

## Job Search Resource and Workbook for Former Students

I'm not sure what kind of job I want.

What kinds of jobs are available based upon my degree, skills, and experience?  
Am I doing something wrong? I have responded a dozen ads, but nothing is happening.

I know what I want to do. I don't know where the jobs are.

Do I have the right resume to help me get the job?

I need a strategy to get the job I want.

This workbook is provided to help you find answers to your questions while providing a strategy and step-by-step tactics designed to support your job search. The Texas A&M Career Center and The Association of Former Students are working together to provide these resources and a team of career specialists to help Former Students explore, research, and effectively network to job opportunities aligned with their unique career goals. Our resources extend far beyond resume reviews and links to job listings, but they are not a placement service. The section in the back of the workbook will walk you through web-based resources to support your search.



## Key Elements for a Self-Directed Search

Finding a new job *is* a full-time job. Here are key steps that we have identified to successful searches:

1. Understand the basics of the employment process and marketplace.
2. Build an inventory of your knowledge, skills, abilities and experience to showcase your accomplishments; and to show your potential to deliver value.
3. Identify your short/long term career goals aligned with your interests, needs and workplace preferences.
4. Understand the importance of a strategy that respects the Employer's hiring process, but does not depend on their resume review process to connect you to their decision maker.
5. Use our resources to identify specific employers and their needs through detail-focused research.
6. Identify and contact hiring authorities, and their team members, using informational interviews to confirm their existing and evolving needs to confirm how you can help them achieve their goals.
7. Refine each resume to package "product you" aligned with each target's specific identified needs, their business strategy and their goals.
8. Secure an interview with the decision maker.
9. Practice interviewing to prepare yourself to present "Product You" as the best mix of experience, knowledge, and skills so that you secure an offer.
10. During the formal interview and follow-up, you must convince them how well you match their needs and that you want THAT job, not a job.
11. Deliver "Product You".
12. Continually invest in your network.

Commitment to your job search plan will help you deal with the highs and lows of the search process until you secure the work you want. Each section of this workbook has been designed to provide insight for that specific step to support your transition. The strategy is designed to help you whether you seek to earn income by securing a position within an organizational chart or prefer the flexibility of a contract assignment.

Employers have indicated that they prefer to hire someone that is currently employed; someone focused on delivering value to earn their paycheck. If currently employed, you will have to put in the overtime at home to meet your objective. If not employed, adherence to a well-executed networking strategy will demonstrate that you are working a plan, which is often attractive to them.

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## 1). Understand the Basics of the Employment Process and Marketplace

It is reasonable in our evolving economy to assume that all jobs are temporary. Take time to understand the realities of our evolving employment marketplace. They may differ from your expectations. This economy is fully engaged in “constructive disruption” which is to say that technology is advancing so rapidly that many jobs are being eliminated by new or evolving technologies. Examples include robots replacing workers in manufacturing, self-checkout stations that are eliminating cashiers, even case law research software replacing law clerks. To maintain your competitive advantage you must make sure that you are continuously monitoring the marketplace for evolving needs and new opportunities created by advanced technology.

### Setting Expectations and Understanding the Employment Marketplace

The hiring process is a two-party business transaction. Both parties’ needs must be met, but recognize that *the employer* is your Customer. From the perspective of the decision maker that will hire you, your needs are secondary to the needs of their organization. They view a hire as an investment in their Team. Three turn-offs for employers include: 1) a perception that you “just need to find a job”, 2) that you are attempting to get away from a job you don’t like, or 3) that you might use their job as a step to move to another job. The depth and quality of your research *to identify and focus on an employer’s existing and evolving needs, aligned with their goals*, will be a key factor during your interactions.

The person making the hiring decision is usually not in Human Resources, unless you are pursuing a Human Resources position. Your strategy must respect the requirements of their hiring/application process, so apply to comply, but your strategy must focus on introducing you to the person that has the authority to hire you.

A manager will only add staff when their needs reach a critical point that could hurt their ability to respond to customer’s needs or to respond to a new business opportunity. Decision makers continuously monitor the changing needs of their organization and they maintain a shopping list of needs specific to their team. That list may or may not align with a specific job description. Rather than posting job listings, between 60% and 80% of jobs in the private sector will be filled through referrals or through some form of networking. Many industry insiders indicate that they don’t have time to answer phone calls and e-mails from job seekers asking if a job has been filled, but they will make time to explore a referral that could fill their specific needs.

Securing a full time job may not be your best option. If your ultimate objective is income, then contract work may be your best option. Employers need their projects completed and their goals met. Many employers view contract projects as a test drive to observe your performance before offering full time employment. Contract projects are an increasingly attractive opportunity to help you overcome a hiring manager’s concerns including economic uncertainty, age concerns, or appearing over qualified or offering questionable experience.

Please understand that all jobs are temporary. Individuals that want to earn income in this economy will need to continuously develop their knowledge, abilities, and skills while continually delivering value to employers to advance from one assignment to the next. A comprehensive marketing effort will require a good resume, a well maintained network, and a systematic approach for assessing and documenting your value to the team. **You should continually invest in your network; constantly looking for opportunities to connect people with the resources to meet those needs.** Sometimes that person with the solution will be “Product You”.

Some Former Students have unrealistic expectations of The Aggie Network. Earning a degree or your Aggie Ring does not guarantee a job offer or even an interview. Active, deliberate participation within the network has provided advantages for securing opportunities. This is important in a marketplace where many of tomorrow’s jobs have not yet been created.

## 2). Build an Inventory of Your Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Experience to Showcase Your Accomplishments and to Show Your Potential to Deliver Value

What do you have to offer a prospective employer? Probably more than you anticipate. Create a resume inventory focused on capturing the depth and breadth of your strengths, knowledge, skills, accomplishments and experience that could be of value to prospective employers. Many skills are transferable, so the more items you can identify, the greater the opportunity to match their shopping list of needs. Details are important to create the most comprehensive inventory. Inventories do not have page limits. Here is a three step process to help assemble your inventory. Think of this as the toolbox you bring to work with you..

### Step 1: Brainstorm

Keep the process simple to help make it fun. Use a poster board, some crayons or markers, and perhaps your favorite beverage. Sometimes background music helps as well. Relax, get away from distractions and conduct a “brain dump” on paper to capture your thoughts. Don’t initially try to organize your thoughts or their placement on the paper, just let your thoughts fall out anywhere on the poster board. You will get to the details later. Recall projects, activities, team efforts, things you have learned, and what you have accomplished. Think about times you followed up on a good idea, times you made a difference, or times you were recognized for your results. Don’t rush the process. Give yourself time to think back and remember.

- What kind of projects have you worked on that were fun?
- What did you do that was challenging, but rewarding?
- When did you feel like you made a difference?
- Did you improve a process or a system?
- What did you do until you were exhausted, but you delivered results?
- Proud moments when you looked back at a job well done?
- When did you feel like you were a part of something bigger than yourself?
- Identify three times that you “nailed it”.

When you are out of things to add to the brainstorm process, transfer those skills and accomplishments into a MS Word document and save it as your “Resume Inventory”. This inventory is your “career toolbox”.

### Step 2: Add Detail to Fully Tell Your Story

Now go back and fully document the details for each of your accomplishments. Don’t worry about organizing or categorizing yet. Smile as you grow to a new page, your toolbox is getting bigger!! The extra effort you put into capturing this information will develop the heart and soul of your resume. Three questions can help you significantly fortify each statement. Think of it as “putting meat on the ribs”. Ask yourself:

1. Why did I do that? (What was your motivation for the task or job responsibility? Was it an issue you volunteered to resolve? Help them see inside the head and heart of a prospective Team member. )
2. How did I do that? (Was it a process/procedure/protocol you followed, software or equipment you operated? Did you create a team, work cross-functionally, use another language or train people? Did you develop a new approach, a new product or service? Did you use suggestive selling or “upsell” to grow the business?)
3. What impact, value or results did you deliver? (Remember that most people can perform an action. Managers are more interested in how you completed assignments better, faster, cheaper than your competition to help envision your potential and the value in your deliverables. Help them see you understand the value to the business behind the work you performed). Did you increase sales or

market share? Did you reduce waste, cycle time or production costs? Dollars signs and numbers cause managers to slow down and pay attention.

