employers and recruiters
- Your online business card, your resume, and your letters of recommendation all in one
- Provides function that matches you with professionals who have a similar work history (e.g. same company, college, graduate school, etc.)
- Identifies potential clients, subject experts, and potential employers who come recommended by people in your network
- Find business/employment opportunities
- Enhance your job search by discovering and making inside connections for jobs
- Post and distribute job listings
- Be introduced to other professionals through the people you know—critical for researching companies and influential people

Connect with people who have a vested interest in you

Former supervisors, co-workers, colleagues at professional service firms (artists, consultants, recruiters, etc.), college or graduate school alumni. These connections tend to be the most valuable people in your network as they will go the extra mile to help you and can vouch for your skills and talents. Also, they may be in a position to hire you. The bigger your personal network, the better your results in searching out companies, organizations, people, etc.

Find people with whom you have a connection

There are LinkedIn groups for companies, colleges, graduate schools, and entrepreneurs (by state, industry, region). Most users allow others in the group to directly connect with them. Find volunteer organizations or professional associations you already belong to. The bigger your network, the better your results in searching out companies, organizations, people, etc.

Complete your profile to increase your visibility

The more complete your profile, especially with keywords, companies, titles, etc., the more points for connection on a data or search query and the more people will find reasons to connect with you. LinkedIn allows your profile to be indexed in search engines such as Google. LinkedIn displays how many times your profile has been viewed and sometimes by whom.

How to Build a Professional LinkedIn Profile

□ **Claim your unique LinkedIn URL**

To increase the professional results that appear when people type your name into a search engine, set your LinkedIn profile to “public” and claim a unique URL for your profile (Unique URL example: www.linkedin.com/in/yourname). This also makes it easier to include your LinkedIn URL in your email signature, which is a great way to demonstrate your professionalism.

□ **Craft an informative profile headline**

Your profile headline gives employers and connections a short, memorable way to learn who you are in a professional context. Think of the headline as the slogan for your professional brand, such as “Recent honors grad seeking animation position.” Check out the profiles of students and recent alums you admire for inspiration.

□ **Display an appropriate photo**

LinkedIn requires a professional high-quality headshot of you alone in front of a plain background. As an artist, an artistic self-portrait is okay, but keep in mind that does not show the human behind your profile and some recruiters may react negatively to that.

□ **Show off your education**

Include information about all college-level institutions you have attended. Include your major as well as highlights of your activities (scholarships, grants). Include any honors, awards, and accomplishments.

□ **Develop a professional summary statement**

Your summary statement should borrow sentences from your best-written cover letter; be concise and confident about your goals and qualifications. Include relevant internships, volunteer work, and campus involvement and/or leadership. Use short blocks of text or bullet points for easy reading.

□ **Fill your “Skills” section with keywords**

Include keywords and phrases that a recruiter or hiring manager might type into a search engine to find a person with your education/skill set. Match relevant keywords found in the job

listings that appeal to you and the LinkedIn profiles of people who currently hold the kinds of positions you want.

□ **Update your status weekly**

Update your status at least once a week to inform connections about the events you are attending, major projects you have completed, professional books you are reading, or any other news that you would tell someone at a networking reception or during a quick catch-up phone call.

□ **Collect diverse recommendations**

The most impressive LinkedIn profiles have at least one recommendation associated with each position a person has held. Beyond that, ask for recommendations from faculty and staff, employers, and professional mentors.

□ **Share your work**

Add examples of your writing, portfolio, design work, or other accomplishments. Direct people to your website, blog, or Twitter feed with links. Attach any relevant media or design work to the job during which it was created.

Additional LinkedIn Development

100% complete = 100% more likely to get noticed

Resources say users with complete or “All Star” profiles are 40 times more likely to receive opportunities through LinkedIn.

Use your inbox

Contrary to popular belief, networking doesn’t mean reaching out to strangers. The best networks begin with those you know and trust, and then grow based on personal referrals. Send personalized messages to professionals (friends, relatives, internship colleagues) you know in the “real world”. As you build your connections on LinkedIn, always customize your connection requests with a friendly note and, if necessary, a reminder of where you met or what organization you have in common. If you’re being referred by a mutual friend, write a brief intro of who you are and why you’d like to connect. You’ll impress people with your personal touch.

