



# On the Search

Not sure where to start your job search? The 8-Step Job Search Toolkit is a self-paced workbook full of strategies, advice, and resources created to help students and recent alumni prepare and execute their individualized job search plan.

By completing the Toolkit, you will gain new knowledge and skills covering a vast array of topics such as organizing your job search, mastering the world of making connections, improving your interview techniques, tailoring your resume, making the most of Handshake, staying motivated, coping with rejections, moving forward, and so much more.

We recommend that you complete each of the eight steps of the Toolkit in the order provided, spending approximately one week on each step. However, the time you spend on each step is up to you depending on where you are at in your job search process. As you complete the Toolkit, you will also notice space we left for you to jot down notes. We recommend that you take time to think through and write out notes for these prompts to enhance your experience using this workbook. Feel free to type notes onto the PDF or write notes on a separate sheet of paper.

**In addition to this guide, you can use our [ChatGPT Prompt Guide](#) to help you prepare for the application and interview process utilizing this AI tool. We welcome you to utilize it throughout any of the eight job search steps outlined in this toolkit, including resume writing, interviewing, researching employers, job searching, networking, and more.**

**Ready to get started?**

## **Need Extra Support?**

As you are completing the Toolkit, feel free to chat with Toppel coaches for support virtually through Zoom or in person at the Toppel Career Center.

**Zoom:** <https://tinyurl.com/toppel>, Monday - Friday, 10:00AM - 4:00 PM

**Email:** [Toppel@Miami.edu](mailto:Toppel@Miami.edu)



# The 8 Steps



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# STEP 1

## Organize Your Job Search

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Have you ever thought about using a job search tracking template to help make your job search adventures less overwhelming, more organized, and not as time-consuming? A job search tracking template can be a very helpful tool to utilize because it keeps all of your information in one place including job application links, important dates, and even potential or current connections with companies of interest. By the end of this section, you will have implemented your own tracking system to better organize your search.

### THE PLAN

1. Before placing information into a tracking template, it is helpful to brainstorm areas to begin your job search such as locations or industries/fields that you are interested in. These are good starting points to figure out the type of job you are searching for.
  - City/State- Where in the world would you like to work? Maybe you want to work back home or experience someplace new. Write down your top three locations you would want to consider:  
  
1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Type of job- What types of jobs have you considered applying to so far? Write down your top three job types of interest:  
  
1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Field/Industry- What fields/industries have you considered so far? Write down your top three fields/industries of interest:  
  
1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Companies- Are there any companies that you may want to work for? Write down your top three companies of interest:  
  
1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

- Skills- Are there skills you've excelled at that could benefit you in an industry you may have not considered? Write down three interdisciplinary skills that come to mind:

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

2. Take a look at the job search tracking template from the Muse to get familiar with it. It maps out how a typical job application process would go and even provides additional sections to input beneficial information. We have provided a few examples for you of the types of information you would want to enter into your template. This [article from the Muse](#) has additional details on how to best use the template.

- [My Job Search Tracker](#)

3. Enter the information for any jobs you have applied to so far into the job search tracking template. Even if you have already been rejected by a company or are still waiting to hear back, it can be helpful to place this information into the tracking template so you can look for possible patterns and find ways to improve. Stay consistent with inputting information throughout your job search regularly.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

[How to Keep your Job Search Organized | Life Hacker](#)

[How to Get and Stay Organized During Your Job Search | The Muse](#)

## STEP 2

# Tailor Your Resume For The Job You Want

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

You've found the jobs that resonate with you the most. Next, to ensure you make an impression and get an interview, you need your resume to stand out. To do so, you need to assess the job you're applying to and tailor your resume towards it. Taking this step will ensure any recruiter or Applicant Tracking System will review your resume and determine you are the perfect fit for the job. This section's tasks will be all about how to tailor your resume to increase your chances of landing an interview.


