Job Search Success

Welcome to the DoD Career Decision Toolkit, Job Search Success. It's time to actually hit the pavement and start looking for a job.

Goal

The goal for this section is to help you organize, plan and execute a successful job search.

Plan

This course begins with an optional self-assessment on page 2 and continues with five modules:

Module 1: Getting organized (page 5 to page 8)

In this module, you will learn and practice using tools to set SMART job search goals and establish a weekly job search schedule.

Module 2: Researching Industries and Companies (page 9 to page 11)

In this module, you will learn how and why conducting research on the industries and companies you are interested in will not only help you find a better job, but may improve your compensation package.

Module 3: Finding Your Job (page 12 to page 13)

In this module, you'll learn to find your job using today's version of the classified ads: on-line job boards.

Module 4: Networking (page 14 to page 20)

You'll learn more about the fine art of networking, and how the people you know can help you learn about industries, companies and jobs.

Module 5: Application Forms (page 21 to page 23)

You'll complete a sample application, after learning the tips and techniques to creating job-winning applications.

Succeed

You can download the Job Search Success Checklist for Success for this course on the main access page. Use it as a guide through the course topics.

Glossary: There is a course glossary on pages 24 through 26.

Job Search Self-Assessment

This self-assessment is designed to test how much you know about how to conduct a job search in today's job market. You are encouraged to take this before starting this course. If you ace it, you are welcome to skip to another course, or you can review some or all of the topics in this course. There's always something new to learn!

1. Match the following terms of the SMART goal method to their meaning. The correct answers are in the chart that follows the terms and meanings.
Terms
- **Specific**
- **Measureable**
- **Attainable**
- **Reasonable**
- **Timely**

Meaning
- **Is this goal achievable?**
- **Exactly what do you want to do?**
- **Are you focused on what you really want?**
- **Did you set a realistic timeframe for your goal?**
- **How will you know when you succeed?**

Term	Meaning
Specific	Exactly what do you want to do?
Measurable	How will you know when you succeed?
Attainable	Is this goal achievable?
Relevant	Are you focused on what you really want?
Timely	Did you set a realistic timeframe for your goal?

Feedback: Specific goals define exactly what you want to do. Measurable goals allow you to know when you will succeed. Attainable goals are realistic. Relevant goals are focused on what you really want. Timely goals set a realistic timeframe.

2. How long, on average, can you expect your job search to last?
   A. **Six months for every $30,000 in salary you expect to earn.**
   B. **One year for every $50,000 in salary you expect to earn.**
   C. **One month for every $10,000 in salary you expect to earn.**
   D. **One month for every $15,000 in salary you expect to earn.**

Answer: C. One month for every $10,000 in salary you expect to earn.

Feedback: The correct answer is one month for every $10,000 in salary you expect to learn. Other factors, such as the location's economic situation, candidate age, career field and salary desired can significantly change this average length of time.

3. Which of the following are things to look for when conducting research on a company you are interested in? Choose all that apply.
    A. **Whether industries are growing, shrinking or stable.**
    B. **Which companies you want to target in your preferred industry.**
    C. **Which industries often hire ex-military members.**
    D. **Which companies have the best company bowling leagues.**
    E. **Which companies you want to target in your preferred location.**
    F. **Working conditions and culture in companies you want to target.**
    G. **Whom to contact at your target companies.**

Answer: B, E, F and G are correct.

Feedback: You will probably want to look at which companies to target in your preferred industry and location, what working conditions and culture you want, and whom to contact at your target companies.

4. Which of the following websites is a Dun and Bradstreet site that provides information about large and small companies.
    A. **www.hoovers.com**
    B. **www.businessweek.com**
    C. **www.forbes.com**
    D. **www.inc.com**
    E. **www.fortune.com**

Answer: A. www.hoovers.com

5. If you are at least 18 years of age, have an honorable discharge, have a high school diploma or equivalent, pass a drug test and complete a formal interview, you are eligible for which program?
    A. **Troops to Teachers**
    B. **Heroes to Hometown**
    C. **Boots to Business**
    D. **Helmets to Hardhats**

Answer: D. Helmets to Hardhats

Feedback: Helmets to Hardhats is a DoD-supported program designed to help transitioning military members move into the construction industry.

6. Which of the following are places you could go to look for jobs online? Choose all that apply.
   A. www.careerbuilder.com
   B. www.careeronestop.org
   C. www.militaryexits.com
   D. www.military.com/support
   E. www.godefense.com

Answer: All of the above are correct.

