

## PM 597: Networking and Job Search Skills Week Eight

### Networking, Part 1

Hi, I'm David Ginchansky. I'm a Senior Career Counselor at the USC Career Center. Thank you for spending time today to learn a little bit more about networking.

Today's objectives are to look at networking through a different frame. A lot of people look at networking more in terms of short-term, using people, schmoozing type of attitude. Networking, when you look at it in a different way, can actually work more to your advantage.

Next, we're going to discuss the importance of networking. These days, when you apply for jobs, applying online is not enough. When you incorporate networking into it, it gets you a better chance into the interview itself. Then, we're going to be talking about how you can expand your network. Looking at those people who are within your network and even looking at those people who you may not even know are within your network. Finally, we're going to be sharing some of the best networking strategies that are out there, so it can make it work for you, and make your job search a little bit easier.

Let's first of all talk about what networking is. Networking is the active part of your job search. Like I mentioned before, you can apply online, but when you're applying online, you're being a reactive person in the process. You're waiting for things to happen. When you're networking, you actually increase your chances, again, of being noticed because you are being a person who is taking charge and making things happen.

Networking is also intended to be more about establishing goodwill and building relationships over time. If you think about networking as life-long relationships, it could work a lot more in your favor than if you think about something that you just do now. A lot of people do think about networking more in that perspective. That's what makes them very nervous about that, especially because they know that networking is intended to be a two-way road, where you give just as much as somebody else gives to you. When you're searching for a job right now, it's very hard to see what you can give to others. Sometimes, you don't see that until way in the future.

What you'll see from this diagram is the different types of things that you can incorporate into networking, or what can be part of your network. It could be anything from the social media that you have, utilizing LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, resources such as that, to more of the in-person interaction that you might have at networking events, career fairs, informational interviews, or just general interaction with people at the various different types of places that you go to. The important thing that we just want to emphasize here is networking is not schmoozing. Networking is really about building relationships.

Now let's talk about the importance of networking. Networking research has found that 80% of people find their jobs through their connections, not through those online job postings. Keep that in mind when you're starting to network with people. It increases your chances dramatically. Also, when you do start networking, you get considered for a position before a job even posts. In fact, once a job actually is posted, they already generally have somebody in mind who they want for the job. When you're networking, you become that one person that they're considering versus one of who knows how many people are applying for that job.

Networking is also very helpful and the easiest route to getting to an interview. You see from this diagram here that this is the general process that people go through when they apply for a job. First, they get their resume to the employer, and it usually is through an online application. The employer receives it. Then, if you're lucky, it goes to Human Resources professionals. Sometimes, it actually goes through an Applicant Tracking System where a computer just reads your resume to look for key words.

What you want with the next step is it goes to Human Resources person and they screen your resume. They find a resume that best match the job description, and then they forward it over to the hiring manager. The hiring manager then decides who to interview.

What happens when you network is you eliminate the first three steps of this process. You get directly to the hiring manager who is the person who decides, not only who to interview, but who they eventually hire.

Another way to look at networking is through the Six Degrees of Separation. This was a theory that was created back in the late 1960s that found that anybody that you need is 6 contacts away from you. Again, if you look at this diagram, you'll see "C" stands for a contact or connection. The idea is the more that you know what you want to do, the more you know your brand, the more that you'll start to find that not only are you 6 degrees away from the person that might get you to the job or interview that you want, but those numbers will start to dwindle down, so that that contact might be 3 or 2 because you start building connections within the particular job industry or career that you want.

Let's look at the network from a different perspective. This is how you can expand your network. Look at yourself, first, in the center here. Then look at the pockets of people around you. You have your friends. You have your classmates, family members, people in social circles, religious institutions - anywhere along those lines - alumni, even professors in your classes. These people know people. The first circle around you is connection number 2, and then the circles after that is connection number 3, connection number 4. When you start to connect to these people to get to the desired results, they can help you to getting where you need to be.