Join the “in” crowd

Continue to seek out new online relationships by joining LinkedIn Groups relevant to your interests. As a group member, you can comment on discussions, find exclusive job listings, and meet people who share common interests.

Lend a (virtual) hand

As you build connections and gain group memberships, think about what you can do to support other people. Comment on a classmate's status update, or forward a job listing that fits the qualifications of a friend.

Do your homework

Before an informational interview, a job interview, or a networking opportunity, use LinkedIn to learn about the background and interests of the people you are scheduled to meet. Access company pages to research organizations and their employees, and use Advanced Search to find common interests among potential coworkers, employers.

Utilize LinkedIn ProFinder

On LinkedIn ProFinder, clients submit a proposal request for the service they need, such as graphic design, logo design, or photography. You are able to submit a proposal for the project, and each client receives a maximum of five proposals. If you use this feature, it is imperative that you have a well-developed LinkedIn profile, connections, recommendations from others, a quality proposal, and samples of your work uploaded to or linked on your profile. At this time, LinkedIn users with a free membership can submit up to ten proposals to get a sense of how the platform works and whether it is a good avenue for you to find clients. After ten proposals, a LinkedIn Premium subscription is necessary for unlimited responses for project requests.

Now step away from the computer

Online methods should complement, not replace, in-person relationship building.

Professional Organizations

AdFed - Advertising Federation of Minnesota

A non-profit professional trade association serving the local advertising community. Members of the association volunteer their time and talents to execute committee events overseen by a board of directors. Ad2 is for more members 32 and younger.

www.adfed.org

651-290-7489

AIGA - American Institute of Graphic Arts

AIGA brings design to the world and the world to the designers. As the profession's largest community, they advance design as a respected craft, strategic advantage, and vital cultural force. They work to enhance the value and deepen the impact of design in business, society, and our collective future.

www.aigaminnesota.org/membership/

612-339-6904

AMA - American Marketing Association

Strengthen your leadership and managerial skills and build lasting relationships with other marketing professionals. Undergraduate student membership available.

www.amaminnesota.org

651-489-1321

ASID - American Society of Interior Designers

A community of designers, industry representatives, educators, and students committed to interior design. Through education, knowledge, sharing, advocacy, and community outreach, they strive to advance the interior design profession. 30,000 members engage in a variety of professional programs and activities.

www.asid.org

202-546-3480

ASMP - American Society for Media Photographers

The premier trade association for the world's most respected photographers. ASMP is the leader in promoting photographers' rights, providing education for photographers, and helping to connect clients with photographers.

www.asmp.org/

215-451-2757

IFDA - International Furnishings and Design Association

A unique and innovative association of continuity and creativity that brings together complementary professionals in the furnishing and design industries. Provides information about buying and selling patterns, imports, competition, networking, education, and professional development.

www.ifda.com

610-992-0011

IIDA - International Interior Design Association

A professional networking and educational association committed to enhancing interior design through knowledge, value, and community. One of the most active chapters in the Midwest, IIDA offers professional development resources and opportunities.

www.iida.org

1-888-799-4432

FilmNorth

FilmNorth's mission is to empower artists to tell their stories, launch and sustain successful careers, and advance the North as a leader in the national network of independent filmmakers. We achieve our mission by nurturing a vibrant, diverse community of film and media artists; providing education and resources at every stage of their careers; and celebrating their achievements. Student Membership: \$55.00

www.myfilmnorth.org

651-644-1912

MIMA - Minnesota Interactive Marketing Association

MIMA believes fundamental changes in technology and culture have transformed business, and it is their association's role to connect, illuminate, and partner with members and guests in

order to elevate the quality of marketing practices and to display the talent available in Minnesota to the rest of the world.

www.mima.org

651-999-5345

MNPPA - Minnesota Professional Photographers Association

An organization of photographers whose purpose is to educate their members by promoting professionalism, quality of work, sound business practices, and excellent customer service.