7. What is the purpose of networking? Choose all that apply.
   A. Find the hidden jobs.
   B. Strongly sell yourself to anyone who will listen to you.
   C. Get direct referrals to individuals who are hiring.
   D. Expand the number of people you know in the industries you are targeting.

Answer: A, C and D are correct.

8. How long should an elevator speech be?
   A. Three minutes.
   B. 30 seconds to two minutes.
   C. Five minutes
   D. What's an elevator speech?

Answer: B. 30 seconds to two minutes.

9. True or False: If a potential employer requires you to provide a salary figure, refuse to do so until they offer a number first.

Answer: False

Feedback: Always try to wait until the employer brings up the subject of salary, if at all possible. However, if you are required to answer, give a salary range rather than a specific number.

10. The purpose of the application form for the employer is to:
   A. Quickly weed out unlikely candidates.
   B. Gather as many potential candidates to interview as possible.
   C. Give enough information for an employer to give the candidate a job offer, based on the application information alone.

Answer: A. Quickly weed out unlikely candidates.

Feedback: Applications are gatekeepers, designed to help quickly identify candidates who do not meet minimum qualifications.

Module 1: Getting Organized

Probably very few of us would set out for an unknown destination without consulting a map or GPS, but surprisingly, many people fail to apply the same logic to their job search. Instead of constructing a plan, they respond to a few ads, talk to a few people, post their resume, and wait to see what happens. This approach rarely achieves the speedy results most job seekers want.

If you haven't looked for a job recently, you may be surprised at how much has changed. The basic elements are the same, but the Internet has fundamentally changed the way we look for work and how recruiters evaluate candidates. This module will help you get organized for your job search and learn more about what to expect.

Your goals for this module are to create a weekly schedule for your job search and to identify the approximate length of your search.

What You Can Expect During Your Job Search

So what does a job search look like these days? These steps will give you an idea of what to expect as you begin your job search. We'll talk about each step in more detail later, but it's important that you understand what you'll need to do to get a job. It's not easy. It can be a full-time job itself, taking 40 hours per week. A job search is like anything else in life: The more you put into it, the more you will get out of it. Detailed planning, organization and execution will increase your odds of getting the perfect job, sooner.

Treat Finding a Job as a Job

Actively work on your job search daily by doing the following:

- Network (online, face-to-face, cold calling).
- Research (industry, company, jobs).
- Find jobs.
- Apply for jobs.
- Follow up on all employer contacts.

Document your efforts.

Create a Sample Application

You will create a master job application and use it as an example when you fill out actual applications for prospective employers.

Create Several Resumes

Resumes are definitely not one-size-fits-all! Revise your resume constantly to reflect your best efforts and most current information. As part of your search efforts, you will create these versions of your resume:

- One page.
- Two pages.
- Text only.
- One tailored for each general job type you want to apply for, then you can further tailor it to apply for specific jobs.

For more information, see the Toolkit section called "Resumes and Cover Letters."

Create Several Cover Letters

Just as all resumes are not the same, your cover letters should address specific situations. Revise your cover letter regularly. Create versions for:

- Every position you apply for.
- Cold calls.
- Networking leads.

For more information, see the Toolkit section called "Effective Resumes and Cover Letters."

What Next? Organize Your Job Search

While it's best to start your job search months before you leave the military, there are some situations that make this relatively difficult, such as an overseas deployment. However, there are a few things you should be sure to do before you leave the military, because they will greatly facilitate your job search.

Request letters of recommendation and references from current and previous supervisors and co-workers right now, while you can find them easily.

Request a copy of DD Form 2586, "Verification of Military Experience and Training," or VMET, to help you complete your resume, job applications and college admission forms.

Finally, complete a DoD-sponsored Transition Assistance Workshop.

Setting Goals

If you don't know where you are going, how will you know when you get there? If you don't know what success looks like, how will you know if you're successful? The answer to these questions is simple: Create goals! Goals are important in many aspects of your personal and professional lives, and the techniques outlined here apply to any goal-making situation.

Your goals should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely.

Specifics help you focus your efforts and clearly define what you are going to do. If you have a vague goal, such as "I want to find a better job," how will you ever know if you have reached it?

You want to establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward attaining your goals. "I will attend four networking events each month and try to connect with one person at each" is a measurable goal.

Attainable is not a synonym for *easy*. The goal needs to be realistic for you and where you are at the moment.

Does this goal take me in the direction I want my life and career to take? Make sure your goals are focused on what you want.

Putting an end point on your goal gives you a clear target. Without a time limit, there is no urgency to start taking action *now.*

There is a handout in the Attachments on the main access page that you can download and print to help you write SMART goals for your ideal position, ideal salary and compensation package, when you expect to get a job, the number of applications you'll complete each week as well as the number of networking contacts you'll make.

Weekly Job Search Schedule
You should establish a standard weekly schedule. To help, use a paper calendar or an electronic one, such as Microsoft Office Outlook. On it, you'll make specific plans for times to do research, make applications for jobs, do some networking and follow up on anything you started earlier.

Be sure to document the names of the people you speak to, the specific jobs you apply for and the results of the application. It will help you ensure you follow up on all leads and don't let anything fall through the cracks. Also, if you are receiving unemployment insurance, you'll need to be able to furnish this information as required by law.

How Long Will Your Job Search Last?
So how long can you expect your job search to take? It's important to have a baseline expectation, since it will affect your financial planning, your family and your state of mind. Many service members are able to begin actively searching for a civilian job long before leaving active duty. Understanding how long the search might take will help you decide how soon before separation your search should start.

A basic rule of thumb is that you should allow one month of search time per $10,000 of desired salary. This is just an estimate, and there are many factors that can shorten or lengthen the actual time of your search. Some of those factors include:

- •Periods of economic unrest.
- •If you are seeking approximately $60,000 or more in compensation.
- •If you are "older" (50 plus).
- •If you are in a career field that is relatively stable or shrinking (as opposed to growing or expanding).
- •If you have a disability.

•If you want to relocate, especially if you are looking for an employer to pay relocation expenses.

•If you are attempting to move into a field not directly related to what you did in the military.

A Word About Social Networking Sites

We'll talk more about social networking later, but right now, as you begin your job search, it's important to immediately "professionalize" your online presence. If you are using Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn or any of the other social networking sites, look at them from a potential employer's point of view. Do your pictures, your posts and your profiles make you look like the kind of person who would appeal to a potential employer?

Anything you post or say online can and will be seen by potential employers, regardless of how private you think it might be.

Now that you've had a chance to think a little more about what to expect, it's time to get organized for your job search.

•Complete the SMART Job Search Goals handout

•Use a paper or electronic calendar to create a weekly schedule for the first month of your job search

•Identify approximately how long your search might take

When you are done, you will have completed Module 1. Module 2 begins on the next page.

Module 2: Researching Industries and Companies

Part of the job search process is to research industries and companies. This is especially important if you are unfamiliar with the civilian industry you are interested in, or with the civilian companies you may be working for in the future

Your goals for this module are to be able to explain why you should do this kind of research, list the places you do the research and identify three companies or industries you are interested in pursuing further.

Why Research Industries and Companies?

Does the industry and company you work in really matter, as long as you have a job? The answer is: They matter a lot! Different industries and different companies have different ways of working, cultures, processes, work environments and so forth. You are not just looking for any job; you are looking for the job that is for you.

You will use the results of your research to narrow your search to specific industries and companies that match your goals, values and work style.

Industries

Doing research on different industries will help you learn:

- •The types of industries that exist.
- •The skills employers seek.
- •The education/certifications needed.
- •Which are growing, shrinking or stable.
- •Which are military-friendly.

Companies

Doing research on companies will help you learn:

- •Which to target in your industry.
- •Which to target in your location.
- •Corporate culture and working conditions.
- •Points of contact.

Where Do I Go? Places to Conduct Research

Thorough research will help you match your skills to an employer's needs, target your resume, set realistic expectations and expand your career choices to jobs you may have overlooked. Be sure to visit the company's website and expand beyond that by visiting other sources, such as those listed here.

The Internet

Simply type the industry or company name into a search engine and see what comes up. This is a good way to see any recent news stories about a company or industry. Keep in mind that nobody polices the Internet; just because you read it online doesn't make it true. Do further research through multiple sources to get a clearer understanding of the industry or company.

Public Libraries

Libraries may have subscriptions to journals, databases, newspapers or other sources that you usually would have to pay for to use. These resources can provide you with access to current events, new locations/openings and trends associated with your target industry or company.

Business Publications

Consult business journals, newspapers and magazines. Here are few that might be helpful:

- Business Week (http://www.businessweek.com) News and information; good for large national and multinational companies.

- Forbes (http://www.forbes.com) News and information; good for large, national and multinational companies.

- Hoovers (http://www.hoovers.com/) A Dun and Bradstreet site that provides information about large and small companies.

- Inc. (http://www.inc.com/inc5000) News and information; good for large and smaller companies.

Industry Organizations and Associations

Use an Internet search engine to search for "industry organizations" or "industry associations" plus the industry you are interested in learning more about. For example, you could search for "industry associations law enforcement" or "industry organizations nursing." Read about these organizations and consider joining one to increase your career network.

The Companies

You can search for information directly from the companies themselves. Look for annual reports, company websites and other marketing or recruiting materials.

Employees, Ex-employees, Friends and Family

Don't forget the power of face-to-face communication. Ask everyone you know about working in a specific industry or with a specific company. You never know what you might learn from Uncle Waldo or that guy you play golf with a few times a year!

Social Media

Sites such as LinkedIn, Plaxo, Xing and others are designed to help you connect professionally with others. LinkedIn, for example, allows you to look for people in your network who might know someone in another company. This allows you to make contact with people already in a company you are interested in learning more about.

You have completed Module 2. Module 3 begins on the next page.

Module 3: Finding Your Job

Gone are the days when you would open the Sunday paper and go to the classified ads to find a job. Fewer jobs are posted there; the Internet has taken its place as the job search method of choice. There are hundreds, probably thousands of job boards online.

Your goals for this module are to determine your eligibility for any military job assistance or credentialing program and to list at least five places where you can find job postings.

Department of Defense Supported Transition Programs

Troops to Teachers and Helmets to Hardhats are wonderful programs associated with the Department of Defense, designed to help ex-military members who are interested in teaching or getting into the construction industry.

You can download details about Troops to Teachers including contact information, from the Attachments section of the main access page.

Today's Want Ads: On-line Job Boards

There are a myriad of Internet job boards. Which one is best for you? There are no hard and fast rules, so you will want to sample more than one. We have compiled a list of some of the best in each of several categories.

General Job Boards

The following websites provide not only listings of jobs around the country (and in some cases, around the world) but they also provide resources to help you prepare for interviews, write your resume and include many more tips to aid your search. Job websites vary in style and content, so try each of these to see which works best for your needs.

- Quint Careers.com http://www.quintcareers.com
- Riley Guide.com http://www.rileyguide.com
- Job Hunters Bible.com http://www.jobhuntersbible.com
- Monster.com http://www.monster.com
- Career Builder.com http://www.careerbuilder.com
- Career OneStop.org http://www.careeronestop.org/

Just For Veterans

These websites focus primarily on jobs for veterans and those transitioning out of the military. Some contain additional resources, while others are simply listings of job opportunities.

- Vet Jobs http://www.vetjobs.com/
- Department of Veterans Affairs Jobs http://www4.va.gov/JOBS/
- Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) http://www.dol.gov/vets/

- Military Connection http://www.militaryconnection.com/job-fair.html#
- Military.com http://www.military.com/Careers/Home/0,13373,,00.htm
- VetSuccess.gov http://www.vetsuccess.gov/

Just for Wounded, Ill and Injured Warriors
The following job boards focus specifically on listing positions for wounded warriors and other individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability, look at these websites, but don't restrict yourself to just these. Look at the other sites we've listed; you can find a job anywhere, given the right accommodations.

- Hire Heroes USA http://www.hireheroesusa.org/
- Federal Jobs Net http://federaljobs.net/disabled.htm
- USA Jobs http://www.usajobs.gov/ei/individualswithdisabilities.asp
- Wounded Warrior Project Jobline http://wtow.woundedwarriorproject.org/index.php?option=com_careertrack&Itemid=88
- Disability.gov http://www.disability.gov/employment

Federal and State Jobs
If you are interested in working for the state or the federal government, these job boards can help you find what you're looking for.

State Employment
- Job Hunt.org http://www.job-hunt.org/state_unemployment_offices.shtml
- State and Local Government on the Net http://www.statelocalgov.net/50states-jobs.cfm
- Career OneStop http://www.jobbankinfo.org/default.aspx

Federal Employment
- USA Jobs http://www.usajobs.gov/ei/individualswithdisabilities.asp
- Go Defense.com (D o D) http://www.godefense.com/

Where Will The Jobs Be? The Outlook

How do you know if a career field is expanding or shrinking? What new and growing positions are out there that you haven't thought about? The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) regularly compiles Occupational Outlook reports that detail projected changes in employment by industry, occupation, education and training required, and total job openings. This is a great resource to spend some time researching. You can visit this site: http://www.bls.gov/oco/oco2003.htm

You have completed Module 3. Module 4 begins on the next page.

Module 4: Networking

You may have heard about "networking" as a job search strategy, but what does it mean? This module will give you guidelines on how to take advantage of this important component of your job search. While the landscape has changed in recent years, the simple truth is that most of the time getting a job is still about who you know, and being in the right place at the right time. Networking helps you do this.