It will not take long to realize that some bullet statements yield multiple answers to these questions. That is a good thing because different organizations have differing needs. You won't use every bullet on every resume as some will apply to specific needs that you identify, some will not. As a bonus... the time you invest on these details will help you prepare and fortify your answers for critical questions you will answer during interviews.

### Step 3: Organizing Your Information

At some point while you are developing your inventory, you will want to begin organizing information into sections that look more like a resume. If you feel uncomfortable starting from scratch, several resources in the Career Center Library, including our [Resumes & Professional Letters Writing Brochure](#) may be helpful. Let's consider some sections and a few questions...Just in case you overlooked something ...

#### Personal Data

- Include your name, physical address, phone number, and your @aggienetwork.com e-mail address.
- Use your photo for your profile at aggienetwork.com and LinkedIn.com , rather than on your resume.

#### Objective

- Not required, but strongly encouraged to identify your focused interest in work. The most effective statements will show your alignment with *their* needs ...not your needs.
- Phrasing that aligns you with the work or industry of interest, especially when aligned with their core business, their goals or strategy helps the readers see your 'fit' with their Team.
- Avoid general statements and terms such as: "opportunity for advancement", "challenging position", "position dealing with people", "self-starter" or "a progressive company". Let your competition use those weak, catch-all phrases.

#### Education

- If you are a recent graduate, this section is more likely to be listed near the top of your resume. If you are a Former Student with more work experience, it may be more appropriate for this section to be towards the bottom of your resume. Is the hiring manager shopping for entry level or experience?
- Regardless of where this section is located on your resume, it should begin with your most recent education.
- Provide name and location (city & state) of the college or university; and month & year of graduation. On the second line identify your degree with major, minor and certifications; then your overall GPR (for recent graduates). Experienced Former Students need not include GPR.
- You may want to include relevant, specialized coursework if not known by employers (i.e. Capstone projects, critical coursework or electives), but list no more than 4-6 important classes.
- Provide percentage, if over 50%, of financial support you earned through employment and scholarships while attending school.
- Include honors earned, Dean's List, class rank, awards, and merit based scholarships, if you are a recent graduate. Experienced Former Students may consider listing some honors, but this listing should be limited to your most significant achievements.
- If you completed study abroad; focusing upon what you learned that applies to the work they need performed is typically more attractive than your engagement with other cultures.

#### Skills & Languages

- Include any technical skills such as computer software applications, hardware, laboratory skills and/or languages. Be prepared to demonstrate your skills with software systems, software development tools, or any equipment referenced in your resume

- Specify your foreign language proficiency. Note that “fluent” indicates exceptional speaking ability and should only be used if you would actually be able to complete your interview in that language.

#### Experience

- List full-time, part-time, internships, or co-op jobs. Applicable volunteer work could also be included.
- Start with most recent company or organization name, city and state of location, and dates (month, year) of employment. Aligning dates along the right margin of the page focuses reader’s attention on the skills, abilities and experience as they scan the page.
- Your job title typically goes on the second line. If a volunteer, it helps to identify total hours worked.
- Describe your experience and accomplishments using action verbs and write to identify results, impact, or value (\$, %) that help the reader see why they want you on their team. Keep in mind that most readers are more interested in your impact than your responsibilities.
- Quantify whenever possible, sales, productivity, market share, end of quarter results, staff retention or other relevant statistics; including number of people led or trained.
- Include those duties that reflect transferable skills, including communication, teamwork, training, recruiting, problem solving, conflict resolution, project management and others.
- Be specific when listing responsibilities and duties and avoid broad generalizations. Terms like helped, assisted, participated, observed really do not specify your part in the outcome.
- Begin with the most relevant experience first. Be consistent with present or past tense depending on the time of the experience. Considering using past tense to reduce future editing.

#### Leadership

- Include any offices you held or committees you chaired.
- Focus on what or how you led, rather than what you planned or managed. Planning an event is perceived as more about organizing resources than about leading people. How did you influence the planning or results?
- Describe what, or how, you helped these organizations accomplish goals, deliver results or change.
- Be sure to quantify results whenever possible, particularly when describing fundraisers, membership drives, programs or events.

#### Activities

- List activities, organizations that you are a member of, but have not had a leadership role in during your educational or professional experience.
- Include a brief description if the group or activity is not well-known to help the reader see alignment with their needs. Don’t assume the reader is fully aware of A&M traditions and organizations.

#### Other Categories

- These can be used to demonstrate valuable attributes. For example: publications and presentations, relevant projects completed, special training, professional licenses or certifications.

### 3). Identify your short/long term career goals aligned with your interests, needs and workplace preferences.

Is your goal in life to survive or to thrive? This question is not focused on the quantity of possessions one can amass, rather it focuses on what you can do to earn income that excites you *so much* that you can't wait to start working each day. Stop for a moment and view career goals from a unique perspective. How can someone (a networking contact) help you with your job search, or serve as a mentor you, if you don't know where you are going? This section is designed to help you through that process.

What excites you? What work do you want to perform so well that you are willing to push through the hard times as well as the good times so that you can be the best in the world at that activity? Seek out that work that you can perform that makes a difference and provides value; and you will probably not need to worry about income. This will be work that you don't want to change again in a year or two for something better because you are already working toward your long term objectives!

If you are experiencing difficulty identifying that goal, then perhaps it is time for a change in your daily routine. Consider disciplining yourself to set aside time each day to get away from distractions (i.e. Facebook, video games, and television) and invest that time exploring the immense variety of needs in the marketplace, in the world, where you could make a positive impact. There is scarce little content on late night television that can impact your life as much as time you invest in planning for your future helping others achieve their goals.

#### **Pulling Your Thoughts Together**

Conduct an assessment of essential needs and desires as they pertain to you and your family before you start your search. Develop a checklist from the results of your self-assessment to help evaluate jobs identified during your job research. Compare opportunities to select the best match for you.

What kind(s) of work or industries interest you?

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You may have several ideas during this initial phase of assessing options. That is alright as long as each person with whom you network perceives that you have laser focus in their area of interest.

What is your ideal work environment?

Large Corporation  
Government Agency

Small Business  
Non-profit Organization

Higher Education

What is your preferred location—urban, suburban or rural? (Keep in mind that you may have no choice but to go where the work is performed.) \_\_\_\_\_

Preferring College Station? You may find that you must accept a trade-off with limited employment options for your lifestyle preference, with long term implications to your career development and income potential.

Do you prefer to work with people, data or with things (i.e. your hands)?

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If things, what kind of things? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you prefer to work with teams or work alone? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you prefer to work on new projects or prefer following a regular routine? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of reward is most important to you in a job—money, security, creative authority, recognition, etc.

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List your three most important career job goals (places or ways that you want your work to make a difference)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**If you still feel lost we have several resources to consider.**

<http://www.jobhuntersbible.com/for-career-changers/view/figuring-out-a-career-through-taking-tests-career-assessments>

The **HireAggies Homepage** provides several resources to help identify and explore options.

(Instructions at the back of this workbook will help you access the Hire Aggies page.

In the Shortcuts section on the right side of the screen please locate the **SIG13 Assessment Tool**.

Results from your assessment will be forwarded to the **Career Finder** resource to help identify types of work to consider which can be researched using the **Career Explorer** resource, also located in the shortcuts section.

The **Jobs** link at the top of the page links to the **HireAggies Jobs** job board section. Review the listings to consider alignment with your interests and career toolbox. Disregard notes indicating that you do not qualify as those determinations are based upon preassigned criteria used for other purposes. Compare your skills and experience with their shopping list identified in the job description. If you align, submit your resume and look for contacts to request informational interviews (which will be discussed later in this resource).

