<u>Job Search Strategies</u>

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Job Searching: Before You Begin

Addressing/Preventing Post-Graduation Anxiety: What You Can Do Now

In order to keep yourself accountable, as well to provide yourself with a general framework for your job search endeavors, consider beginning a Career Pathway Journal. This can serve as a 'jumping off point' for your job search efforts, and can help you determine some broad parameters associated with your future career goals.

Some questions to ask yourself within your journal:

What are your career goals?
- Write down short- and long-term goals. As you continue to explore career options in your major, you should revisit your goals as-needed.

What are your skills and interests?
- Reflect on your skills and interests. What do you consider to be your creative or design strengths? What do you enjoy doing? What inspires you? Also, think about your challenges. How will you overcome your identifiable challenges?

Navigating your career path
- Research different careers and companies (local or in desired area). Do you prefer on-ground or remote work? Freelance vs. employment?

Revisit the journal as time passes in order to continuously assess your progress towards the goals and objectives you identified within it. Journal regularly about your accomplishments, interests, networking opportunities, market trends, and industry professionals whom you admire. Celebrate any progress, no matter how small, as this can help to maintain motivation.

Setting Expectations

Prior to embarking on a job search, it is absolutely essential to distinguish between career goals and job expectations which are attainable and realistic and those which are unrealistic and not likely to occur in the short term. Furthermore, job seekers need to recognize feasible timelines and reconcile with the fact that, for the vast majority of individuals, career trajectories are not fast-paced or continuously progressing upwards. For most people, career progression is a winding, incremental journey of multiple roles with increasing relevance to their field, more responsibilities, and higher job satisfaction. At times, the trajectory may slow, plateau, regress, proceed rapidly, or even veer off into an entirely new direction!

Remain mindful of the following:

- **Art and design skills can be applied across a wide range of industries**. You may need to start in a role which is only tangentially related to your abilities and field of study. View these opportunities as beneficial 'stepping stones' serving to increase your professional skill set and make you better equipped for the next role!

- **Be comfortable with compromise and extended timelines**. Career progression can take time, and life very rarely adheres to one's desired schedule. Remaining flexible, open-minded, and adaptable when it comes to the opportunities you pursue generally results in better employment outcomes than being rigidly adherent to a specific or overly narrow view of 'acceptable' jobs.

- **Setting realistic expectations helps avoid disappointment and/or excessive stress/anxiety over the future.** Very few job seekers secure their 'dream job' right after graduation, so you should not be operating under the assumption that this will occur. Understand that jobs can be temporary, and each position you hold can bring you closer to your ultimate, long-term employment goals in the future.

Managing a Positive Attitude

At times, job searching can be time-consuming, draining, and maybe even discouraging. Be sure to consider the following points when starting your job search efforts in order to develop personalized methods for maintaining a healthy attitude and practicing ongoing self-care during this time:

- How do you motivate yourself?
- How can you manage frustration, worry, and stress?
- When you are overwhelmed with your job search, what steps can you take?

Ensuring a Wholly Professional Online Presence

Before starting your job search, you should run a Google search on yourself and review the results. Anything you can find online can also be found by a potential employer (they can and do scan your online profiles!), and anything questionable, unprofessional, or inflammatory may hinder your job search efforts.

Revisit the visibility settings on all of your websites and online profiles in order to adjust the accessibility of all your content and personal information. Toggle site and profile settings on or off as desired, and/or delete content as needed in order to ensure an online presence which is entirely curated and conducive to a productive job search.

Presenting a wholly professional image also includes being strategic about the online handles you go by, the website titles and URLs associated with your work, and the email address you use professionally. The professional email address you use during your job search should not be your MCAD one. It should be basic and professional; some variation of your first and last name is ideal. Avoid any silly/creative/hard to pronounce/'edgy' email addresses, as these can project a lack of professionalism and come off as juvenile or unskilled to potential employers; this extends to the name of your 'brand', your portfolio website's URL, and your online handles as well. Overall, the idea is to convey a sense of professionalism and credibility, as well as to make it easy for potential employers to recognize your communications/profiles/website and quickly connect all of these with your application materials.

If you don't have a completed, curated, functional, and polished website upon which to host your portfolio, leave it off of your resume until you do. Again, the URL you use should be similar to your professional email address and online handles (your 'brand' should be consistent).

Job Searching: Learning More Via 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.

Be aware that 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.

The Benefits of 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. If possible, request an in-person meeting on-site at the company' location so you can experience their working environment. With that in mind, however, be flexible about meeting times in accordance with their schedule, and be open to any other meeting locations besides the company site itself, such as a café or a coffee shop.