Now let's talk about where you can network. The first slide that I'm going to show you is networking opportunities that the USC Career Center can provide for you. On the top left corner, are career fairs which we hold once a semester. At a career fair gives you an opportunity to meet up to 180 employers who have internships and jobs available.

Even if you're not quite ready for an internship or a job, it's still worthwhile to go to these events and start networking because nothing impresses an employer more than when you actually go to them and you say, "I'm interested in working in your organization. I know you're not looking for a first year or sophomore right now, but I would be very interested in learning a little bit more about what I can do to be a more tractable candidate for you." It's a great opportunity to both network and find jobs. If you want to learn a little bit more about it, please check out our Preparing for the Career Fair presentation, as well.

We also have panels available in the form of internship week, as well as Explore@4. Internship week happens in the fall and the spring semester. At the internship week, companies come and they talk about internships that they have available for the following semester. If you're looking for an internship, it's very worthwhile to go there because not only do you hear about those opportunities, but you can bring your resume and network with the employers afterwards.

We also have Explore@4 which is a panel as well. These are informational in nature. Each Explore@4 is around a different type of field or industry. You learn from professionals in that field about how they got into the field, and what their career path was, and what recommendations they would have for you. Definitely, check something like that out if you want to learn a little bit more about a career and start to build connections that way as well.

We also have events such as our Diversity Networking Mixer and company profile events where companies come on campus. You can interact with them and learn a little bit more about their opportunities. The great thing about both of these types of events is, generally, you get multiple different types of connections with people. You get to learn a little bit more about what it's like to work within those organizations.

Finally, we have various different types of conferences. This particular conferences are PhD conference. We have a lot of opportunities for PhDs to learn about the field going into academia, or going into industry utilizing the PhD degree that they are earning.

Let's talk a little bit about things that you could do outside of the USC Career Center. The USC Alumni Association is a valuable resource for you. You could find alumni in various different types of ways. First of all, you could find alumni through [alumni.usc.edu](http://alumni.usc.edu). If you're interested in connecting with alumni, there's many alumni clubs throughout the United States and internationally that you can explore and connect with, especially as you're getting closer to graduation, and seeking out the Trojan family to help you in your efforts.

There's also social media to work to your advantage. LinkedIn has a great resource where you can actually find Trojans out there in the working world in various different types of industries and careers that can help you learn more about the field, and possibly connect you to jobs. We have a LinkedIn presentation as well which digs into that a little bit deeper so you could learn how you can use that to your advantage.

We also have an initiative called the Trojan's Hiring Trojans. This you could find through connectSC where Trojans who are in the working world actually specify that they are seeking Trojans for internships and jobs. When you go through a connectSC search specifically for this, you can actually emphasize this in your cover letter to let them know that they are considering a Trojan when they are looking at the application that you are submitting to them.

There are also various different types of social activities that you can go to. Tailgating is a very popular activity. It's a great opportunity to interact with people. Also, take into account that you can just look around for people who are wearing USC paraphernalia. You could be anywhere. You could be at the airport. You could be in a coffee shop. If they're wearing a cap, if they're wearing a shirt, why not say, "Fight on"? Who knows? It might elicit a response and actually establish a relationship that you can start.

You also have people who are guest speakers, or professors, or people who are on panels that you can meet through the various different types of events and activities that USC holds. That can work very much to your advantage and build new relationships as well.

There's also just the general coffee shop talk. I actually know one student who knew of a coffee shop that was very closely located to a major entertainment center. She wanted to go into the entertainment industry. When she did her homework, she actually went to the coffee shop and had enough of interactions with people in the entertainment industry that it lead to connections and interactions with people that could lead to internship and job opportunities.

How can you be successful in your networking? The first important thing to keep in mind is to be available. This means if they are only available to talk to you at 7:00 in the evening, be available for them because the time that you might actually be able to connect with them again may be 2 months, 3 months down the line. We all live busy lives. Make it easier for them. Don't make it hard because they may not decide to stick with you if you're not available for them.