**CareerShift** (also located on HireAggies.com) can introduce you to the array of jobs associated by industry or key word search. Think of the “My Jobs” section as a recipe book and compare your ingredients to their recipe for success in that job. Each job listing in CareerShift provides a link to company contacts for possible informational interviews and company research information.

If you need an additional resource to help identify your Dream Job, please consider “48 Days To the Work You Love” by Dan Miller.

The Dictionary of Occupational Titles and the Occupational Outlook Handbook <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/> provides descriptions of industries and job options within those industries based upon information provided through the US Department of Labor.

Keep up with current trends in your field through trade publications, news/business magazines and newspapers. This information will be important during interviews to validate that you are aware of market or industry trends and evolving needs.

Develop a list of career possibilities, identified by industry or job title/job description, to research drawing from your work experience or your studies. (If you are unsure, the search strategy we introduce in this workbook is designed to help you identify additional options to consider)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of work do you want to be performing to earn income 10 years from now? \_\_\_\_\_

My Dream jobs are: 1). \_\_\_\_\_

2). \_\_\_\_\_

3). \_\_\_\_\_

Has a particular interest risen to the level of your passion or your cause for existence? \_\_\_\_\_

Consider whether your desired career requires an advanced degree. Reach out to others that have earned the respective degrees to request informational interviews to inquire about their experiences and perspectives. The “Find an Aggie” directory and the Find Alumni section the My Network link on LinkedIn.com, discussed later, can help you identify potential contacts for those conversations.

If you are having a hard time completing this section, consider volunteering for a community or charitable organization to gain further work experience. You can identify a list of organizations providing volunteer opportunities on the GoinGlobal web resource in the USA/Canada City Guide section by searching respective major cities. Volunteer positions can and should be included on your resume when the activity aligns with work you would perform for a prospective employer.

#### **4). A proven strategy to connect you to their decision makers.**

Once you have identified a company of interest, you must follow the requirements of their application process. Organizations have established portals to formally receive resumes “into their system”. Most people with whom you connect will ask if you have submitted your resume. Adhering to their requirements will confirm that you follow their rules and will help to make sure you are not easily dismissed by a potential referral. Use a broader, more industry based resume during this initial submission.

Many organization’s review resumes in a streamlined process. Resume screeners will typically spend between 10 to 30 seconds to skim resumes, usually looking for keyword matches. Their goal is to reduce the stack from hundreds resumes to a more manageable short list of 10-20 prospects. Resumes with punctuation, grammar or spelling errors are usually immediately eliminated as are generic “one size fits all” resumes that clearly are not specifically aligned with their industry.

Once you pass the screening process, you are dependent upon the hiring manager to connect with screeners to seek out resumes aligned with their needs. These managers have the authority to hire staff, but they are paid to achieve goals delivering products and services on time and under budget. Generally speaking they do not have time for reading resumes, much less updating job descriptions. To avoid stacks of resumes, many managers have learned to streamline their hiring process by not posting a job listing. Instead they encourage team members and peers to refer prospects that show potential. They know these referrals will only occur where someone sees real potential because the referrer's reputation will be associated with the performance of the candidate. For this reason, treat everyone you meet like they might be your next employer. This referral approach is often called the "hidden job market" because the jobs will not be advertised. Many managers believe this approach saves time, expense and yields better hires.

Recognizing the importance of the hidden job market, smart job seekers will seek out experts within the target industry or company and ask for informational interviews to confirm what they are learning during their research. This deliberate networking approach not only provides an insider's perspective; it also helps deliver a resume that will verify what a manager has heard about you...rather than introduce you. In these situations you will be viewed as an answer to their needs rather than someone looking for a job.

Asking others for advice and assistance, focused upon the employer's needs, is a key to success with the entire job search process. Bottom Line: It is your responsibility to connect with the person that has the ability and authority to hire you.

### **5). Use our resources to identify specific employers and their needs through detail focused research.**

Start with a list of 25 employers to research that align with your goals and interests that you identified in Section 3. Consider a variety of industries in the beginning to help identify the array of potential entry points and to help understand a variety of options for earning income.

#### **Resources to help research**

There are many resources to help you identify potential employers. Many of these resources also help locate individual contacts at the respective companies while identifying Former Students for networking efforts. Instructions for assessing some of these resources will be detailed later in this workbook.

- The Aggienetwork.com website provides the "Find an Aggie" directory identifying over 417,000 Former Students in a searchable database.
- CareerShift, located on the HireAggies platform, provides a searchable database with links to search by product, service and industry. It provides company overviews, a direct link to the organization's website as well as a link to search for company and industry contacts. You can even search by key words in job titles!
- LinkedIn.com provides multiple mechanisms to identify industries, companies and their contacts. Under the Interests link on LinkedIn.com, Locate and join the Aggie Network group which includes over 50,000 Aggies that have joined the group specifically to network with other Aggies. Click to the Education section to identify the larger body of over 200,000 Aggies using LinkedIn to see information is organized under 5 Categories

**Where They Live,  
What They Studied**

**Where They Work,  
What They are Skilled At**

**What They Do,**

A keyword search tool can help you locate Aggies by keywords in their career profiles.

- To research publicly traded companies in the United States you can also access the EDGAR database. Their 10-K reports are annual reports for publically traded companies that often provide insights into a

company's products, services, operating units and business strategies. Consider printing the cover and business section for resource notes during interviews.

- If you would like to look internationally consider GoinGlobal on the HireAggies platform. This resource also identifies companies that use H1B visas to secure international talent.
- The Company Website
- Social Media sites
- Check to see if the company of interest provides recruiting packages for prospects.

You should be routinely checking resources like the Wall Street Journal, Employer's Business Daily (Investors.com) or Yahoo Business News Headlines to be conversant on the broader spectrum of issues facing business and our economy. You will be well served by developing a deeper understanding of both the conservative and progressive perspectives on the issues and key stories so that you will be better positioned to make informed decisions.

- Google news provides news of mergers, acquisitions and legal developments.
- Yahoo Finance provides a quick market overview of company stock performance.

### **Researching a Specific Organization**

The hiring decision will be based, in large part, on the hiring manager's perception of how well you prepared for the interview. Depth of preparation provides a good indicator of your interest in a specific job. As a member of their team, you will represent them when interacting with their boss and their customers. Your preparation will serve as an indicator of the effort you will invest into preparation to anticipate needs, to solve problems, to understand customer's expectations; in other words your commitment to earn your paycheck each day. (By the way it does not matter where you work or what you do... you will always have customers!)

When competing for each job opportunity you will be expected to understand a basic history of the organization, why it was started and where it currently operates. Aside from information on their website about their culture and customer commitment; you need to understand their mission, their strategic goals and you need to have a sense of **where you would best match their needs**.

### **You need to know the answer to these questions to compete effectively for an opportunity:**

- Do you have a familiarity with their services or products?
- Are they organized into operating units?
- What training programs are offered?
- How do they compare to their competition in the marketplace?
- Do their website and social media outlets provide a sense of what they do to help you understand the workplace environment?
- Can you identify any recent projects, new products, or new initiatives; as well as their long and short-term goals?
- How has the company resolved challenges in the past?
- Have there been recent employee layoffs, lawsuits or merger discussions?
- Have there been major awards or recognition?
- What are the backgrounds of the managers?
- Could you find information on the people you are attempting to meet?
- Have you reviewed their financial statements?

As you research the organization write down 8-10 questions based on what you have learned from this research. Employers typically will ask you if you have any questions toward the end of the interview, even if you have initiated the conversation as an informational interview.

**6). Identify and contact hiring authorities, and their team members, using informational interviews to confirm their existing and evolving needs to confirm how you can help them achieve their goals.**

**Basic Networking Guidelines**

The most successful networkers think outward rather than inward. They focus upon understanding the person with whom they are engaging while reaching out for valuable referrals more than making the quick connection.

Effective networking occurs at informal social or industry gatherings as well as more formally requested one-to-one appointments. Always have a ready supply of business cards to share contact information and to make notes of key items of interest or commitments that you may make during a conversation.

Effective networking is not asking people for a job. The most effective networkers work toward identifying opportunities to help others meet needs or solve problems, often through referrals rather than a sale. These win-win relationships create an environment where the other person actually looks forward to follow-up contacts, usually because *they* benefit from the conversation. The reciprocal relationship will yield ample opportunities over time.

Networking is not selling. Selling is selling.

Networking is not just for extroverts. Networking is more about listening than talking. Most people in business don't want to hear your story. They want to solve their problems and grow their business. By listening you will uncover real rather than presumed opportunities.

It is likely you intend to connect with The Aggie Network. Strive to connect with Aggies, but respect this resource. Aggies tend to have a special connection drawn from shared experiences and more important our shared core values, each of which is valued in business. Because of these shared values, many of the over 410,000 living Former Students will make time to help you with your search. Make it a point to connect with your local A&M Club. There are over 125 A&M Clubs worldwide. Houston, Dallas, and Austin have Aggie networking groups that can support your efforts. If you want to make a favorable impression with most Former Students stay current with the Aggie sports page.

**Solicit advice, ideas and referrals through Informational Interviews.**

Build a list of individuals in the types of jobs, industries or organizations of interest, to help you grow a network of contacts. These contacts can help you see organization-specific needs, identify opportunities where organizations want to grow their teams, and to anticipate emerging markets.

Networking efforts often stall when job seekers focus all of their effort on connecting with a small group of key contacts. Treat your search as a numbers game. Try to identify 5-10 contacts per organization where possible to improve your chances of connecting. Over time we have seen that 15 to 20 percent of Former Students will respond to requests, when following the approach that follows in this section. That compares to 5 to 8 percent response rates from other schools. Set a goal of 20 contacts per day for 10 days. This strategy helps you have 200 requests in place within two weeks! Start with Former Students because of the higher response rates and because you will have a comfort zone connecting with others where you have a shared life experience in Aggieland.

After identifying a networking contact, send an e-mail to each individual (no group or mass mailings) or leave a voice mail. If calling let them know the date and time when you will call back. (This will help you handle gatekeepers when you can say "they are expecting my call at ".) Do not send your resume with the request. You are asking for an opportunity to hear their advice, perspectives and ideas to help confirm what you are learning during your research. Informational interviews are a learning opportunity; not the time for self-promotion.

Sample request

(Good Morning/Good Afternoon) Mr/Ms/Dr \_\_\_\_\_

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm in the process of a career change and am considering (industry / job type). While searching (name of the networking resource), I saw that you are in this line of work and have made an effort to research to gain a better understanding of your organization. Would you have a moment to share some your perspectives or ideas that could help me better understand existing and evolving needs regarding your occupation and industry?

Thank You for your assistance

Your Name

Phone #

### **Preparations for the Informational Interview**

Ideally you want a conversation in person, but telephone or skype conversations can also yield exceptional results. Regardless of the situation make a point of keeping your research notes at hand for reference. Use a phone on a land line whenever possible to optimize sound quality. Consider standing during phone interviews as it tends to add energy to the conversation. Review the basic preparations for interviews. The same ground rules for job interviews apply to informational interviews with one major exception. Definitely **do not** ask if they have any openings.

When the interview starts, thank them for their time. Be prepared to share why you are excited about exploring their industry and learning more from their perspectives. Mention your referral if you received one. They may ask you about your background. Since you know that question will be asked, have a well prepared response. Also be prepared with a short introduction that elaborates on your interest. It should be focused to the type of work being discussed. If you are exploring several different types of work have one for each type of work. This is important because the contact needs to see that you are focused on their line of work, to be a legitimate prospect. As an example:

"I became interested in the (industry) field last summer when I worked at (organization name) and had an opportunity to work with the (job type) Director there. Her job provided an opportunity to make a difference with the organization and it really fascinated me. She worked with all aspects of (responsibility) and (responsibility); she was sincerely interested in helping her team (goal). I liked the variety in her job and the fact that she was a very positive influence at (organization name) ."

From this point on remember that your focus is to ask questions, listen and learn. Remember that your contact is the expert. Conduct an informal but "business-like" interview. Respect their time. You asked for *their* advice and ideas so NEVER argue with their opinions or perspectives. Remember...they are the experts in their world, and you are visiting. Their feedback regarding industry or company needs and desired characteristics/skills can be used to improve your resume.

### **Informational Interview Questions:**

These sample questions are provided to help get you started with your informational interviews. In time you will identify other questions you prefer, or that are more specifically applicable to your areas of interest. We recommend that you not send these questions with your interview request. You are more likely to receive more thorough and candid answers during an interactive conversation. Just make sure you listen more than talk and be sure to respect their time and their perspective. This is the time to learn, not to sell.

- Looking back through your career, what key steps led you to where you are today?

- If you were starting your career today, where would you focus your attention?
- What characteristics/skills make for a good \_\_\_\_\_? (this is what they are looking for on resumes)
- Where do you see evolving needs or areas of emerging opportunities?
- How would you describe the culture of your organization?
- What can I do to make myself more marketable in your industry?
- Do you know anybody that needs help? Who else should I be talking to?
- What advice would you share to help someone like me prepare ?

Remember that they did not agree to serve as your agent. Asking if they know someone that needs help is less demanding. These referrals often help secure access that might not otherwise be possible.

Make sure you send a Thank You note that evening, before you go to bed. This can be done by e-mail, but grammar and spelling are important. A well thought note that reflects a key point that you learned and leave a very positive impression.

**Maintain a Networking Log:**

Company or Organization:                      Address:  
 Date of Meeting or Contact:                      Referral Source:  
 Key Points I Learned:  
 Suggestions from Contact:  
 Thank-You Letter Sent:  
 Suggested Contacts:  
 Next Steps:

Keep in mind that someday in the future an Aggie will contact you for your advice and ideas. Please make the time to help them.

**7). Refine Each Resume to Package “Product You” Aligned With Each Target’s Specific Identified Needs, Their Business Strategy and Their Organization’s Goals.**

The goal of your resume and cover letter is to **make the reader want to interview you**. Your targeted resume is one tool that helps a specific employer identify a prospect with knowledge, skills, experience, and talent that match up with the specific needs of their organization. Your ability to communicate that you are the most cost effective match for the items on that manager’s shopping list will strongly influence whether you are called for an interview. Describe how you have completed assignments better, faster, cheaper than your competition documenting the value of your deliverables when possible. This information is the heart and soul of a great resume.

If you are pursuing more than one basic type of job, for example sales OR marketing have a resume for each job type. They require very different skill sets.

**Format Options**

There are several resources in the Career Center Library, including a resume guide [Resumes & Professional Letters Writing Brochure](#) that should prove helpful in producing your baseline resumes. Use the format that presents your qualifications best to showcase your alignment with the needs on their shopping list.

The traditional chronological format can be used to emphasize your development as a resource and the organizations with which you have been associated. This is important if you have progressed through leadership roles or had increasingly noteworthy responsibilities with more recognizable organizations.

The functional format emphasizes the range of knowledge, skills, and abilities that match with the employer's needs before describing your employment history. Smart job seekers use both, depending on the specific situation. Many in Academia or research use a curriculum vitae which typically is a more broadly descriptive resume describing one's academic journey incorporating areas of study and research. If pursuing federal employment, please contact the Former Student Services Team for additional resources.

When submitting your resume to a web-based job listing, you should convert the resume to a scan able text format. Career Center Staff members can familiarize you with the appropriate formatting.

Ask several people you trust, that will provide brutal unvarnished feedback, to review your resume to check for spelling, grammatical errors, applicability and readability. Be receptive to their perspectives and feedback. They will not be doing you a favor by being soft with their critique.

### **Resume Appearance Checklist**

- Does your job objective show your alignment with their core business, strategy or goals? Use the balance of the document to showcase how your skills and experience support your objective.
- Spelling, mixed tense and grammatical errors provide the fastest route to the trash can for many otherwise powerful resumes. Have someone else proofread spelling and grammar for you. Do not rely on spell-check to correct errors! Spell-check will not differentiate between led and lead or between to, too, and two. The best rule of thumb is to read your resume backwards. That is when spelling and grammatical errors really stand out.
- Make sure the resume is concise and easy to read. Too much ink on a page may be an indicator that you have information that is not relevant to that specific employer. It can create resume noise that keeps the reader from seeing your obvious matches with their urgent hiring needs.
- Do not use personal pronouns such as I, me, or my.
- Avoid repetitive phrases when describing your experience.
- Describe activities that employers may not be familiar with, especially those unique to Texas A&M University (if you are a Recent Graduate).
- Instead of using abbreviations or acronyms for organizations, write the entire name of the group unless it is widely understood what they represent.
- Use a consistent font throughout the resume. Fonts such as Times, Optima, Helvetica, Courier, and Arial are professional in appearance and easy to read. The text in the body of the resume should be 10-11 point. Headings can be 12 point, with your name between 14 and 16 point.
- Use bold print to highlight each section or heading. However, avoid excessive use of underline, italics, bold, or graphics. This adds unneeded emphasis and may make the information difficult to read. Margins can be set at 1" on all sides. If you need space, reduce the top and bottom margins first. All margins should never be smaller than .7".
- Always use high quality paper, but it does not have to be "resume paper".
- Print your resume professionally using black ink on white paper. (You will want to carry six copies of your resume to each interview.)
- Limit resume to one page, if a Recent Graduate. Often a second page is essential for extensive work and relevant details for experienced Former Students. The most relevant experience must be on the first page to increase the likelihood that it will be seen.
- Compose a separate cover letter to accompany each resume and address the letter to a specific person. Try to identify the decision maker during your research, but if you cannot identify a contact you can use Dear Hiring Manager. Avoid sending a letter which begins "Dear Sir/Madam."

## Cover Letters

A cover letter introduces your resume to a potential employer. It is the opportunity for you to summarize your qualities and skills that will pique the interest of the reader to look at your resume. The cover letter is not a restatement of your resume; rather it shows your focused interest in something exciting they do and your desire to serve their organization. The more research you do before the initial contact with a company representative, the more prepared you will be, to show them that your alignment with their needs.

### Three Parts of Cover Letter

**The 1st paragraph** is the opening, where you identify the purpose of the letter. Identify the work you are applying for, by position when possible. You should indicate how you identified the opportunity, be it through the organization's website, business experience, or through a personal referral. A referral provides the strongest opportunity to connect. (example: I am writing you at the recommendation of James Wilson from your Houston office...) If you do not have a referral, consider identifying what you have learned about their organization, strategy or core business that compels you to want to be a part of their team. (Example: While researching your company, I am learning about the industry leading work you are performing by focusing on reducing rework in your drive train manufacturing process.)

**The 2nd paragraph** is the section where you help the reader see how you would like to align your interests and abilities with their goals and the needs on their shopping list. Relate to the job description and what the company is seeking. This is your opportunity to let the employer know that you are aware of their needs and you are ready and able to fill those needs. If there is anything in your background that might be of special interest, you should indicate this in the second paragraph as well. Do not spend too much space complimenting the company, as they already know about themselves and are more interested in learning about how you align with their list of needs.

**The 3rd paragraph** is the closing, where you once again express your interest in the company and your excitement relating to the specific position. (example: I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you to discuss, in greater detail, areas where my skills and experience meet your needs.) It is important to state your plans to follow up in a timely manner, rather than "hoping to hear from you soon". Let them know that you intend to be proactive in your job search, which is often very appealing to a potential employer. Make sure you provide a reliable mechanism to contact you.

### Cover Letter DON'Ts

To ensure that your cover letters are well-written, avoid the following mistakes:

Don't exceed one page (unless you have extensive experience or publications).

Don't have grammatical, punctuation, or spelling errors.

Don't simply repeat what is in the resume.

Don't use pre-printed form letters rather than individually typed letters.

Don't use a different paper than your resume paper.

Don't have lengthy paragraphs. Avoid run-on sentences.

Don't forget to sign the letter, which would indicate a lack of attention to detail.

Don't use overly informal language, as this is your first chance to make a "business" impression. Avoid using Aggie centric phrasing, such as "Howdy" or "Gig 'em."

Don't include inappropriate information (is your e-mail address professional) and do not omit critical data.

### Cover Letter Checklist

Before sending a cover letter, check the following list

Is the letter original and specific to the position?

Have you addressed the letter to the right person, including appropriate gender and correct name spelling?

Will the letter capture the reader's attention?

Have you specified what you want to do for the company in order to meet its particular needs?  
If you are responding to a job posting or advertisement does the letter include reference numbers or titles?  
Have you included personal accomplishments without appearing arrogant?  
Is the language concise, the format attractive, neat, and organized?  
Have you used active rather than passive verbs?  
Did you indicate when you would contact them?  
Did you sign your cover letter?

## **8). Secure Formal Job Interviews**

The strategy we propose is designed to help you respond to posted job listings and to develop your network to connect with “hidden “ opportunities as they arise within organizations where you are building and maintaining connections. Windows of opportunity can open and close rapidly, so be ready to respond when necessary. Remember that you are working within their timing and schedules. You want to be viewed as responsive, but not desperate. Respond promptly and pay attention to details during correspondence with the decision makers and their team members.

## **9) Preparation for the Formal Interview and Follow-up. You Must Convince Them How Well You Match Their Needs and That You Want THAT Job, Not a Job.**

The interview is a crucial component of your job search process. You need to determine who has the hiring authority, but make sure that you are friendly and respectful to every individual you come into contact with right down to the receptionist and the janitor. It is reasonable to expect that team members will be asked to provide feedback as part of the selection process. Help each of them see that you will be a great addition to the team.

Think of the interview process as a competition. The winner in many cases is the person that survives a process of elimination from a pool of candidates, rather than the person that distinguishes themselves as a perfect candidate. Attention to detail and a polished performance will be expected. Hiring managers are looking for the person that confirms that they are the closest match the organization’s needs and culture; who will work within price range the organization is willing to pay.

If you are a recent graduate interviewing for your first job, you should follow the guidelines the Career Center uses to prepare current students seeking entry-level jobs. More seasoned candidates will be expected to apply their work history and experiences to demonstrate their alignment with the organization’s needs. Be prepared to answer questions pertaining to your previous jobs as well as any gaps in employment or unusual circumstances. Time that you spend reviewing the targeted resume that you submitted for that position will be well rewarded when you are able to detail your strengths, skills and experience during the interview.

### **The Art of Packaging Your Interview**

Preparation for an interview requires research and practice to effectively present your alignment with the hiring managers shopping list. It requires attention to detail regarding your dress, posture, and demeanor. But there is also an art to the interview which is built around communications skills. It starts with engaged listening and is carried through your ability to keep a conversation relevant and on topic.

No doubt your objective is to showcase and demonstrate “Product You”, but take great care that you hear, understand, and respond to the actual questions asked by your next manager and team members, rather than answering questions you thought they would like you to answer. The art continues in the ability to guide an interview conversation to assure that you cover each of your discussion points to demonstrate your unique

alignment with their shopping list. Make sure you write down the 2-4 key messages that you want to deliver during the interview to help prompt you as an interview progresses.

The “Mock Interview” on-line resource can help you review your response to tough question, observe and adjust your presentation style and body language. Practice answering sample interview questions as soon as possible so that you can effectively communicate those skills, accomplishments, and experience that best serve their needs. Help the interviewer not only hear, but see that you are the best candidate to meet their needs. Use it!!

The portfolio you carry into the interview should contain 8-10 pages of your printed research documents, marked-up so they can see your preparation research. Use that research to prepare 8-10 targeted questions related to areas of interest to refer to when they ask if you have questions. It may be hard to remember some questions in the excitement of the moment so you will be able to calmly refer to them in your notes. It may be surprising to learn how many interviewers will read your questions before you get the chance to ask them. If you are a writer, graphics specialist, or developer, be prepared to leave samples of your work.

### **Invest Time to Understand the Job to be Performed.**

Know your customer’s needs. Valuable resources for researching employers include informational interviews, web research, and SEC Form 10-Ks. The Career Center web links, employer presentations, career fairs, as well as business, trade and government publications also serve as resources.

The “Find an Aggie” directory on Aggienetwork.com and the contact search tools in CareerShift and HireAggies are great resources to find Former Students and other contacts who are working in the industry or even the company that you can connect with to secure an informational interview. These conversations provide great insights to the experience you could have in the job. These conversations can also provide insights into the hiring process, right down to the types of questions asked during the interview.

### **10). The Interview and Follow-up**

Prepare your portfolio. Carry an attractive portfolio (cordovan, black, or brown leather) with extra copies of your resume and references. Don’t forget the research notes and written questions that you will refer to later in the interview.

Make a good first impression. Arrive at the interview early, allowing plenty of time for parking, walking, and inclement weather. Stop at a restroom and check your appearance. Dress professionally, smile, make eye contact, and shake hands firmly.

Follow the interviewer’s lead. Take a seat when and where he or she asks you to sit. Sit comfortably but attentively, making sure not to slouch or appear too relaxed. Never place your materials on the employer’s desk without asking permission first.

Many interviewers are most influenced in their decisions within the first few minutes of the interview. Invest time before the interview to know how you are going to answer the “Tell me a little about yourself” question. That answer will likely drive their first impression of you. Rather than providing your life story, introduce yourself by tell a short story about what you have done, that aligns with the job, where you made a positive impact for an organization.

Memorize the key points you plan to deliver and budget the appropriate time to communicate each point. Avoid rambling or sharing negative stories. You want to help the interviewer recognize any added value you can deliver for the team while avoiding costly misstatements or unnecessarily exposing any weaknesses or points of concern.

Wait for your cues. Avoid discussing salary or benefits until it appears that an offer will be made, unless the interviewer initiates the discussion. Do not provide a salary expectation until you've researched the rate for someone with your qualifications. It is to your advantage to be able to discuss a salary range based on facts identified during your research. Maintain enthusiasm throughout the interview, prepare a recap of key messages that you want to deliver, and exit with courtesy and confidence.

As you get toward the end of the conversation, if you have decided that you want to work for the organization, tell them that you want the job and that you want to be part of their team. Savvy managers expect you to help close the sale. Your excitement and energy for the job sells and it can be contagious.

### **Types of Interview Formats**

Learn to recognize the different formats used by potential employers to help you manage your presentation and budget your time. Each requires specific preparation on your part. Below are listed several common interview formats.

### **Behavioral Interviewing**

The behavioral interview is based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to determine and evaluate past behavior. This type of interview takes special preparation and skill to perform well. These employers identify a profile of behaviors of interest to the organization. Some examples of desired behaviors include:

Customer service	Stress tolerance	Planning	Initiative
Organization	Problem solving	Leadership	Creativity
Flexibility	Motivation	Teamwork	Technical knowledge

The interviewer typically asks open-ended questions designed to stimulate recollection of a situation to explore as to how you have behaved in that situation. For example: Tell me about a time you...

- Balanced/prioritized several tasks within a short period of time.
- Dealt with an unproductive or uncooperative colleague.
- Found better ways to perform a task. How did you handle the situation.

This interview format is seeking an answer that provides an overview of the situation, the candidate's role, other persons that were involved, key events and the outcome. It tests your ability to quickly summarize and communicate a situation. The "STAR" Technique can provide an effective model by which you can organize and deliver your response to the question. Organize your response along these points:

S - Describe the situation in which you were involved.

T - Describe the task to be performed.

A - What was your approach to the problem?

R - What were the results of your actions?

The interviewer documents your responses and compares actual behaviors in the situation to the desired behaviors they are seeking. Make sure the answers you provide are honest, concise, and reflect positively on you. If the event did not yield the desired positive outcome, then focus on what you learned from the experience, how you turned the experience to a positive, and how you will apply it going forward.

Practice answering behavioral interview questions. They provide an exceptional opportunity to demonstrate how your experience aligns with their needs. These questions also provide an opportunity to demonstrate your communication skills.

### **Traditional Interview**

This is the most common type of interview. It is usually conducted as a one-to-one conversation. These interviews are built upon a series of questions that often work from a script with some follow-up or clarifying questions. In some cases the interviewer is working without a list of questions. In those cases it is critical that you help keep your responses focused on their identified needs and that you budget time to assure that you cover your talking points and prepared questions. The best preparation for this interview format is to research the employer and the industry prior to the interview and practice, practice, practice with sample questions.

### **Sequential Interview**

This is a variation of the traditional interviewing technique that involves a series of steps with several interviewers in a pre-planned sequence. Participants are typically drawn from one of two formats. In one format you will meet first with your future manager followed by meetings with peers, often from aligned departments within the organization. In this scenario they may be looking for your fit within their organization. In the second format you will meet with your future manager followed with a sequence of meetings with senior managers within the organization's chain of command. Usually, each interviewer will defer the final hiring decision to the direct supervisor. In either scenario, you should treat each person you meet as if he/she were a key player in the decision-making process. If you make a negative impression on anyone, it will probably be reported in their post-interview evaluation process. Participants often compare notes looking for consistency in answers and provide their unique perceptions as to how you align with the needs in their respective departments or along their chain of command.

### **Group/Panel Interview**

Panel interviews are becoming more common as organizations encourage more teamwork and group decision-making. This type of interview typically occurs at the employer's location. Focus upon one question at a time. Key attention toward the person leading the discussion, but stay attentive and respectful to each member of the group by engaging all of the panelists in the conversation. You may be asked more than one question at a time. Select one question at a time and provide your response. If the committee continues to challenge you with multiple questions at one time, then recognize it as a stress interview technique and focus upon one question at a time answering questions from everyone at the table.

### **Technical Interview**

Many technology companies utilize the technical interview in their selection of new employees. Candidates are asked industry-related questions and are often asked to demonstrate various techniques.

### **Sample Behavioral Interview Questions:**

- Describe the best/worst team of which you have been a member.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you sold someone on an idea or concept.
- Tell me about a time when you were creative in solving a problem.
- Describe a time when you helped co-workers who dislike each other to work together.
- Tell me about a time when you made a bad decision. What did you learn? What would you do differently? (They are not seeking faults as much as what you did to correct or improve the situation.)

### **Sample Traditional Interview Questions:**

- Tell me a little about yourself.
- Why did you select your career path?
- What would you like to be doing five years from now?

- What has been your greatest accomplishment so far?
- Describe your greatest strengths and weaknesses.
- Would you rather be in charge of a project or work as part of a team?
- What have you learned from the experience you have held?

**Sample Stress Interview Questions:**

- What kind of people do you find it difficult to work with?
- What are some of the things you find challenging to do?
- How would you evaluate me as an interviewer?
- What interests you least about this job?
- How do you handle rejection?
- What is the worst thing you have heard about our company?
- See this pen I'm holding? Sell it to me.

**Sample Case Interview Questions:**

- A chain of grocery stores currently receive its stock on a decentralized basis. Each store deals independently with its suppliers. The president of the chain is wondering whether the firm can benefit from a centralized warehouse. What are the key considerations in making this decision?
- A magazine publisher is trying to decide how many magazines she should deliver to each individual distribution outlet in order to maximize profits. She has extensive historical sales volume data for each of the outlets. How should she determine delivery quantities?

**Close the Sale**

Recall that the interview is a sales presentation where you are selling a product; that is, your skills, knowledge, experience, and energy. Make sure you have covered the key talking points that you wrote down during your preparations. You do not want to expend the effort to present yourself as a viable candidate and then fail to get closure. For a screening interview, you want to get a commitment from the interviewer as to what action will take place next and when. If the interviewer does not provide details as to whom will contact you and when, you should ask before leaving the interview.

If you have a strong interest in the employer and the opportunities presented, make this clear in your closing remarks. Tell them you want the job.