During and After the Interview

It is important to follow interview etiquette even for an informational interview. This is your opportunity to make a positive first impression with a representative of a new company, so be sure to be prepared, dress professionally, and arrive on time. This individual is taking time out of their busy schedule to assist you, so if you meet at a café or coffee shop, make sure that you offer to pay for their drink/refreshments/food. 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 upon. 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 in an informational Interview

- What are the responsibilities associated with your position?
- What background is necessary for this type of 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 your position?
- What personal characteristics are helpful in this type of position?
- What are typical career paths for this kind of 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 some exciting trends, changes, or controversies currently impacting 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 across environments?
- 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?

Job Searching: Embarking on your Search

In order to know which keywords to use across platforms, as well as to identify which search fields to select and which filters to apply, you will need to determine the type of role you are seeking. Remember, be realistic!

All of the following should be kept in mind:

- Determine in advance whether you are open to full-time, part-time, or both.

- Be flexible about on-site/hybrid role availability.

- You will likely need to be on-site most of (or all of) the time, especially for part-time roles and entry-level full-time roles. Fully remote jobs are 'unicorns' which are very competitive and are usually reserved for more experienced professionals with extensive work histories and proficiencies.

- Identify any and all logistical limitations you may have before starting your job search. Ensure that you will be able to get to/from the work site before applying.

- Don't limit yourself to specific job titles like Illustrator, Animator, Photographer, Artist, etc. You may not find many postings listed under these names, but that doesn't mean jobs focused on using these art and design skills aren't around, as they may just be using different job titles!
  - Employers use a wide variety of titles for various types of jobs. For instance, a role called Graphic Designer or Media Developer may actually be seeking someone to develop illustrations for inclusion in their marketing materials and/or craft animated GIFs and motion graphics for their website. Read through the whole posting, especially the job duties, in order to determine potential fit.

- Timing and pacing: always be ready to apply!
  - Understand that job postings move quickly, and you need to be ready to apply right away after locating a posting of interest. Posts are only active for a short window, and they won't wait for you to get your application materials ready. Assume that any posting you find today may no longer be accepting applications tomorrow, even if there is a posted application deadline. Try to apply to all roles within the same business day.

- Any submitted applications including materials which haven't been tailored to the job are essentially wastes of your time. If a role is interesting enough to apply to in the first place, it is worth taking the time to update materials for.

- Don't mash the apply button! Sending out generic applications to numerous roles in bulk is not a best practice, and will only result in rejections. These accumulated rejections can be discouraging.

Job Searching Online: Job Sites and Platforms

There are a few main avenues by which employers can post openings: company websites/careers pages, direct job boards, field-related/industry-focused job boards, nonprofit job boards, social media, aggregate job boards, or company review sites.

Company Websites/Careers Pages:
The 'gold standard' for opportunity postings. Always attempt to apply directly via the company website, as you know for a fact that the job is still open and your application will be received by the appropriate recipient. You might need to dig around on the site if it

doesn't appear as a direct result of a Google search for Company Name + careers. Company careers pages can be called Careers, Employment, Jobs, or even be hidden in the About or Contact Us section. They can also be hidden at the very bottom of the webpage after scrolling all the way down. Work With Us can either be a careers page or a submission portal for new clients. Spend some time navigating around the company page in order to locate their postings (keep in mind that, unfortunately, some company websites don't feature this section at all).

Direct Job Boards:
Direct job boards facilitate the posting and advertising of available opportunities by the company/employer itself. These are sites that organizations directly post positions to, meaning that the employers who post there are actively choosing to make their opportunities available to the platform's specific user base. Some direct job boards are curated for a particular type of job, or within a particular sector.

> *Examples – Handshake, LinkedIn Jobs*

Field-Related/Industry-Focused Job Boards: (Can overlap with Nonprofits)
Employers can pay to post roles with these boards. They feature a more curated and relevant selection of roles than an aggregate site, and are kept more up to date. Often, they will just reroute you to the company website to apply.

> *Examples - Springboard for the Arts, Americans for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, etc.*

Nonprofit Job Boards:
These boards can feature jobs with the nonprofits themselves, or be a nonprofit focused on advertising jobs available with relevant third parties.

> *Examples - Pollen Midwest, MN Council of Nonprofits, Idealist, WorkforGood, National Council of Nonprofits*

Social Media:
This includes the individual account portion of LinkedIn. Companies can post directly to LinkedIn Jobs via their employer account, but staff can signal boost via their own accounts. Smaller companies can solicit applications for roles they announce directly via their other social media accounts, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Social media profiles are often used to 'signal-boost' postings and share links to the direct job posting hosted on the company careers page rather than as avenue for a standalone posting.

Aggregator Job Boards:
These sites primarily post positions that are found on other job boards or company websites. Rather than organizations posting directly to aggregate job posting sites, these sites collect and aggregate data from hundreds to thousands of sources. Because of this, they are often second- or third-hand re-postings which are frequently outdated,

inaccurate, or even expired. They usually lack a link to the original posting. Consequently, applying via these boards is a last resort only (every once in a while, the company has actually posted the job to the aggregator site themselves!). Approach them as starting points/search tools, but always try to find the original posting on the company site when it's time to actually submit your application.

> *Examples - Indeed, Google Jobs, SimplyHired, ZipRecruiter (LinkedIn Jobs can aggregate)*

Company Review Sites:
Approach the information presented on these sites with a grain of salt, as the anonymous reviewers may not always provide measured opinions or both sides. However, their insight can be valuable when assessing a potential workplace's merits cumulatively. These sites can sometimes advertise available jobs with the featured companies. Smaller companies may not be represented or have any reviews associated with them.

> *Examples - Glassdoor, Careerbliss*

Job Searching: Letters of Inquiry/Letters of Interest/Prospect Letters

A letter of inquiry/letter of interest/prospect letter is a document which can be sent to employers with which you are interested in working, but who have not posted or advertised any available opportunities. Since it is essentially the emailed equivalent of a 'cold call', it may or may not result in a response. However, it is an option you may wish to utilize when seeking employment and/or internship opportunities.

The letter follows the same three-paragraph format of a cover letter, and the content is very similar, with two main differences:

- The first difference between a cover letter and a letter of inquiry is that a cover letter is written as a response to an opportunity posting which outlines the specific qualifications/requirements associated with the advertised role, but a letter of inquiry does not have a posting to reference and respond to. Therefore, the relevant skills/abilities/experiences described in the body paragraph of the letter must be anticipated by the letter writer. In order to determine which skills, abilities, and experiences would be most valuable to the employer, thorough research is required.
  - o Examine the type of work the employer produces, what the company culture is like, and what kind of projects they are currently undertaking.
  - o When writing the letter, select the skills and experiences you possess which align best with the information you discovered from your research and describe them in the body paragraph.

- The second difference between a letter of inquiry and a cover letter lies within the conclusion paragraph. In a cover letter, the third paragraph is where you state your confidence in your candidacy and ask for an interview. In a letter of inquiry, it is where you state that you possess skills which could be of value to the company and ask whether they might have any positions available, either now or in the future, which align with your abilities. You may state that your resume is attached and that you would welcome the opportunity to discuss how you could leverage your skills and experience to contribute to the company's continued success.

Sample Letter of Inquiry/Prospect Letter (Sent Within Email Body – Most Common Method)

Dear Ms. Doe:

Most recently, Main St. Studios came to my attention from Susan Smith, a client who speaks to your exceptional videography work. I was impressed by the clear attention to detail and professionalism exhibited by your team while completing the project for Ms. Smith. Therefore, I wish to inquire whether any summer internship opportunities might be available with Main St. Studios. As a junior filmmaking major at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design with extensive skills in video camera operation, film editing, and lighting support, I am very eager to utilize them alongside seasoned professionals in the field in order to contribute to the success of the company.

My focus in filmmaking at MCAD has been in documentary videography and storytelling. Recently, I completed a 20-minute feature on a local artist, which won first place at the Fun Film Festival. I have also further developed my technical capabilities in the area of video editing during a collaborative project in my Film Studies course. In my role as a team member, I was responsible for utilizing Adobe Premiere and After Effects to complete both the rough and final cuts of the footage shot by my teammates while consistently adhering to tight deadlines. Furthermore, I was integral to the creation of the original storyboard for the shoot.

My specialized training in filmmaking and my experience working effectively in a team has provided me with the tools I need to make a real contribution to Main St. Studios. If any internship opportunities arise within your company now or in the near future, I would greatly appreciate being considered for the role; accordingly, I would be happy to provide my resume and portfolio for your review at any time. Thank you very much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Jane Williams

Sample Letter of Inquiry/Prospect Letter (Sent as Attached PDF)

Date

To Whom It May Concern
ABC Graphics
123 First Street
Minneapolis, MN 55402

To Whom It May Concern:

I was recently reviewing your website and I immediately became intrigued with your organization's concepts and designs. My skill set includes the creative and technical skills which are demonstrated throughout your website and product line. Therefore, I am very interested in exploring possible graphic design opportunities with ABC Graphics.