The next important thing to do is to follow up and stay connected. Can't emphasize enough the importance to follow up. There's been many situations where we might give a connection to somebody and that person does not connect to that person. Or, they don't let them know what they did with the advice that they provided for them. We want to know what you're doing. We are invested in how successful you are in your job search. Keep us posted on what's going on.

The follow up doesn't always have to be around the job search. One of the ways that you build connections and you build relationships is you talk about the things that are just the ways that we are in common, our commonalities. If you love golf and the other person loves golf, then let that be a connection point for you two to build your relationship and make it stronger, so that you can help each other out.

The other important thing is to keep others informed. Again, if they want to know what's going on, let them know what's going on. Sometimes, it's worthwhile to let them know where you are in your process if you haven't talked to them in a couple of months. Sometimes, it's good to just



send a holiday card just to let them know that you're thinking of them, or to let them know that you're thankful for what they provided for you over the past year. Any way to keep them informed or keep them connected works to your advantage.

Another thing to do is to document activities. A week from now, I forget what I did, but if I look at some notes that let me know that I talked to somebody, and they suggested that I look at these websites, or that I connect to these people, and I follow up on that, and let them know what's going on, but also if I'm not getting responses to follow up. It could work to my advantage so that I don't end up with obstacles in my way. Rather, I'm moving forward.

The other thing you want to keep in mind, in terms of successful networking, is noticing your non-verbals. We always talk about positive non-verbals. Are you smiling? Are you maintaining eye contact? Do you have a strong handshake? We're talking about a good grip, not a soft grip, about 3 seconds long, where you are connecting with the person and making efforts. Do you have open gestures, or are your hands in your pockets? Are you crossed? Are you looking down? Things along those lines, you want to watch out for those types of things. Positive non-verbals work very much to your advantage.

Lastly, you want to think about how you're delivering your pitch. What is your brand? How can you make it clear to others that you want a specific thing, and how they can help you out.

## Networking, Part 2

Now, I want you to envision yourself about to walk into an elevator and right there is the CEO of a company, and you have 60 seconds to impress him or her to convince them that they should hire you for the job. This is the idea behind the elevator pitch. Some people call it the focus statement, some people call it the 30-second speech, but regardless this is what you want to work on so that when you are interacting with people, they know a quick brief overview of whoever you are and what you're seeking.

When you putting together your elevator pitch, keep this in mind. Include your name and that's your first name and last name. Tell them what your major is, or your background. Give them an element of what your interest is, what type of career that you might want to go into, or why you're interested in an organization, or why you're trying to learn a little bit more about the field, and then follow it up with some type of inquiry to allow the conversation to move forward.

You want to give them some type of clue that there's a question behind what you have. Another thing to keep in mind is, do you have that positive non-verbal language? Let me give you a couple of examples of different elevator pitches that you can use.

First elevator pitch is, "Hi, my name is Tommy Trojan. I'm a junior at USC, majoring in psychology. I'm interested in an internship with a marketing firm because I believe it would combine my interest in marketing with my strong analytical and research skill sets. Since you are an employer with Trojan Marketing, I was hoping you could tell me a little bit more about your internship opportunities."

What I hope you heard in that example is, the person mentioning both their first and their last name, mentioning their major and the year that they are in school, telling them what they are seeking for, that marketing research opportunity, and following it up with something that they were hoping to find out from the employer, their internship opportunities.

Here's example number 2, "Hi, my name is Tommy Trojan. I will be graduating in May with a Masters in Public Health. I have a particular passion for being a health educator, having studied and interned in this area for the past 2 years. I'm very aware of your reputation in this field. Could you tell me more about current job openings and what you seek in a candidate?"

Again, name, major, gave me a little bit more of a background with evidence of experience, and then seeking out again more information about career opportunities. One of my favorite job search strategies is the informational interview. With an informational interview, you actually are trying to meet with somebody face-to-face, but a phone works, to learn a little bit more about their career. They are one-on-one conversations to gather information and learn more about the different types of things that you might want to do.

The great thing about informational interviews are that you get to ask the questions. You are in charge. You can actually bring your questions to the informational interview. You can ask anything that you need to now. When you do an informational interview, one of the things that you want to think about is structuring it so that you're starting off with an elevator pitch that explains to them why you are meeting with them. It gives them an idea of what you want to talk about and helps them and guides them in how they might be able to tailor their conversation.

Once you've done your elevator pitch and told them why you want to talk to them, then you want to ask them questions about themselves. Talk about them first. Learn about their career path, learn about why they like their career, learn about what it took for them to get there, learn about what they don't like about their career. The more that you get people talking about themselves, the more that they like you. Once they like you, they are probably more willing to want to help you out. After you've had them talk about themselves, then you might want to start asking questions about industry or trends.

Knowing a little bit more about what's going on so that through their first-hand exposure, you might have that qualitative knowledge that when you get into an interview in that field, should you decide you want to stay in that field, you can speak from that perspective and become more knowledgeable, or be seen as more knowledgeable, because you are talking about what you are aware of in terms of trends in industry.

After you've talked about that, then ask them questions more guided towards what you need to know. This could be anything from where you might go to find more opportunities, or where are there other people that they might recommend that you talk to. Anything along those lines. When you are wording those last questions, talk about them in terms of them still being an expertise. Instead of saying, something along the lines of, "What can I do?", say something more along the lines of, "What would you recommend that I do?" Again, if you're speaking more towards a person and their perspective, they are going to like you more and want to help you more.

Informational interviews are very fantastic because they lead to connections, they give the information in the lingo that you need and a lot of times, they even lead to offers as well. I've been in an informational interview myself where a job offer has been landed. I've also heard many people come to my office to tell me about how they got a job through their informational interviews. Again, the more information that you have, the better off you're going to be. Don't forget to ask at the end, especially after you've established a relationship with a person, do you have any other people that you would recommend that I speak to? Those people would be able to connect you to the next 3 informational interviews, and then the next 3 informational interviews after that, which hopefully will lead to the next job after that.

A few more reminders for you in terms of networking. Remember that networking is necessary in a successful job search. No longer can we rely on online job searching and applying alone. When you incorporate networking into your job search, you're more likely to get to the career

that you want because people are looking out for you and you're not doing it on your own. Also, know your brand. It's essential. Know what it is that you want to do, or have an idea of at least the top 3 to 5 careers that you're thinking about, so that when you are interacting with people, you're able to speak to, not only what it is that you want to do, but where the skill sets, and the interests and the values that you have, that you could bring to the table. The more that you're able to speak to this, the more people are going to be able to actually guide you in the right direction, than if you're just to say to somebody, "I'm looking for a job."

Also, think in terms of long term and establishing relationships. Networking is not short term. It's not schmoozing. These are the people who might be your friends 10 years down the line. These are the people that you might be hiring 10 years down the line. The more that you maintain contact with people, and it doesn't have to be every day, it might be yearly, the more it's going to work to your advantage. Again, networking leads to connections, the information you need and the offers that will get you where you need to go.

If you want to learn a little bit more about networking, or if you have additional questions, don't hesitate to visit us at the Career Center at the Student Union Building on the University Park Campus. You can also call us or e-mail us, or visit us at [career.usc.edu](http://career.usc.edu) and we will be glad to help you out. Thank you and fight on.



## Job Search Skills, Part 1

Hi. I'm David Ginchansky, Senior Career Counselor at the USC Career Center and welcome to the Job Search.

Today's learning objectives is to look a little bit more into the Job Search and what you need to take in to account before you actually get into applying job search strategies. The first thing that you need to do is access yourself and your fit in the world of work. Next thing you want to do is determine your options. Instead of casting a wide net for any job out there, thinking more about those jobs that match with your interests and your needs. Once you know those key options then you can focus a little bit more on your efforts guiding yourself towards the different types of careers you might particularly be interested in to make your job search a lot more smooth. Once you've done that, how can you incorporate best job search strategies to increase your chances of getting into the interviews for the jobs and careers that you want?

Before you actually apply what you want to know is who specifically you are and what it is that you want. What you'll see from this diagram is, it is a career development process. It's what we all go through in determining the different type of careers that we want. The first step in the process is knowing yourself. What are your interests? What are your values? What are your needs? What's your personality and how does it fit into different types of careers? Once you know yourself then you actually go into the explore possibilities phase and in that phase you actually discover a little bit more about the places that you fit. Narrowing your choices through various different avenues and activities so that you now more on the lines of what it is that might fit with who you are.

The next phase is where you actually make choices. Where you set goals and you develop a plan for a specific number of careers that you're looking for and address an obstacles or barriers that might get in the way. Once you've gone to that point then you can actually make it happen. Implementing all that you've learned beforehand to get into the actual job that you might want.

Now this Career Development Process is also known as Career Development Cycle because its cyclical in nature. You will probably change your career five to seven times in your lifetime. Once you've actually gotten to that first career that you want, you may enjoy it but you may also want room for advancement or you might decide you want to switch to something completely different. At that point you'll probably go back in to knowing yourself learning the new interests that you have, the new values that you have, the new skills that you have developed and how you can incorporate that into the other phases over and over again.

Let's talk a little bit about that Phase 1 of Knowing Yourself. This is probably the most important phase in the job search process but probably the phase that most people spend the least amount of time doing. In fact most people will just apply on line because that job sounds cool and the truth of the matter is there's a lot more that goes into it. What is your background? What have you done in the past, what is it that you want to do and how does it tie into the job

that you want. Now we have various different types of resources for you to help you in exploring yourself a little bit more. One of the first things that we have is called Career Beam and that's actually within connectSC on the resources tab. In Career Beam it's a whole career developmental portal that allow you to take a quick profile assessment that doesn't take any more than 20 minutes where you rank the things that you're interested in and you rank the things that you value and it pops up with various different types of industries and careers that you might want to look in to based on how you answered those assessments. It's a very valuable tool because not only do you learn about these things but it has hyperlinks that allow you to learn more about those different types of careers and learn a little bit more about those different types of industries but also allows you to answer a bunch of different types of self-reflection statements, journaling along through a pathway or journey each step of the way so that you are staying on track towards a career path that might be of interest to you. There's also a lot of great other resources, industry research, more information about resumes that are good for particular fields you may be looking into. Definitely check out Career Beam in the Resources section of the career center connect SC website.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator known as MBTI for short is an assessment that we give at the career center that looks at your personality and finds that you're one of sixteen different personalities. Based on your particular personality type, there's certain strengths you have, there's certain weakness that you have, and there's certain values that you need in a job. When you actually take the MBTI we have an interpretation meeting with you where we actually walk through the different types of careers that your type gravitate towards you. Not specifically saying that these are the careers you should go in to but careers you should consider because your type tends to gravitate more towards those type of careers. We also have the Strong Interest Inventory. This is an interest assessment that just looks at your interests but matches it to professionals who've answered the same questions. How closely do your interests match with a professor? How closely does it match with a Career Counselor? How easily does it match with a business professional in various different types of forms or how closely does it match with a health professional? Taking that type of assessment along with the MBTI or the Career Beam could work to your advantage because then you're getting more of a holistic view of yourself as you try to explore career a little bit more to see where it is that you might actually fit.

Another thing to think about is just to do your own self-reflection. Think about those skills that you have. Are those skills not only that you have but skills that you want to use? For example, I'm actually pretty good at math, but I don't like to use math. It's not something that I want to do in my job so career counseling works very much to my advantage because I get to work on other skill sets such as communication, helping, guiding, things along those lines. Also think about your personality. If you're not a type A personality entertainment or high stress job may not be ideal for you so keep that in mind when reflecting on these type of things. Also think about your interests. Are these interests what you want to incorporate into your job or are these interests that you want to have more as a hobby? What are the things that you value? What are the things that speak to your heart, the things that motivate you? Think about those things as well. Some people it's status, some people it's family, some people it's lifestyle.

There's all different types of values that are out there that are very important and that are very important to take into account. Reflect on that, journal it. Do whatever you need to do so you can think about those things. Use past experiences to help you along the lines.

Once you've gotten to know yourself, it's good to actually explore possibilities. This is the different types of avenues that you can go into to learn a little bit more about how you can incorporate yourself into the world of work. The first way to do that is through actual work experiences. That could be internships that you take. It could be work experience that you have. It could be what type of volunteering you do either here on campus or with a non-profit organization. Or it could be the research that you do in the labs throughout USC. Each one of these opportunities are experiential educations where you can really get a little bit more of a feel for that environment that you might go into, what skills you want to do, what elements of, what duties of a job that you want to do. The more that you take that into account and the more that you reflect on that the more that you can take that and on to that next step.

Another thing you can do to explore possibilities is to join student organizations or professional affiliations. Student organizations are very accessible here at USC. You just need to go to [www.usc.edu/stuorgs](http://www.usc.edu/stuorgs) and it gives you a whole listing of organizations based on various different types of areas. It could be a social thing; maybe you like to sing so you want to be part of an acapella group or it could be more professional. Maybe you want to be in a health club or a business club where you're interacting with like-minded individuals and learning a little bit more about that field so you get a little bit more experience. What's even more advantageous is, if these are areas that you end up being interested in you can actually take on leadership roles. That type of stuff looks great on your resume. Never neglect the idea of incorporating student organizations in to your experience here at USC.

Professional associations are taking it to the next level. Professional associations are associations around different types of fields, and trust me, there's a professional association for anything. Within those professional associations they have everything from conferences to local chapters where you can go to meetings and interact with professionals in the field. Nothing impresses a professional more than when a student comes before they graduate from college and they start talking to those professionals saying, "This is what I'm thinking about doing. I'm just trying to interact more with people in my field." Those are the people that might be the bridge for getting you to the job that you might want.

Informational interviews are also very important. We talk a lot about informational interviews in our networking slide but just keep in mind that if there's a professional who's doing something that you want to do, don't hesitate to reach out to them through a connection to find out a little bit more about that job, possibly get connections from them, as well as get some guidance from them on what you can do along the way to increase your chances of getting a job in that particular field. Should you decide to continue to go down that path?

Classes are also a fantastic place to go to explore possibilities, learning a little bit more about a field, or building a different type of skill set. It's a great way to explore that a little bit more.

That's why we do a lot of GE classes at USC. To allow you to get exposed to various types of things because there's various different types of careers that are out there. So definitely utilize the classes because they can definitely work very much to your advantage.

Lastly you want to investigate. Look a little bit more into the organizations and the job descriptions. Organizations, we always recommend, once you know a field, look at the different types of organizations within those fields. You've got those big large corporate organizations within those fields and then you have the small business, entrepreneurial type within those fields? Where do you fit? Which one fits with your personality? Are they doing what you want to do? What do you want to do specifically within that organization? All this stuff is very valuable.

Job descriptions are great as well because it allows you to look at different types of jobs within various different types of fields and reading through those job descriptions might give you enough of a feel of, this is cool this is something that I might want to do. Even if you don't have the particular skill set then you know where you can gear your skill set towards or gear your experiences towards so that you can make yourself more viable for that as you're getting closer to those job descriptions. Reviewing those job descriptions can be very valuable because it can give you some kind of guide or pathway to what you might want to think about.

The things that you see here on the screen are things that you just might want to consider. ConnectSC is obviously a fantastic place to look at in terms of finding both internship and research opportunities. Within connectSC we have something called career network which allows you to connect to alumni who are willing to do information interviews. iNet is a resource within connectSC as well where you could find internships too. Career insider, we have something called the career access resource library and a few other resources within there that allow you to explore organizations, careers, industries, and fields a lot more. Definitely utilize those and check out connectSC videos to learn a little bit more about how you can find those and how those can work to your advantage.



## Job Search Skills, Part 2

Now that you've explored possibilities, it's getting into the next stage of making choices, and then one of the things that we highly recommend, at least at this point in the economy, is to be flexible and have options. Many of us might have a dream career, but it might take a little while to get there. Most of the first jobs out there are not our ideal jobs. Sometimes you're lucky, but most of the times questions that you want to ask is, "Will that job lead to the job that I eventually want to have?"

Now, another big reason why you want to be flexible is because we still work in an employer's market, and what that means is employers have more of a choice, and they can be a little bit more picky in who it is that they want, and because of that, they might have some specifics in terms of the requirements of the job; so, to take that one job and find relatable jobs would work to your advantage, and narrow your choices down to three or five jobs could work to your advantage. One of the ways that you can actually incorporate that is to develop an action plan using SMART goals. Now, SMART goals are another acronym, because we don't have enough acronyms here at USC. Here's just one more for you.

You'll see that the S in SMART stands for "specific," so are you describing something in that goal that's specifically what you want? Also, is it "measurable"? Put some type of quantity behind that goal that you want; don't just say, "I'm sending resumes," tell me how many resumes that you're sending. Is the ... In the SMART goal, the A is "actionable," is it attainable? Is it realistic? If it's not realistic, then you might want to think about what is manageable with you, because we all work as different types of human beings, so some of us can send out the 20 resumes a week, some of us want to spend a lot more time developing and thinking about those resumes and cover letters and making it really strong, and we might only dedicate three to five resumes a week; so, make it attainable or actionable to you.

Then, is it "relevant"? The goal, is it specific to the field that you want to go into, are you going off tangent? Keep it specific, keep it relevant. Then lastly, "timely." Put some type of time frame on when you anticipate you will have your goal accomplished, and try to stick as closely to that goal as possible. An important thing is as you're developing these SMART goals, give yourself some type of a reward as you accomplish it, because the job search is not an easy thing; nobody really enjoys a job search, so the important thing to keep in mind is to reward yourself as you're actually accomplishing these goals because then it helps you move forward and it keeps you motivated.

One other thing that I just want to mention, and this goes back to the three to five careers, is the Bureau of Labor statistics and the O\*NETs OnLine are two really good resources where you could learn about different types of careers just by putting a name of a career that you're interested in, then it gives you information on that career, everything from the nature of the work to what the job outlook is like, to how much you get paid, to similar occupations, and within the similar occupations, you might find additional careers that you might want to explore, and help that to expand your horizons a little bit as you're applying for jobs.

Now, the action plan itself might look something like this, where you have that goal listed, and then some type of affirmation to keep you moving forward. Then you have those steps, and you have those obstacles, and you have solutions, then the dates that can get you to where you need to go. I'm just going to look at that one first step there, and it says, "Identify two or three job titles to apply for in my field." It is being specific, it is defining what the person wants to do, it is being measurable. It's saying "two" or "three," it's giving me a number. It's being attainable, the person's not saying they're going to identify 20 job titles; they're keeping it within the range of what they could possibly do. They're keeping it relevant by focusing it on their field, and they're keeping it timely by giving them a target date of one week. Keep that type of stuff in mind, find a solution, and if you need a solution and you don't know how to get from step to solution, don't hesitate to come to us at the Career Center, we'll be glad to help you along that route.

The last phase of the job search is to make it action; this is the actual implementation phase. You've assessed yourself, you've explored your possibilities, you've narrowed down your choices so that you can tailor everything about yourself and create your brand so that when you're going out to the working world, it makes sense to the employer why you're applying for them. Again, brand yourself, and the way that you brand yourself is through the way that you tailor the resume, the cover letter, and creating your elevator pitch. What key words are you using? What are you speaking about that's relevant to what the company is asking for? Are you speaking to those types of things both within your resume and cover letter, as well as in the answers that you give in the interview? Keep that all in mind and implement it to make it happen. Once you have your resumes tailored, once you have your cover letter ready, once you know how to tell somebody about yourself, then it's time to go out there and apply for jobs and to network with people, and to interview. When you incorporate all that type of stuff, and you know why you fit, then you make it a lot easier for them to understand why you fit.