You should request a business card as the conversation is wrapping up and ask if you can call or e-mail the interviewer with any additional questions or follow-up on the status of your application.

Take time during your departure to sit down in the lobby, collect your thought, and make detailed notes of your conversation(s). Your recollection of the discussions and the information covered is freshest at that moment and you will forget a significant percentage of the conversation within 30 minutes. Perhaps even more important, people passing through that lobby will take notice of your thoroughness, discipline, and demonstrated attention to detail.

The business cards you secure during each interview will provide you the correct spelling of the interviewer's name, title, and his/her mailing address. Send a thank-you card or business letter to them that evening before you go to bed. Thank them for their time and make sure that you reference something during the interview that excited you or that presented an opportunity for their organization for which you would like to be a part.. A thank-you via e-mail is now commonly accepted, particularly considering the travel schedules of many key decision makers. That short business letter thanking them may well separate you from your competition.

**11). Deliver "Product You"**

## 12). Continually Invest in Your Network

Write down your short term and long term goal on a card and place it in your wallet, or enter it in your phone. Take it out and read it each Monday morning so that it helps you maintain focus and reminds you to stay on track during the week.

Anticipate needs, grow your customer base, and keep your job. Networking doesn't stop once you secure a job. The workplace is constantly changing. Many products and services become obsolete or are replaced by new offerings. You will learn that all jobs are temporary. You must constantly demonstrate value and help your organization grow to stay competitive and to secure your place as a needed member of their team.

It is a rare that an individual will earn recognition as distinguished in their field of work that is not an active member in one or more professional associations. Don't just join, become an active participant; better yet step forward and earn a leadership role. You can consult the *Encyclopedia of Associations* to identify organizations in your field.

Invest the time required to maintain your network to identify new trends and anticipate needs will help to position yourself at the right place at the right time to respond to opportunities. A key element to maintaining your network will involve identifying and forwarding articles of interest or leads to your contacts to help them serve and grow their organization. Most will return the favor.



Is a different city in your future? Connect with Aggies in that city for local perspectives and insights. The **Reconnect** link at Aggienetwork.com is a great resource for locating contacts with local **A&M Clubs**, within your own **Class Pages** or with **Constituent Groups** of interest.

## Key Web Resources on HireAggies

Select the **Hire Aggies** link on the **Careers** page and follow the navigation.

### Exploring Career Options

If you are new to the search process, or are considering a career change, please check out the **Career Explorer** resource in the shortcuts section on the right side of the **Hire Aggies** page. This site can help you discover potential entry points in a variety of industries that are looking for your unique talents

**Career Explorer** introduces you to leading industries, identifies popular careers, and allows you to search by key words, then provides job overviews to review and consider. You can narrow your search to focus on jobs experiencing faster rates of growth.

Each overview provides a job description, identifies required knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform that work, as well as basic education expectations.

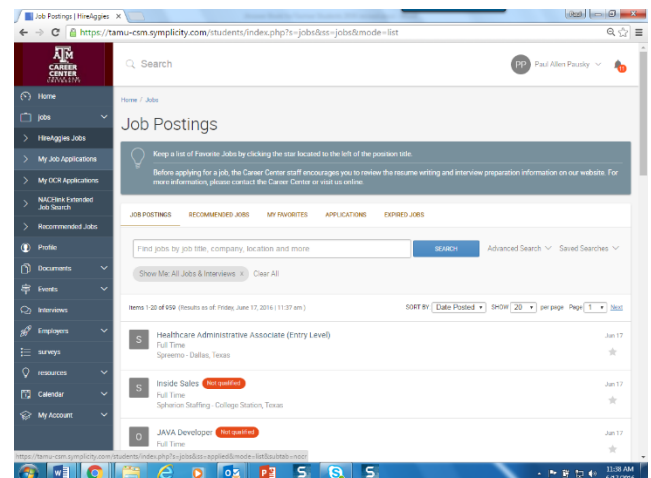
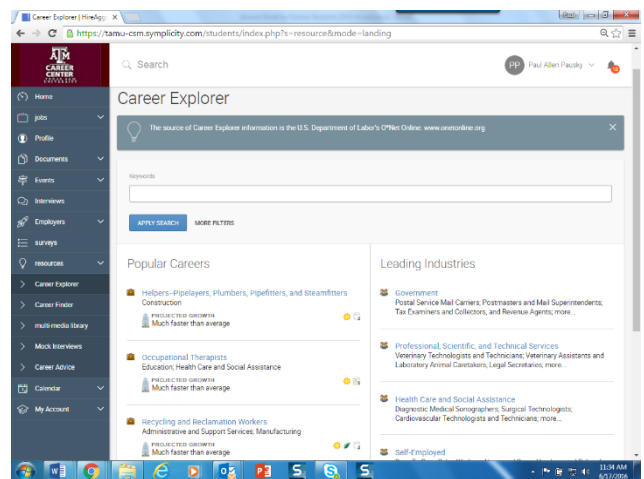
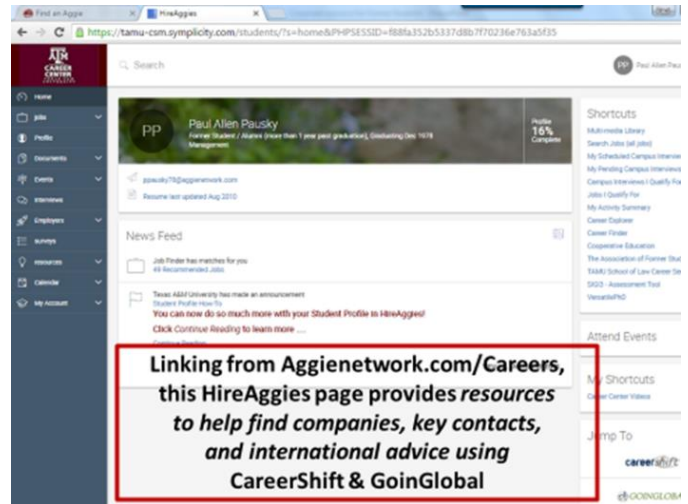
These job overviews help provide you with key words you can use when searching job listings to help you compare options and test your “fit” with different industries and entry points. They provide valuable insights you can use to adjust your resume based upon industry trends and expectations.

Another helpful resource is the **Occupational Outlook Handbook** at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

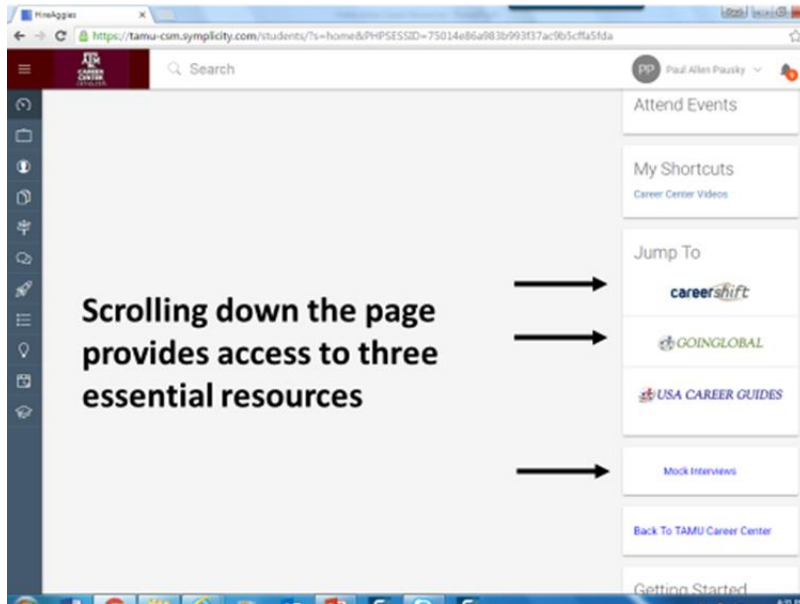
### **Are you looking for job listings?**

We routinely receive new job listings from Employers looking for experienced Former Students. These listings are accessible through the **Jobs** link on the top left side of the page. This link will open the Career Center’s Jobs Listings page.