As detailed within my resume, I am a recent graduate from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD). My education and training in the field of graphic design has afforded me the opportunity to refine my creative and design abilities. I am proficient in Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign. In addition, I possess exceptional skills pertaining to conceptual layout, branding, and typography. I am an innovative creator with the ability to work effectively and collaboratively. Furthermore, I have a strong commitment to task management and pride myself on consistently meeting deadlines. I am confident that my skills, talents, and abilities would be an asset to ABC Graphics.

If a position should become available to which you feel my background and qualifications would be a match, I would greatly appreciate your consideration and welcome the opportunity to present my credentials in an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Hedda Hopper

Job Searching: General Best Practices

The collected information and practices included below are broadly applicable and relevant regardless of your field and/or industry.

- Start with broad search terms like "design", "graphic", "creative", "multimedia", "production", and then narrow your search as necessary.
- Don't preemptively disqualify yourself due to a perceived shortcoming. A job posting is the employer's wish list: an applicant possessing everything they mention may not apply, so as long as you meet the basic needs of the role, apply!
- Search every day—new job opportunities appear daily
- Check your email for employer communications as often as possible (including your Spam folder: employer emails can get rerouted here!)
- Research all companies/organizations which may be of particular interest to you: know general information, current news, and mission, vision, and value statements.
- Read all job descriptions carefully to ensure your resume and cover letter are tailored to match the main 'asks'.
    - 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 augment 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.
- Don't delay and wait until the deadline—apply ASAP.
- Identify your salary requirements: This is often a question included within applications, and it could make or break your candidacy.
    - Do your research in advance in order to be aware of the market rate for the types of positions you are searching for. You should have some idea what these positions should pay according to the role, your level of skill/experience, industry standards, and the geographic area.
    - If possible, give a salary range (within $5,000) as opposed to a single figure. E.g., $50k-$55k
    - Many part-time roles advertise the hourly rate of pay directly within the posting. Sometimes this will be non-negotiable (meaning a single number is shared, rather than a range), in which case you may just enter the provided exact rate within the salary field if it is still present within the application.

Submitting Applications: Best Practices

- Follow all application instructions perfectly—don't leave any sections incomplete.
    - 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.

- Save application files as PDFs, and double check them prior to submitting. Keep copies of all your submissions (including dates of submission).
- Follow up by email if you don't hear back, but be sure to allow at least one full week for the employer to respond.
- Look carefully at each posting's selected method of application: you will likely be instructed to either upload all files via an application portal, or send a cover letter as the email body and attach your resume (and perhaps portfolio) as a PDF attachment. If it does not indicate otherwise, send materials as a PDF.
  - If you are directed to send your application materials via a direct email, follow up in a few days with another 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!
- In addition to your resume and cover letter, you will most likely be asked to fill out and submit a basic employment application form (often in the form of an online questionnaire consisting of multiple fields). These are usually required by an employer's HR department, and the information you provide within it will be used to run a background check as well as process/onboard you as a new employee if you are offered the job. An application form is a legal document, so be 100% truthful when filling it out.
  - Do not guess on dates or your timeline pertaining to education or employment. If you do not recall when you graduated or worked at a company/organization, double check.
  - An example of a standard application form's first page is featured below. You may download the [complete form](#) via the Career Development intranet page in order to practice filling out an application.
- It is estimated that 50% of mid-size companies and almost all large corporations use an applicant tracking system (ATS) to screen candidates. This is a digital filing system used by HR/TA to streamline the application review process.
  - They may have implemented "recognition software".
  - Depending on the ATS' level of sophistication, your resume may be ranked lower on the 'suitability' scale if a certain percentage of pre-configured keyword hits/matches aren't present. You may also be auto-rejected based on your answers to 'knockout questions' posed within the application process.

Example: Employment Application Form (First Page)

ABC DESIGN COMPANY
PRACTICE JOB APPLICATION

Last Name	First	Middle	Social Security Number
			XXX-XX-XXXX

Present Address (Street, City, State)　　　Zip　　　Home Phone (Area Code, Number)　　　Email Address

Describe the type of employment you desire　　Part-Time_____　Full-Time_____　Position _____

Are you either a U.S Citizen or able to submit proof of legal eligibility to work? Yes_____ No____
(Note: Original Documentation will be required at time of hire to comply with provision of the Immigration Reform Act of 1986)

Are you 18 years of age or older?　Yes____　No_____

Have you ever been employed by ABC Graphic Design Company? If yes, please list below

Location _____ From_____
To_____

Do you have a relative who has ever been employed by ABC Design Company?　Yes_____ No _____

If so, Location_____

How were you referred to ABC Design Company?_____

Academic Training

School Name	City, State	Attended From-To MO/YR	Major Course of Study	Graduation Date	Degree or Certificate
High School					
College(s)					
Graduate School					
Other Technical or Business Education					

Job Searching: Quick Tips for Interviews

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.