<https://mnppa.com/>

763-390-6272

Minnesota Publishers Roundtable

To develop, advance, and promote the book publishing industry in Minnesota and adjacent areas. To provide book publishers and others in related professions and trades an opportunity to exchange ideas and experience. To promote good fellowship and friendly cooperation among its members. Individual membership is \$15.00. Sept-Sug membership and renewals only available during their annual membership drive, which occurs each fall.

www.publishersroundtable.org

Minnesota Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators

Supports over 400 members throughout Minnesota, offers a mentorship program and a variety of networking opportunities. First year membership is \$95, annual renewal is \$80. No student memberships available.

<https://minnesota.scbwi.org/>

323-782-1010

Siggraph - Special Interest Group on Graphics and Interactive Techniques

Their mission is to promote the generation and dissemination of information on computer graphics and interactive techniques. The purpose is to foster a membership community whose core values help them catalyze the innovation and application of computer graphics and interactive techniques.

<https://www.siggraph.org/contact>

White Bear Center for the Arts

The mission of the White Bear Center for the Arts is to provide a gateway to diverse arts experiences. Educating new and established artists, cultivating the understanding of art in its many forms, and celebrating the joys of art. They value the creative process, openness, and transformative experience. Student membership with an ID is \$40.

www.whitebeararts.org

651-407-0597

Creative Staffing Firms

Always remember that the staffing firm's client is the business that needs employees, so that constituent will always be the priority. Typically, the staffing firm charges the client, not you.

A staffing firm cannot guarantee you work; however, they are a good resource and have led to opportunities for some graduates.

Persistence is critical to making this relationship successful—do not expect them to be in constant contact with you.

Advent Creative Group, adventcreativegroup.com, 952.920.9119

Celarity, celarity.com, 952.941.0022

Creatis, creatis.com, 612.843.2720

Creative Circle, creativecircle.com

Digital People, digitalpeople.net, 612.373.2626

Doherty Staffing, doherty.com, 952.832.3561

True Talent, truetalentgroup.com, 651.442.9008

Horizontal Integration, horizontalintegration.com, 612.466.4942

Top 10 Career Fair Tips

1. Prepare your resume

- Schedule an appointment with Career Development to review your resume and discuss preparing for the career fair.

2. Develop a strategy

- Create a list of companies to speak with and prioritize them according to interest.
- Ensure you have enough time to talk to all of your target companies.

3. Research companies of interest and develop questions

- Look up the companies that will be at the career fair and explore jobs they have posted on job boards and on their website.
- Research the company and tailor your elevator pitch to their needs.

- Develop thoughtful questions for each employer.
- 4. Know your elevator pitch—tailor if necessary**
 - Include the following: major, year, previous roles, leadership experience, strengths, career interests as they align with the company, and a question. You don't necessarily need all of these things—choose aspects you are comfortable with that are authentic and genuine.
 - Consider how your knowledge, skills, and aptitudes connect to the work they do.
 - Be sure to demonstrate enthusiasm and smile.
 - 5. Have a professional appearance and demeanor**
 - Dress in business professional attire – ensure it is clean and fits well before the event!
 - Print off 20 copies of your resume and carry them in a folio along with a pen and notes.
 - Smile and practice your firm handshake before the career fair.
 - 6. Listen and get contact information**
 - Listen to understand, not to respond. Consider what other participants may be hearing from the employers. Ask for contact information or at least write down names so you can follow-up on LinkedIn.
 - Take notes following your conversations so you can remember information to help you follow up.
 - 7. Step out of your comfort zone**
 - Talking to employers can be intimidating, but it's well worth it. You need to get noticed to make an impact. Often times, meeting recruiters at career fairs increases your chances to move forward.
 - 8. Do not use your cell phone or spend time collecting swag**
 - A professional presence is critical. Consider how these activities make you look.
 - 9. Apply for jobs before or after**
 - Apply for a job before the career fair if it is posted on a job board or their website. This shows a recruiter that you are interested and plan well – two great characteristics for a new hire. If you apply afterward, and be sure to follow up, let them know you did, and thank them for their guidance on the application process.
 - 10. Follow up via email or LinkedIn within 24 hours**
 - This is how you can stand out. Few students actually follow up—take advantage of that! This step provides the employer with a history of communication to refer to when reviewing your application.