As a Former Student you may qualify for many jobs outside of your major. Utilize the dropdown list at the top of the page to select the “All Job Listings” option



then search by keywords. You may not be aware of the variety of employment options in the marketplace or where you best “fit” in the job market. If the system indicates “You Do Not Qualify”, but you believe you meet or exceed the identified requirements; then bypass the system and apply directly with the employer utilizing contact information available throughout our resources



**CareerShift .... Perhaps our most powerful source for leads, job descriptions and contacts!**

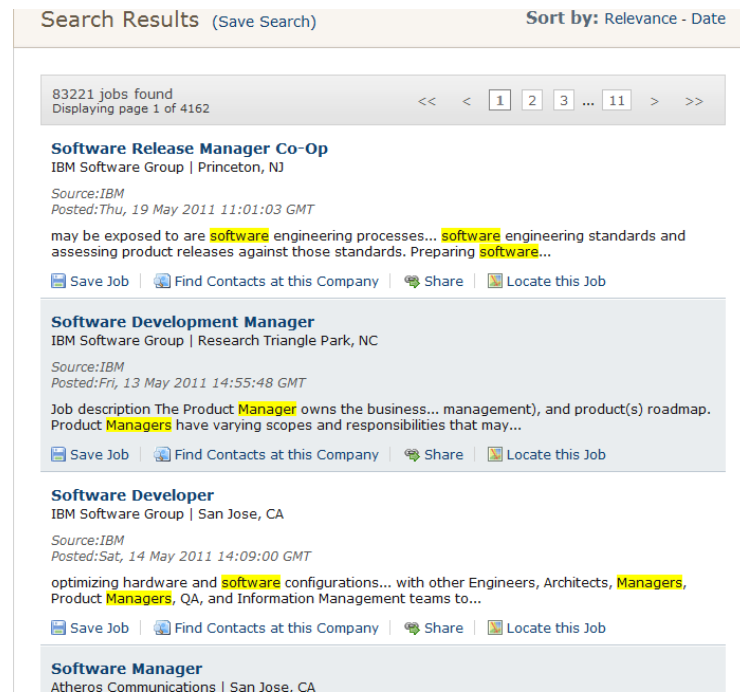
Our national job listing aggregator is called CareerShift and is located among the links on the left side of the HireAggies webpage.

The My Jobs tab on CareerShift provides three valuable sources of information. Each listing provides access to company-specific information with links to submit resumes.

In addition, the bottom of each listing provides access to contacts at the respective companies with background information on most of the identified employees.

The value of this information cannot be overstated! The secret of CareerShift is that it is much more powerful as a generator of leads and as a contact generator than as an accumulator of job listings. Even with 83,221 job listings identified in this sample search!

Location may be a priority in your job search. Use the **My Companies** search option to focus your search within a specific city or metro region and as narrowly as within 10 miles of a specified zip code! Research each in detail to identify areas of shared interest related to their specific operations. Look at web sites, annual reports, U.S. Securities Exchange Commission 10-K filings at ([www.SEC.gov](http://www.SEC.gov)), and job listings in **CareerShift** or similar sites. Have folders prepared for each company that you can open and refer to this key information during your conversations. It is a good practice to write down about 10 questions, specific to what you have learned during your research.



**Mock Interview** - While checking the **Hire Aggies** page, please make it a priority to access the **Mock Interview** site to help you practice interviewing and to improve your presentation skills to best present “Product You” during interviews. The site can record each practice interview and provide playback options.

Remember: You will perform in an interview like you practice.

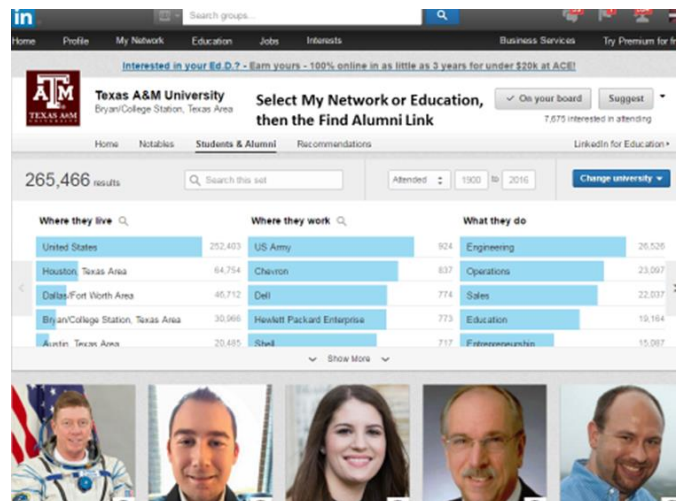


Our **GOINGLOBAL** package provides an amazing depth of resources for Former Students seeking international employment opportunities. Pick a country! Their **Job Search Resources** section provides regular updates on changing trends and insider information designed to introduce you to the nuances of employment in that country. The **Online Job Sites** link you directly to job board sites in each respective company. Other links identify **Employment Trends, Top Companies, Work Permits and Visa** information, and **Resume/CV Guidelines**. The **H1B** database identifies companies that sponsor international workers using work visas.

**GOINGLOBAL** also provides essential insights to help you make the most of your international experience. Their Daily Life section introduces you to the country. As if that is not enough assistance for your travel, the site provides tips on time management, smoking behavior, and what to do if you want to act like a local. The Office Protocol section discusses management styles, corporate hierarchy, and provides an overview of typical boss and subordinate relations. The site provides insights into standard business practices, tips for conducting a meeting or giving a presentation, as well as guidance for written correspondence and anticipated negotiation styles. The site provides additional resources for cultural information and provides insights for women in the workplace.



**LinkedIn.com** offers multiple opportunities to connect with industry insiders to identify and explore needs in the marketplace. Time invested in developing your professional profile will usually yield contacts as you grow your depth of experience. Utilize the Group Search option in the Search box to locate important information exchange groups. The Find Alumni section (under **My Network**) can help you find Aggies by location, company or type of work that have opted into LinkedIn.com because they want to network!





**To research publicly traded companies**

Go to SEC.gov  
Scroll down to the **Search Edgar** box on the lower right side of the page.  
Enter name of company in the search box  
When you locate the company page, select the Filing Type search box and enter **10-K**.  
Then follow links to the document to learn more about the company and help determine why they need you on their team. Section 1 from the Table of Contents should be very helpful.

Print the Business section of the 10-k . Write down 8-10 questions drawing from information you learn during your company research. Use this information to develop your company file as you prepare for your interviews.

The screenshot shows the SEC website's main content area. At the top left is a large image of a silver whistle with the SEC logo on it. Below this is the 'Whistleblower Information' section with a sub-header 'Submit a tip, learn about the program, or claim an award'. To the right is a 'Spotlight' section with a list of links: SEC Accomplishments, Cybersecurity, 2015 Agency Financial Report, FY 2017 Budget Request, SEC and the Military, Affinity Fraud, Equity Market Structure Advisory Committee, Investor Advisory Committee, Advisory Committee on Small and Emerging Companies, and Excess Capital Studies Act. Further right is the 'Requests for Public Comment' section with links for Incentive-based Compensation Arrangements, Business and Financial Disclosure Required by Regulation S-K, and Report on the Review of the Definition of 'Accredited Investor'. Below that is the 'Information For' section with links for Investors, Small Businesses, Brokers-Dealers, and Funds and Advisers. On the far right is the 'Latest News' section with several headlines and dates, such as 'Software Executive and Three Friends Charged With Insider Trading' and 'SEC Proposes Rules to Modernize Property Disclosures for Mining Registrants'. At the bottom right is a dark blue box with the text 'Search EDGAR Free Access to 21 Million Filings'.

We hope that this guide has reinforced your opinion of our ability to assist you with your search effort. After you have familiarized yourself with our new resources please contact the Former Student Career Services Team at FSCShelp@tamu.edu. The Career Center and The Association of Former Students are working together to provide some serious networking tools and lead-generating resources to help you connect.