Networking IQ Quiz

Are you a networking pro or could you use some tips? Answer these eight questions to find your Networking IQ!

1. When meeting someone at a networking function, you should begin the conversation with:
- **A. Casual conversation about the weather, sports, movies, pets or common interests.**
- **B. A brief background on your career and the type of new position you are seeking.**
- **C. Questions about how the person can help you find a job.**

Answer: A. Casual conversation about the weather, sports, movies, pets or common interests.

Feedback: Begin your conversation with casual talk; then you can move into a discussion of what the other person does and eventually into a discussion about your career and what you are looking for.

2. If you are having a difficult time getting a conversation started or if you are uncomfortable with networking, you should:
- **A. Wait for someone to approach you to begin a conversation**
- **B. Admit that these functions are awkward for you and ask the person for tips on how to get to know someone.**
- **C. Try meeting people around the food table and talk about how great the caviar tastes.**

Answer: B. Admit that these functions are awkward for you and ask the person for tips on how to get to know someone.

Feedback: If you are uncomfortable with networking, admitting that to the person you are talking to is almost always a great ice-breaker. People will go out of their way to help you. They will carry the conversation and frequently introduce you to others to make you feel welcome.

3. The best conversationalists are people who can:
- **A. Ask other people interesting questions.**
- **B. Talk comfortably on a wide range of topics.**
- **C. Always pick up the conversation when others run out of things to say.**

Answer: A. Ask other people interesting questions.

Feedback: Surprisingly, some of the best conversationalists do the least talking. While all of these answers are characteristics of good conversationalists, being able to draw others into the conversation is an extraordinary skill.

4. **When preparing for a function, you should:**
   A. **Keep up to date on current events, world affairs, emerging business trends and state-of-the-art management or leadership concepts.**
   B. **Ask the host in advance for a list of the guests and their backgrounds.**
   C. **Bring a small note pad and pen to write down contact information or schedule meetings.**

Answer: A. Keep up to date on current events, world affairs, emerging business trends and state-of-the-art management or leadership concepts.

Feedback: If you want to carry on good conversations, then you must stay contemporary on a variety of subjects. Read, read, read on a wide variety of topics, including current events, business trends, social issues, sports and the arts. It has been said that if you read three books on any subject, you will know more than 95 percent of the rest of the world on that subject. By reading on many topics, you will always be to engage people in great conversation.

5. **The best way to show respect for what someone else is saying is to:**
   A. **Compliment the person on what they have said.**
   B. **Ask others to join your conversation to hear what they are saying.**
   C. **Be a good listener, provide responsive gestures and ask good follow-up questions.**

Answer: C. Be a good listener, provide responsive gestures and ask good follow-up questions.

Feedback: Being inattentive is the most common characteristic exhibited by people at networking functions. Always display good eye contact with verbal and body language response. Ask good follow-up questions. Welcome others to join your conversation, but don't interrupt the speaker to bring others into the conversation. Being a good active listener is the best compliment you can pay a speaker.

6. **After meeting someone, if you feel there is no potential for an individual to help you in your job search, you should:**
   A. **Politely excuse yourself and continue to meet other people.**
   B. **Not be too quick to judge.**
   C. **Continue the discussion but try to get others to join the conversation so that you can continue to meet new people.**

Answer: B. Not be too quick to judge.

Feedback: Most people view networking as "what can I get from this person," which is the wrong way to view networking. Rather, you should view networking as "how can I benefit or

help this person." If you try to quickly judge the contact from a personal perspective, you have made a terrible mistake. The goal of networking should be to meet interesting people, help them whenever possible, learn from them, perhaps make a contact that is mutually beneficial or maybe just simply make a new friend. Never set your expectations too high.

7. After you have established a common interest and believe you would like to spend more time talking to this individual, you should:
   A. Suggest he excuse himself from the function and go to a restaurant or private room where you can talk confidentially about your career or possible job opportunities.
   B. Set an appointment to meet at a later date.
   C. Ask for a business card and permission to call in a few days to perhaps find a time when you could meet.

Answer: C. Ask for a business card and permission to call in a few days to perhaps find a time when you could meet.

Feedback: Don't be too aggressive in trying to make that contact. A networking function is more of a social event rather than pure business. Meet lots of people and spend a few minutes with each. Collect lots of business cards and then a few days after the event, make contacts with people where it would be mutually beneficial to build a business relationship.

8. If you are networking, and someone latches on to you and follows you everywhere, you should:
   A. Politely involve the person in all of your conversations.
   B. Tell the person to get lost.
   C. Excuse yourself, indicating you have to meet with someone or perhaps visit the restroom.