Now that you've done all these steps, let's talk a little bit more about best job search strategies. The first thing that you should probably take into account is asking for job leads and connections. Some people feel very uncomfortable in this type of situation, but the truth of the matter is most of us as human beings want to help other human beings, and if you don't go out there and ask, people can't give you the answer; they cannot assume that you know. Definitely ask and look at your network. Your network is diverse, and you can learn a little bit more about that with the networking video that we have for you. Also, attend various different type of networking events; those networking events could be anything from a panel that might be part of a class that you have, to the various different types of Career Center events that we have from our internship week to our career fair, to diversity networking mixers, to anything along those lines. It's a great opportunity to connect with people and learn a little bit more about that field and build your connections.

Next is to inquire, even if jobs aren't posted. A lot of times you might see that there's a company that you want to work for, but you keep checking their website, and you look to their career page, and there's never a job posted for you. Well, what is stopping you from trying to connect with somebody using a LinkedIn, or try to make a phone call just to see if there might not be an opportunity for you to intern, or learn more about that organization. A lot of people will do that phone call, and that leads to a relationship that leads to a job. What also works to your advantage is when you do reach out to people when jobs aren't posted, and they might be close to posting a job, you get considered before that job is posted, and that puts you at a huge advantage over other people because other people will wait until the job's posted, and then before you know it, 100 people apply for a job when you've connected with them ahead of time.

Another great thing that you could do is to search with other people, the more eyes and ears that there are for a job, the more it works to your advantage. If people know what you're looking for, then they can help you out just as much as you could help them out. Create clubs of people that could help you out, that could be anything from a job club of people looking for similar types of jobs, to those student organizations that you want to be a part of, or those professional associations. There's various different types of avenues that you can utilize in searching with other people.

Also, you want to consider a multi-pronged approach. There theoretically is more than one way to apply for a job. The easy way is just to apply online, right? But there's other things you could do. Is there anybody within that organization that you might be able to speak to? Anybody can do an internal referral for you. Is there alumni over there that you can do an informational interview with? All those types of things can work to your advantage. If you know that company is coming on campus, go to that company profile then, go to the career fair if they happen to be at the career fair. Find five to six different ways to apply for the job, versus just the one apply online. The more you get your name in front of somebody, the more that they're going to remember it.

Last, but not least, do not forget about following up. A lot of people, they'll tell you we don't have anything right now, but check in with me closer to graduation. Well, did you check with them closer to graduation? Did you check them closer to when summer came around? Follow up with them. If they gave you a contact name, let them know that you contacted up with the name. If you apply for a job, there's nothing wrong with trying to reach out to them. Do anything you can do to try to reach out, so that you're not just being a reactive spectator in the process, but you're being a proactive participant in the process.

Just remember with a job search that the most important thing that you could probably do is spend time assessing yourself. Most people do not do that, and the reason, and what happens because of that, is that 25% of people are actually happy with their job when they graduate; that means 75% of people are not, and one of the main reasons why three out of four people are not happy is because they haven't thought about why they fit and why that job works for them.

Next, know your options. Know what the careers are that you want to go into. Know how to get in there, create a strategic plan around that to make it more realistic and more possible. Don't forget to go beyond applying online, again, find four to six different ways to apply for a job. The more that you connect with somebody, the more you connect with an organization, the more that you're going to be noticed and at least get to the interview phase where you can prove yourself there. Be proactive. Don't be a reactive person, don't be the spectator on the field, be the athlete, be the person that's involved; so, go out there.

Finally, communicate your distinctiveness; know your brand. Know what makes you special or unique to the job. This could be very hard to do, but when you spend time thinking about that, it's going to help you because one of the questions that will be asked to you is, "Why are you the best candidate for this job?" The way that you can figure that out is to know what it is that you've done in the past, and what is it that you can bring in terms of skills, interest, history in terms of anything along those lines; so, spending that time could help you from being unemployed to employed, or to getting hired.

If you want any more additional information about the job search, please come and visit us at the USC Career Center. We're located on the University Park Campus in the Student Union building. You can also visit our website, email or call us with any types of questions, and we'd be happy to help you, whether it be with job search or any other process of the career development stages. Thank you, and fight on.