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.

Job Searching: Utilizing Social Media

Why utilize social media when job searching?
- Positions are frequently posted online and are often signal-boosted across multiple social media channels
- You are demonstrating your social media and tech savviness through the platform utilization process itself
- Gain networking skills through actively engaging with contacts across platforms
- Remain up-to-date on what others in your industry/field are doing

What employers look for when they review your social media profiles:
- 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 should look for in employers' social media profiles:
- Their social media presence—how active are they? Do they produce high-quality content?
- Their company culture—does it appeal to you?
- Glimpses inside the office—review location tags whenever possible
- Their industry status—do they maintain relevance in the

- What you do with your time off work

industry?

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 (keep it professional)
- Find and follow companies or notable individuals in your industry
- Look for the hashtags #hiring, #nowhiring, #werehiring, #workwithus

Facebook
- Locate potential links to opportunities on employer pages

General Tips for Social Media
- Add appropriate social media links to your email signature
- Create consistent and professional branding across all platforms
- Crowdsource—let people in your networks know that you are job searching
- Based on what you see online, you can generate informed, up-to-date questions to ask during an interview

Job Searching: 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.

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.

Networking: LinkedIn Utilization

Overview of LinkedIn
LinkedIn is a free professional social networking platform which is widely utilized by most employers and recruiters

- Can serve as 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
- Although there are paid account options offered by LinkedIn, none of these offer any additional functionalities which are beneficial enough to warrant spending money on. Job seekers can stick with a basic profile and still leverage the platform to the fullest extent.

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, and 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 jobs and/or 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. Refer to the major/minor Skills sheet available for download on the Career Development intranet page.

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.

LinkedIn: Additional Best Practices

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.

Step away from the computer
Online methods should complement, not replace, in-person relationship building.

Networking: 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 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.
https://mima.org/   651-999-5345

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.
https://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://www.scbwi.org/regions/minnesota   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/

TCPPA – Twin Cities Professional Photographers Association
TCPPA is an association of professional photographers, dedicated to raising the level of our photography skills through on going education with a commitment to professionalism, and higher business standards.
https://tcppa.org/

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, ad celebrating the joys of art. They value the creative process, openness, and transformative experience. Student membership with an ID is $40.
https://whitebeararts.org/   651-407-0597

Job Searching: Leveraging 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, adventtalentgroup.com/advent-creative-talent/, 952.920.9119

Celarity, celarity.com, 952.941.0022

24 Seven Talent, 24seventalent.com, 612.333.3233

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, horizontal.com, 612.466.4942

Career/Job Fairs: Best Practices

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 twenty 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 afterwards, be sure to follow up, let them know you applied, 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.

Additional Resources for Job Seekers: Helpful Links

The selected links below include a variety of resources which may be helpful for job seekers spanning multiple fields and areas of study. The list includes links to the following: field-specific job boards, links to sites hosting collected calls for art, RFQ/RFP instructional documents, and more. This resource collection is also hosted within Career Development's intranet page.

Arts Organizations/Associations/Councils/Boards
The Advertising Federation of Minnesota (Ad Fed)
AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts)
American Marketing Association (AMA, Minnesota Chapter)
American Society of Media Photographers
College Art Association of America
Forecast Public Art

The Loft Literary Center (MN Publisher List)
Minnesota Broadcasters Association
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
Minnesota Film and TV Board
Minnesota Interactive Marketing Association
Minnesota Public Relations Society
Minnesota Publishers Roundtable
Minnesota Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators
Minnesota State Arts Board
MN Artists
Springboard for the Arts

Additional Job Boards/Classifieds
New York Foundation for the Arts Classifieds
Americans for the Arts Job Board
American Alliance of Museums Job Board
Springboard for the Arts Job Board
The Association of Art Museum Curators Career Opportunities
AIGA Job Board
CAA Job Board
Minnesota Historical Society Nationwide Museum Job Board

Instructional/Informational Text Resources
Americans for the Arts - Call for Artists Resource Guide
Artist Cale Atkinson - Illustration Agents - Who, What, How, Why, Maybe?
College Art Association - Standards and Guidelines

Calls for Art/Grants/Fellowships/Etc. Repositories
Walker Art MN Artists Opportunities
Springboard for the Arts Opportunities Board
Art Deadlines List

Government Career Resources
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics - Occupational Outlook Handbook (the titles in this Direct Match Titles list are used)