Answer: C. Excuse yourself, indicating you have to meet with someone or perhaps visit the restroom.

Feedback: It is easy to get stuck with someone who follows you around. At some point, find a reason to excuse yourself or perhaps introduce the person to someone and then excuse yourself from their conversation. Don't let another person dominate your time at a networking function.

Why Network? The Purpose and Value
While the Internet is an important part of your job search, don't forget the power of talking to people face-to-face and over the phone! Networking can enhance your other job search activities by:

   • Helping you find the so-called hidden jobs. Some sources say up to 80 percent of jobs never get advertised. Networking may be your only way to learn where these jobs are.

- Networking can help you get direct referrals to individuals who are hiring.

- And networking can help you expand the number of people you know in the industries you are targeting, thus increasing your chances of finding a job.

Cables and Plugs Needed? How to Network

So how do you network? Networking is about increasing the number of people you know. It's about talking, listening and following up. It's not a high-pressure sales pitch; it's a series of get-to-know-you conversations with a variety of people. You have as much to offer others as they might have to offer you, so don't be afraid to take that first step!

Build Relationships

Networks are relationships built on mutual needs or interests. Building a career network is about building relationships. Because the vast majority of job openings never are advertised, job seekers need to have a network of contacts - a career network - that can provide support, information and job leads. More jobs are found through networking than all the other job-search methods combined.

Listen and Ask Questions

Networking is about learning things about other people. You already know about yourself, so you are doing yourself a disservice if you do all the talking. Networking involves more listening than speaking. It involves showing concern and interest and asking questions.

Informational interviews are a great way to learn about the industry, company and hidden jobs. They are also an easy way to get to talk to people in a company or industry you are interested in. You prepare a list of questions for each interview so you'll sound polished and professional. For a great tutorial on informational interviewing, visit: http://www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html

Support and Maintain Connections

Developing a strong network means more than introducing yourself to people. It involves making connections and providing the support to maintain them. An initial meeting or contact with someone does not establish a connection unless there is follow-up of some kind. That follow-up must suggest a genuine interest in developing a mutually supportive relationship. Just making a contact with no follow-up will lead to a lot of worthless business cards.

Tips for Networking

Before you start making networking contacts, develop your "Elevator Speech." An elevator speech is a short, intriguing speech about who you are, what you do, what you are looking for and contains something unique about yourself. It is designed to quickly introduce yourself to contacts and give them enough information to encourage them to learn more about how wonderful you are.

Step-by-step instructions for developing your speech can be downloaded from the Attachments on the main access page. Once you've honed your speech, you are ready to start trying it out on people.

Individuals
- Start with people you know and let them know exactly what you are looking for.

- Ask them for contacts or information. Ask contacts for contacts, and so on.

- Contact each person. Let them know why you are contacting them, how you got their name, give them your elevator speech and ask them a few specific questions they can help you with.

- Avoid being too much of a burden; respect their time.

- Document who you contacted, when and what was said.

- Follow up as appropriate, in a timely manner.

- Send thank you notes to people who took time to help you.

Organizations
Look for local chapters of national industry organizations.

- Join local industry organizations; many allow guests to attend functions.

- Participate in as many functions as you can afford to attend. Become a familiar face. Offer to volunteer or even serve on a Board of Directors.

- Meet people by consciously speaking to as many people as possible at the event. Exchange business cards.

Social Networking Tools

The proliferation of social networking tools such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn and others has revolutionized networking. While they frequently are used for purely social reasons, some are specifically reserved for professional networking, and even sites that are more social in nature can help you find contacts and jobs. However, social networking tools have a flip side, too: Employers can also use what you've posted online (and what others have posted online about you) to rule you out as a candidate. Use them, but use them wisely!

Choose the Right Tool

- If you have not already done so, sign up with a social networking site designed for professional networking, such as LinkedIn.

- Summarize your previous experience and skills in the appropriate places of your online profile, in case someone wants to see your skill set/experience.

- Post your resume if there is a place on the site to do so. Indicate you are looking for a job, and be clear about what kind of job you are looking for.

- Ask people to complete online referrals for you for sites like LinkedIn.

Use It Wisely

If you already have an online presence, look at it from an employer's perspective: Does it represent you fairly, accurately and professionally? A recent study by Microsoft found that

- 70 percent of recruiters and hiring managers in the U.S. have rejected an applicant based on information they found online.

- 79 percent of U.S. hiring managers have used the Internet to better assess applicants.

Clean up and "professionalize" your online presence - this includes your profile, what you say, how you say it, the pictures of you (posted by you and others), and so on. Assume that whatever you say online can be seen by potential employers.

Try typing your name into an Internet search engine and see what comes up. If it contains any unprofessional information, look into ways to hide, delete or correct the information.
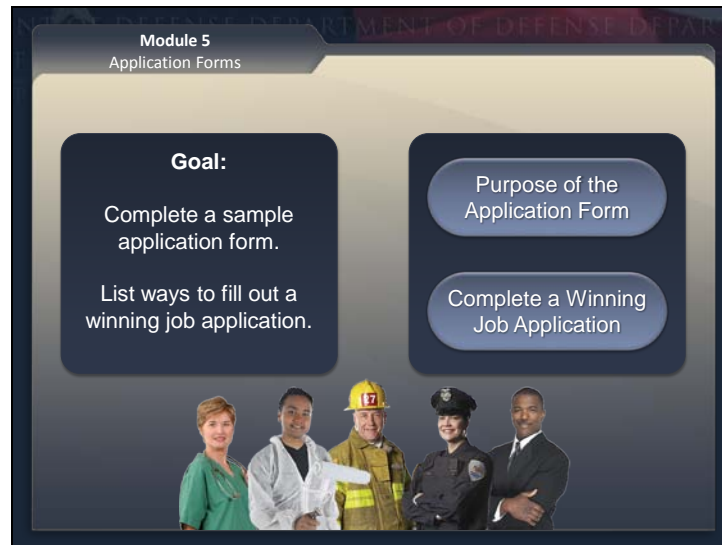
For information on managing your online reputation, see this article:
http://recareered.blogspot.com/2008/03/online-reputation-management.html

Now that you've had a chance to learn more about networking, it's time to make a plan that will work for you. Download the Networking Plan handout from the Attachments on the main access page. Using information from this module, define your plan and then take action!

When you are done you will have completed Module 4. Module 5 begins on the next page.

Module 5: Application Forms

Applications are a key part of the job search process. You will fill out dozens of applications during your search; use these tips to help you fill out a job-winning application form.

You can follow the topics in the order presented, or you can use the Outline tab in the navigation pane on the left to select another module or topic at any time.

Purpose of the Application Form
We've all filled out application forms, but why?

The purpose for you: To get an interview.

For the employer: To screen candidates without taking time for an interview.

In many cases, a computerized gatekeeper scans your application, looking for specific words or phrases. Keep this in mind as you complete the application – use the exact terminology in the position description to ensure your application gets selected for the next round of screening.

Complete a Winning Job Application
You will inevitably be asked to fill out applications during your job search. Sometimes you will be asked to complete them on the spot during a job fair or immediately before (or after) an interview. Other times you will be asked to complete them in advance. These days, more applications must be completed online, as opposed to hand printing on a blank application form. Regardless of the situation, it will be easier and faster to complete the application if you have all the information you need before starting.

Use your VMET
Use your DD Form 2586, "Verification of Military Experience and Training" to ensure you record all of your applicable training and experience. For information about your VMET, go to the VMET Login page: http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/vmet

Print Legibly
Print legibly. Your application cannot be fairly evaluated if no one can read it.

Be Honest
Be honest. Be sure to include all of your accomplishments, experience and training, but do not claim anything you did not actually do. Do not offer negative information, unless it is specifically requested.

If you have a dubious credit history and are asked for your Social Security number on the application, write "will provide upon hire." Your SSN is most likely used to pull a credit report, so wait as long as possible to provide this information.

If you have any criminal convictions, instead of explaining them on the application, you can write "will provide information at interview."

Follow the Instructions

Read and follow the instructions on the application completely and exactly. Do not leave any fields blank and do not write "see resume" in any fields. Your resume and your application may be separated during the evaluation process.

Tailor Answers to the Job

Tailor your answers to the specific job for which you are applying, using key words and phrases from the employer's job description.

Only Give Salary Range if Requested

Don't give specific salary or work schedule requirements. These are better discussed in an actual interview, at the appropriate time. If providing a salary requirement is mandatory, list it as a range.

Provide Valid References

Provide valid references, if requested, with complete and current contact information. Alert your references that they may be contacted, so they can be prepared with positive job-specific information to share and not be caught off guard.

Double-check for Mistakes

Before you turn in your application, double-check everything you have written. Mistakes on the application could result in your not even being considered for the position.

Practice Completing an Application

Now that you know how to complete a winning application, go to the Attachments on the main access page and print the sample application. Complete it using the information you've learned in this module.

Be sure to keep a copy of your completed sample application with you when you attend job fairs or interviews. Then you can fill out any applications quickly and completely.
When you are done you will have completed Module 5.

Course Conclusion

Congratulations and thank you for taking the time to learn about how to negotiate your ideal compensation. We hope you have found this information helpful. The course checklist for success can be found on the main toolkit accessibility page, along with the other course handouts. Check out the resource section of TurboTAP.org (http://www.turbotap.org) for additional important resources that help you ensure a successful transition.

The course glossary begins on the following page.

Job Search Glossary

Annual report

An annual report is a yearly record of a publicly held company's financial condition. It includes a description of the firm's operations, as well as balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statement information.

Blog

Short for "weblog", a blog is an online posting, often about things like a personal opinion, a journalistic story, a fictional story, a journal and/or announcements. It is free and easy to set up your own blog online, where you can write about anything. Potential employers may look at your blog postings to determine if you are the kind of candidate whom they want to hire.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Outlook

The BLS Occupational Outlook is shared as a handbook printed yearly. It tells you the training and education needed, earnings, expected job prospects, what workers do on the job and the working conditions of standard occupations. View the Occupational Outlook at
http://www.bls.gov/OCO/

Compensation/Compensation Package

Compensation is your overall salary, plus benefits, allowances, perks, and so on. A compensation package is everything you earn for working for your organization (e.g., $78,000/year salary; health, dental, vision and life insurance; use of a company car; 5% matching 401K donations and on-site child care).

Elevator speech

An elevator speech is a short, intriguing speech about who you are, what you do, what you are looking for, and how you can benefit an organization that might hire you. They are designed to quickly introduce yourself to contacts and give them enough information to encourage them to learn more about how wonderful you are.

Facebook

A social networking tool, sometimes called social media, designed to connect people to each other online. Facebook is primarily a social tool, as opposed to a professional social networking tool, but can be used for professional purposes, such as networking. Potential employers may look at your Facebook information to determine if you are the kind of candidate they want to hire. Register for Facebook at http://www.facebook.com

If you would like the most current D o D transition information as well as to be linked with other transitioners, join the Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program Facebook page: http://www.facebook.com/DoDTAP

Hidden Job Market

The hidden job market refers to the significant majority of positions that are never advertised on standard online job boards. They are found through networking and research, and often by luck. Networking significantly increases your exposure to the hidden job market.

Industries

Industries are broad categories of companies performing services or producing products for a similar kind of business. Examples include construction, manufacturing, health care, education, retail, transportation and warehousing, and food services.

LinkedIn

A social networking tool, sometimes called social media, designed to connect people to each other online. LinkedIn is primarily a professional social networking tool, used for networking, peer learning, and more. Potential employers may look at your LinkedIn information to determine if you are the kind of candidate whom they want to hire. Register for LinkedIn at http://www.linkedin.com

MySpace

A social networking tool, sometimes called social media, designed to connect people to each other online. MySpace is primarily a social tool, as opposed to a professional social networking tool, but can be used for professional purposes, such as networking. It is particularly favored amongst younger people, artists and musicians. Potential employers may look at your MySpace information to determine if you are the kind of candidate they want to hire. Register for MySpace at http://www.myspace.com

Networking

Networking is creating mutually beneficial human relationships to help each other professionally. It is the process of meeting as many people as you can, learning about each others' professional needs, and doing what you can to help each other. Networking helps you find, interview for, and sometimes even get a job. It can also help you find answers to questions and learn best practices.

Salary

What you get paid for doing your job, excluding any benefits. Salary is a set amount of money paid regularly, whereas wages are paid according to the exact number of hours worked. A salary might be $45,000/year; a wage might be $16.75/hour.

SMART Goals

A method of establishing effective goals. SMART Goals are:

- S=Specific (Exactly what do you want to do?)
- M=Measurable (How will you know when you succeed?)
- A=Attainable (Establish realistic, attainable goals.)
- R=Relevant (Be sure the goal is focused on what you really want.)
- T=Timely (Set a realistic timeframe for your goal.)

Social networking/social media

A social network service focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities. Social media refers more specifically to the tools used to build social networks, such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Twitter

A micro-blogging social networking tool, sometimes called social media, designed to connect people to each other online, often by using a smartphone (e.g. iPhone, Blackberry). It is called "micro-blogging" because you can only post messages that are 140 characters or less. Potential employers may look at your Twitter postings ("tweets") to determine if you are the kind of candidate whom they want to hire. Register for Twitter at http://www.twitter.com

VMET, DD Form 2586

Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET) is an official listing of your military training and experience. To get your copy, go to http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/vmet