### THE PLAN


1. Review the jobs that you've placed on your tracking template so far by reading through their job descriptions. Take note of any skills, competencies, experiences, or other similarities between them, and also take note of things that make them different. Keep a list of any similarities you are finding between the job descriptions:

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2. Compare your list of the similarities you've found with your resume. Does your resume contain these critical keywords? To get to the interview stage, your resume should contain as many [keywords](#) from the job description you are applying to as possible.
  - o An easy way to see how well your resume would do is by utilizing resources such as Big Interview and Jobscan.
  - o [Big Interview Resume AI Tool](#): This tool gives you immediate feedback on your resume writing to help you improve your resume. You get guidance on readability, credibility, ATS fit, and more. Learn more about this AI tool here and how to submit your resume for review here. For free access, create a Big Interview account using your UM email address.
  - o [Jobscan](#): This tool allows you to copy and paste the text of both your resume and the job description you are applying to and will give you a score of up to 100% on how strong your resume is for that particular position. The higher the score, the more likely you will be called for an interview. [Jobscan](#) recommends that you aim for a 75-80% match rate. What is your initial score? \_\_\_\_\_
  - o If you are missing any critical keywords, you may be able to add them into your Experience section through your action verbs. Toppel's [resume guide](#) has a great list of action verbs to consider.

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- i. What about if you are missing skills because you are new to the field? In that case, another way to make your resume stand out is by adding in transferable skills. Transferable skills are skills that you have used in one type of role that could also be utilized in a different type of role. For example, leadership is a great transferable skill that can be used across industries. Check out [this article](#) to learn more about transferable skills and how to include them in your resume.
    - o Make sure you're being specific within your resume, and quantify when possible. If you managed 40 people or developed/implemented a new procedure that increased revenue by 50%, mention that so the recruiter can see something tangible.
    - o Once you have made your edits to your resume, enter it into [Jobscan](#) again and see how much of a difference there is in your score. What is your new score? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. Tailoring your resume to each job description can get confusing as you start to compile many versions of this document. That is why we recommend creating a [master resume](#) to keep all the experiences you've had in one place. Save this file as "Master Resume" so that you never lose it.
    - o This is to ensure that your resume is adaptable. You will be able to remove and add different experiences that may hold more value than another based on the job you're applying for.
  - 4. How do you feel about the accomplishment statements in your resume's Experience section? This is one of the hardest parts of the resume to write and one that people spend the most time on. Accomplishment statements should describe what you did, how you did it, and the results that you received when you were working at a specific job/leadership experience. Now that you've identified some great keywords to use, you can further improve your accomplishment statements.
    - o Some key rules to follow:
      - i. Start each accomplishment statement with an action verb.
      - ii. Make sure you have at least two bullet points per experience.
    - o The formula for your accomplishment statement is as follows: Action verb + What I did + Skills I used = Results I got.
      - i. Make sure to switch up the verbs used ( Prepare -> Developed, Composed, Assembled).

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5. Visit the Toppel Career Center for [drop-in coaching on Zoom](#) or in person to get your up-to-date resume reviewed and perfected before you submit your next application. Mention your major and the industry you are applying to so that we can match you with the right career coach for you.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

[Resumes | HireACane.com](#)

[Resume and Cover Letter Guide | HireACane.com](#) (For some examples or some overall help with writing accomplishment statements, see pages 3-4.)

[Resume Critiquing at the Toppel Career Center](#)



## STEP 3

# Conduct Employer And Industry Research

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

How can proper research help you in your job search? It can help you to better understand your desired industries and how to increase your chances of getting hired. It can help you learn the details about specific employers and how to be most successful during an interview. Ultimately, this extra preparation can make a difference in helping you to land a job by having greater insight on what to do next. This step's tasks involve learning about what type of research matters and conducting your own research for your job search.

### THE PLAN

1. Use your time wisely. We want you to start this section by [reading an article](#) on the most important areas (values, benefits, leadership, etc.) to research when applying for a job.
2. Identify potential job titles and employers to search for. One of the biggest challenges in job searching is that positions with similar duties may be called different names depending on the industry or company. For example, consider entry-level roles in marketing. They could be called Marketing Coordinator, Brand Partnership Coordinator, Marketing Specialist, just to name a few. Learning the various job titles that exist can help you to be more strategic in your search. Utilize [Vault](#) to find alternative job titles across any industry. We recommend completing the Identifying Potential Employers activity on [pages 110-111 of the Picture Your Career workbook](#) to begin researching possible job titles and employers that fit your goals.


- What are 2 possible job titles that you can search for?

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- What are 5 companies you identified that hire for these job titles?

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**Did you notice any skills you're missing or would like to build while identifying possible job titles and employers?** Check out [virtual company projects](#) on [Forge](#) created by companies across the globe and/or take advantage of thousands of [LinkedIn Learning](#) video tutorials (free for students; cost associated for non-students) to build your skills.

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3. Conduct deeper employer research to help showcase to them how you fit. Now that you have generated a list of potential employers that match your interests, use your earlier lessons and choose one employer to gain greater insight. To conduct employer research, we recommend utilizing resources such as [Handshake](#), [Indeed](#), [Glassdoor](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Vault](#) and company websites. Choose one company, and answer the following questions.

Name of company: \_\_\_\_\_

- What does the company do?

\_\_\_\_\_

- What are the company's core values?

\_\_\_\_\_

- What are some benefits the company offers to its employees?

\_\_\_\_\_

- What is an interesting, recent piece of news about the company?


\_\_\_\_\_

- Now, it is time for you to determine how you fit with the company. What is one thing you learned in your research about the company that resonates or aligns with you such as your values, interests, goals, etc.?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Learn your salary range so that you are prepared when this topic comes up during an interview. Do you know what the average salaries are for new graduates from the University of Miami? Did you know you have this information [right at your fingertips](#)? Although your anticipated salary will vary by industry and location, you need to have an understanding of what you will make in your first role. Why should you know this? Many employers will ask you during the application or interview process what you expect to make, and the number you say can't be too low that you aren't getting what you deserve or too high that you are immediately eliminated from the candidate pool.



Three resources we recommend to research a salary are the [Job Market Data tool](#), Salary.com and Glassdoor.com. First, let's research the annual earnings for your ideal occupation using the Job Market Data tool, search for the title of the job you're looking to pursue and scroll down to annual earnings. Next, let's research a salary for an entry-level role you might apply for. Go to [Salary.com](#) and enter a potential job title and location. Then, choose your education level and years of experience to see what you could earn. Next, go to [Glassdoor.com](#) to see what salaries real people have made in this position. This can help you to come up with a \$5,000 - \$10,000 range for what you can expect to earn. If you have never negotiated a salary or a job offer before, we recommend going through Big Interview's [Negotiating Your Job Offer & Salary](#) mini video lessons as a great place to start (log in for access).

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

[Vault](#)- In-depth intelligence on what it's really like to work in an industry, company, or profession--and how to position yourself.

[Negotiating Salary Playbook from Big Interview](#)

## STEP 4


# Make The Most Of Handshake

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Handshake is UM's main job and internship board for students and alumni. It is used by over 900,000 employers, including all Fortune 500 companies. Thousands of internship and job opportunities are posted on Handshake daily. Throughout this step, you will learn to build your profile and upload your resume for an online critique, apply for jobs and internships across different industries, research thousands of companies, and register for industry events, career fairs, and info sessions.

### THE PLAN

1. **Getting started.** To get started with Handshake, if you haven't done so already, [create your account](#) with your UM login. If you're unfamiliar with Handshake or would like to get more information on what Handshake is and what it provides, check out these [Handshake tips](#).
  - o **Building your profile.** After creating/activating your account, click your profile (the circle in the top right corner) to access your student dashboard. On your profile, you will notice your graduation year, class, school, major, and GPA already filled out for you. Your next steps are to fill out the My Journey, Work & Experience, Organizations & Extracurriculars, Projects, Interests (in terms of job searching), and Skills sections. If you have a resume, you can [build your profile from your resume](#) by uploading your resume to Handshake as a PDF file.
  - o **Uploading your resume.** Within Handshake, you can [upload your resume](#) along with other documents such as cover letters and transcripts. Once uploaded to Handshake you can build your profile from it. You can upload as many resumes as you would like. The first resume you upload will be critiqued by the Toppel Career Center and then approved. This process can take 3-5 business days. Please note you have access to [featuring a document on your profile and adjusting document visibility](#).
  - o **Adjusting your profile and setting up privacy settings.** Make sure you double-check your profile content and adjust as you see fit. Once you've completed and are comfortable with your profile, you can [change your privacy settings](#) for your profile so that employers, as well as other students and alumni in Handshake, can view it. We HIGHLY recommend making your profile public, because employers can and do message students regarding opportunities that match students based on their profiles

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2. **Navigating Your Job Search.** Now that you've completed your profile and have an idea of what you're looking for in a job, here are some [tips and tricks](#) within the job section of Handshake that will filter jobs based upon your interests.
- **Using Filters.** To the right of the search bar, you will see filters such as location selections, and types of jobs like "Full-time", "Internship", etc. We recommend selecting "All Filters" here so you can completely control your search.
  - **If you are an International Student:** You can also filter jobs that accept U.S. work authorizations such as CPT and OPT. Also, we recommend you utilize [Interstride](#), a career exploration and job-search platform for international students.
  - When utilizing the search bar, it is a good practice to have a variety of keywords in mind. It can make searching a lot easier and help you to find a wider variety of opportunities.
  - If you find a job you are interested in, you can choose to save that job by clicking the ribbon next to the job title. You can view your saved jobs quickly on the saved jobs tab to apply later.
  - A great addition to saving jobs is having the ability to create job alerts which you can view [here](#). Job alerts are extremely helpful because you will be notified any time a new job is posted that meets your search criteria.
3. Access the Handshake database of 900K+ employers including all the Fortune 500 companies. Many times, we focus on the companies we know about which may lead us to miss opportunities with amazing organizations. A proactive approach to your job search involves identifying and following employers of interest to help us advance the job search process. Here are a few things you should know about the employer database tool:
- [Discover Employers](#). On your Handshake homepage, click on the Employers icon under the "What can we help you find today?" banner to access the employer database tool.
  - [Apply Filters](#). Think about your must-haves or non-negotiables from earlier sections.

Would you like to work in a specific geographical location?


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At a small company or large company?

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In a specific industry?

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- Play around with the filters to discover employers across a multitude of industries and locations.
- Browse the List of Potential Employers. Click on an employer name to view more information about the employer, such as an overview of the company, company reviews written by other students/alumni, interview experiences shared by other students/alumni, a network of other students/alumni across the Handshake platform who have worked for the company, active job listings, contact information, and public staff listings.
  - See Any Interesting Employers? Follow Them. Following an employer in Handshake enables notifications to be sent to you when key activities occur for that employer: a new job is posted, the employer is hosting an event, or the employer is attending a career fair at the U.
4. Find and register for career events and fairs throughout the academic year.
- Discover Events. On your Handshake homepage, click on the Events icon under the “What can we help you find today?” banner to access the event listing.
  - Apply Filters. Are you looking for a career fair, workshop, networking session, speaker/panel, info session, or virtual session? Click on “All Filters” to apply your desired filters.
  - Use Keywords. Are you looking for an event related to your major, career interests, topic of interest, or employer of interest? Use the search bar to enter your desired keywords.
  - Find “On-Campus” Interviews. Companies and graduate school programs often offer on-campus/virtual interview sessions. To find these sessions, under the Events tab, click on the “On-Campus Interviews” option next to the “Event Search” option.
5. Take advantage of the [Handshake Coco AI-powered tool](#), which provides free and personalized career guidance through a chatbot to help you with goal-setting, planning, career research, industry information, interview prep, and much more!

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

[Handshake Best Practices for Job Searches](#)

[Handshake Profile Challenge](#)

[Handshake Quick Training Videos](#)

[Handshake Student Blog](#)

## STEP 5

# Master The World Of Making Connections

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Throughout college, you may have heard that 80% of jobs are never posted or that a referral generates 80% more results than a cold call. These numbers are referring to the [hidden job market](#).

Throughout this section, we will review strategies to assess your professional presence, develop a unique elevator speech (self-introduction), identify and expand connections within your network, connect with professionals on Cane2Cane and LinkedIn, and build a strong LinkedIn profile.

### THE PLAN

1. Assess your professional presence. Read the statements below and mark the true statements:
  - I feel confident answering, "Tell me about yourself," verbally and in writing.
  - I have/use an email address that is acceptable for job searching and networking.
  - I check and reply to my emails/messages regularly.
  - I have a professional and positive social media presence.
  - I take advantage of networking events/platforms to make strategic connections.
  - I have a LinkedIn profile with a customized URL, headline, and summary.
  - I joined Cane2Cane to connect with potential mentors at the U and the community.
  - I have a professional headshot of myself for LinkedIn, Zoom, Cane2Cane, etc.

How many of the 8 statements above did you mark or are true to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
Reflecting on the statements you did not mark above, write down 1-2 actions you plan on taking to improve your networking presence.

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

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

2. Practice self-exploration activities to uncover and identify your strengths, values, passions, and goals. Complete the following activities in the order listed:

- “Who Am I?” (refer to pages 48-49 in the [Picture Your Career Workbook](#)). In this activity, you will list words that describe you, as a whole person. (Challenge/Extra Credit: Contact Toppel to purchase a \$10 code to take the [StrengthsQuest assessment](#). This assessment will help you identify your top five natural talents and how you can develop those talents into strengths.)
- “What is Important to Me?” Your values are like your personal compass—they provide direction for your choices and behaviors and may influence the careers you may want to consider. Below is a list of values people may typically attempt to satisfy in their work lives. Circle or highlight your top five (or ten) values. Feel free to create your own list.

Advancement	Fast Pace	Recognition
Adventure	Fun	Respect/Achievement
Aesthetics	Growth	Security
Authenticity	Independence/ Autonomy	Service/Help Society
Balance	Influence	Status
Challenges	Job Satisfaction	Teamwork
Competition	Leadership	Time Freedom/ Flexibility
Creativity	Mentors/Role Models	Variety
Decision-making	Mobility	Wealth

- “What’s in Your Toolbox?” (refer to pages 46-47 in the [Picture Your Career Workbook](#)). In this activity, you will create a list of your skills, knowledge, interests, personal traits, and experiences.
- “What are Your True Passions?” Think about what fuels you or what makes you come alive. This can be anything and can be more than one thing. Think about topics and activities that you feel enthusiastic or excited about. Write a few of those things down:

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- What is your goal?” or “What’s Next?” Create a list of career paths and post-grad options you have considered. (Challenge/Extra Credit: Think deeper as to why these options are appealing to you)

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3. Develop a professional introduction, AKA your elevator speech/elevator pitch that engages your listeners and makes them want to hear more about you. Being prepared to answer the question, “[please tell me about yourself](#),” in a networking setting or on an online profile (i.e., LinkedIn, Handshake, Cane2Cane, online websites/portfolios, etc.) is one of the first steps to mastering the world of networking. However, answering this question is not as easy as it sounds. But, guess what? The self-exploration activities prepared you for this! Here is a simple formula:
  - a. Who are you? (Name, major, career path, and current job if applicable).
  - b. What do you do/What can you do well? (Key skills and experiences)
  - c. What is your goal? (Internship, job, volunteer, or job shadowing)

Use the space below to craft a version of your elevator speech. Keep it brief (30-60 seconds)!

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4. Map your existing and potential connections. You already know more people than you think. Complete “The Network Target” activity on pages 126-127 in the [Picture My Career Workbook](#).
5. Join the [Cane2Cane Career & Mentorship Network](#) to access a community of mentors.
  - a. Build your Cane2Cane profile.

- b. Click on the “Connect” tab and select “Community” to find professionals and mentors across 60+ industries. Use the filters at the top (Location, Industry Expertise, More Filters – Help Topics, Activities, Race/Ethnicity, Campus Activities, and Special Groups) to search for individuals.
  - c. Click on the profiles to view the individual’s education and career journeys. If interested in connecting with an individual, click on Chat Now or Message (depending on which page you are viewing). Don’t know how to start the conversation? No worries! We give you access to a few templates as soon as you click on connect. Check out these [practical suggestions](#) on reaching out to potential mentors.
6. Create a LinkedIn account to showcase your journey and expand your network.
- a. Use a LinkedIn [Checklist](#) to build your profile.
  - b. [Customize your public profile URL.](#)
  - c. Check out the [LinkedIn alumni tool](#) to access a database of University of Miami student and alumni profiles. Learn [how to use the Alumni Tool.](#)
  - d. Connect with alumni, industry professionals, and individuals you have met professionally. Don’t forget to [personalize your connection requests!](#)
7. Set a goal. How many connections would you like to make weekly? \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_
8. Review the strategies listed below:
- a. