
JOB SEARCH BASICS: GETTING JOB LEADS AND INTERVIEWS

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1. DECIDE ON YOUR TARGET COMPANIES AND INDUSTRIES

The more specific you can be about what you want, the easier it will be for you to connect with hiring managers and get interviews.

San Diego County is big on biotechnology and medical devices. It also has a mostly start-up economy with a few established big employers, such as Qualcomm, UCSD, SDSU, and Intuit.

Resources for identifying your target companies and industries:

- Social Media, especially LinkedIn and Twitter (search #techcomm #jobs)
- San Diego Book of Lists: <http://www.sdbj.com/sdlists>. It is available at public libraries, California EDD offices, and Workforce Partnership.
- ReferenceUSA. This is a database available at public libraries. You can use ReferenceUSA to generate lists of companies, their contact information, management team, and total sales. You can also download the data to an Excel spreadsheet.
- San Diego Daily Transcript: <http://www.sddt.com/>
- Professional and Trade Associations
- Ask your colleagues, friends, and family
- Review your interests, hobbies, skills, and abilities

Note: Your targeted list will change as you progress in your job search.

2. DECIDE ON YOUR JOB TITLES AND DESCRIPTIONS

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Writer | <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Communicator | <input type="checkbox"/> Technical Editor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Content Developer | <input type="checkbox"/> Content Strategist | <input type="checkbox"/> Content Writer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information Architect | <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Designer | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

3. IDENTIFY PEOPLE YOU ARE WILLING TO CONTACT

List all the people you know who can assist you with your job search.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> LinkedIn Connections | <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious Associates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colleagues | <input type="checkbox"/> Bankers | <input type="checkbox"/> Civic Leaders/Politicians |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Past Associates | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawyers | <input type="checkbox"/> Club Members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends/Relatives | <input type="checkbox"/> Accountants | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Interest Associates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbors | <input type="checkbox"/> College Associates/Alumni | <input type="checkbox"/> Met While Traveling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Owners | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctors/Dentists | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salespeople | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance/Real Estate | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consultants | | |

4. CONTACT PEOPLE IN YOUR NETWORK FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

An informational interview is simply a conversation to learn more about a profession or a company. Your goal here is to expand your network and, possibly, have someone offer to forward your resume to a hiring manager. After the informational interview, make sure you thank the person via email and with a thank-you note.

WARNING: You do *not ever* ask someone for a job during an informational interview.

5. DEVELOP YOUR MARKETING MESSAGE

- Resume
 - Your resume's sole purpose is to get you an interview.
 - Focus your resume's content on results—the benefits you bring to a team or company.
 - Submit a properly-formatted Microsoft Word document
 - Do not use Tabs or extra spaces and paragraph returns. Instead define styles properly, and make headings and words semantically rich.
- Cover Letter
 - Make sure you submit a cover letter to demonstrate that you read the job description correctly, that you know how to write, and as a courtesy to the recruiter, hiring manager, or search committee.
- PARs (Problem, Action, Result) or CARs (Challenge, Action, Result)
 - PARs are accomplishments in the form of brief "power stories."

- You will use them on your resume and LinkedIn profile, and in conversations and interviews.
- Develop your accomplishments by breaking them down into three elements using the acronym PAR: Problem, Action, Result.
 - Power story: “As a marketing professional I was assigned the job of developing a campaign to increase sales for a product. I was given a 6-month deadline and a limited budget. Despite these constraints, I came up with a campaign that resulted in a dramatic increase in sales.”
 - Problem: “Needed to create and implement an effective marketing plan for an under-performing consumer product and turn sales around in less than six months on a \$40,000 budget.”
 - Action: “Worked 10-12 hours a day for 45 days in the creation and development of an innovative, cost-effective marketing and public relations campaign using targeted radio spots and local newspaper ads.”
 - Result: “The marketing campaign was implemented under budget in two months. Sales increased 35 percent in the first six months and have continued to improve at this level for the last three years.”
- Note: This section was taken from “How to Write PARs,” distributed by Experience Unlimited, Irvine.

LinkedIn Profile

- Your LinkedIn profile is a narrative version of your resume.
- Your profile should match what you say on your resume.
- Some recruiters are bypassing resumes and just searching for LinkedIn profiles.
- Make sure you update your profile once a month so you can rank well in search. For example, change or add a word in your summary or title.

Talking Points/Elevator Pitch

- Develop your talking points and elevator pitch so you’re prepared for any situation.
 - Intro: Who are you? What do you do? Who do you help?
 - “I am a technical writer. I assist ___ to do ___ (what).”
 - Expertise: State what you know.
 - Here you want to say you have knowledge in maybe one or two things; but you don’t want to say you are an expert.
 - Environment: State your target market and what kind of job you are looking for

- “I’m looking for a small- to mid-size company in the medical device industry that’s growing and needs someone with my abilities in...”
 - Or, if you’ve been out of the job market, you could say, “I’m looking to get back into...”
 - Call to Action (CTA): What do you want? The more specific you are the better.
 - “I am here to connect with___ and learn more about___. Any recommendations you could give me would be great.”
 - Answers to Interview Questions. You never know when a conversation may turn into an interview.
 - Note: Whatever you say, make sure you are always positive about yourself, colleagues, and past job experiences. People pick up on any negativity fast.
- Business Card
- Have about 250 to give to people.
 - List your name, profession, phone number, email address, LinkedIn profile.
 - Use both sides.
- Tag Line
- You do not have a tag line.
 - A tag line is a mission statement—a succinct way of saying what you do and for whom.
 - It should fit somewhere on your business card.

6. CHOOSE WHERE AND HOW YOU WILL MARKET YOURSELF

- In-Person Networking
- Woody Allen once said, “80 percent of success is showing up.” What he didn’t say is, you have to show up a lot.
 - In-person networking is the best way to find leads. It can also be the hardest because you have to keep doing it even when you don’t feel like it.
 - Find resources just for job seekers:
 - Workforce Partnership/San Diego at Work has a grant program for job seekers who need training in a certificate program at SDSU. The Metro Career Center also has a job club where you can discuss your job search with other job seekers: <http://www.sandiegatwork.com/> and <http://www.metrocareercenters.org/>

- NC3 Career Transitions meets every Monday, from 7 to 8:30 pm in Carlsbad. Some of the information for this handout comes from their workshops: <http://www.meetup.com/NC3-Career-Transitions/>
 - Strive for 5 Networking Meet and Greet Exchange meets on the third Sunday of every month, from 1:30 pm to 3 pm, in Carmel Valley. This group is connected with NC3 Career Transitions and the LinkedIn group Employer & Candidate Connection. They give each individual a lot of time to discuss his or her specific job search. Bring a chair, hat, and sunscreen. Coffee is provided by Starbucks. <http://www.meetup.com/NC3-Career-Transitions/>.
 - Find professional organizations and common interest groups:
 - Thompson Search lists many networking events you can attend in San Diego County: <http://www.thompsonsearch.com/newsletter/sdevents.htm>
 - MeetUp.com also has many networking groups, including STC San Diego: <http://www.meetup.com/STC-San-Diego/>.
 - Conference
 - Conferences are an excellent way to find job leads and offers.
 - STC Summit 2017 is from May 7 – 10, 2017 in National Harbor, Maryland
 - Offers discounted prices for student volunteers.
 - Look for any conference promoted by Scott Abel (Content Wrangler) or Jack Molisani (LavaCon).
 - Other conferences: MadWorld (in San Diego in April), Atlassian, Adobe, ATD, DevLearn, and many, many more.
 - Take a class. You can network with colleagues and instructors as well as increase your marketability. See note above about possible educational or training grants from Workforce Partnership. Places where you can take a class:
 - Certificate in Professional Writing at SDSU
 - Learning Design Program at SDSU
 - Technical Communication Program at UCSD
 - San Diego Continuing Education (sdce.org) provides free classes and certificate programs in web design, and Adobe and Microsoft products.
 - Watch a Webinar
 - Webinars are social, a good way to learn about tools and trends in the industry, and often free

- The STC San Diego website lists many free webinars: <http://www.stc-sd.org/index.php/professional-development/free-webinars/>
 - Join a Toastmasters club so you can practice your presentation skills.
 - It is highly recommended that you practice your presentation skills and develop leadership skills even if you are extremely shy and introverted.
 - Committing to work through the Toastmaster program (takes about 18 months) is a good way to do this.
 - Go to non-networking events just for fun and personal interest.
- ☐ LinkedIn
 - LinkedIn is one of the most productive ways to network with others, find job leads, or grow a business.
 - The best times to post updates are Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays in the afternoon and early evening.
 - Make sure your profile is up to date.
 - Let your contacts know you are looking for work.
 - Participate in LinkedIn groups. You now can belong to 100 groups, for example, STC San Diego, ASTD San Diego, ISPI San Diego, Employer & Candidate Connection, and Technical Writers Southern California. Select a few groups for participation and, then, contribute regularly.
 - WARNING: Do not use LinkedIn like Facebook. Always keep your posts and comments professional, and save the personal stuff for Facebook.
- ☐ Twitter
 - Follow Twitter feeds. For example, search for #jobs #TechComm.
 - You can also use Twitter to research companies and trends in technical communication, and to follow other technical communicators.
- ☐ Job Boards
 - Post your resume on reputable job boards, for example, CareerBuilder.com, Monster.com, and Dice.com. You can then slightly alter your resume once a week so it ranks well in search.

7. FOLLOW UP

- ☐ Decide how you will follow up with all your contacts, leads, and interviews.
- ☐ Then document the whole process, from initial contact to signing the paperwork, to staying in touch whether or not you are employed.
- ☐ Follow that process with each contact, lead, and interview.

- Make sure you send a thank-you note after each interview.
 - You can send email thank-you notes and personal notes.
 - Thank everyone you spoke with, including the administrative staff and gatekeepers.
- Stay in touch even if you did not get the job.
 - Every person who interviews you can become a member of your network.
 - You can contact them after a few months to see how they are doing or send them information that they may be interested in.
 - They might reconsider you or refer you to someone else.

8. KEEP TRACK OF YOUR CONTACTS, LEADS, TOUCHES, AND PROGRESS

- Keep track of your job search with a customer relational management (CRM) system, Outlook, or an Excel spreadsheet.
- If you are interested in a CRM, Insightly and ZohoCRM provide free versions of their cloud-based services.
 - The paid versions give you more flexibility; but you can do a lot with the free versions.
 - These CRMs also allow you to schedule posts to LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.
- You can also automate some of your tasks by using templates and using the automated email features in CRMs and Outlook.

9. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Bureau Labor of Statistics Occupational Outlook: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/technical-writers.htm>

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

http://www.edd.ca.gov/Find_a_Job.htm

<http://www.startuphire.com/lc/San-Diego-startup-jobs?s=CA>

<http://www.rileyguide.com/recruiters.html>

<http://theundercoverrecruiter.com/top-5-job-search-aggregators-smarter-job-hunt/>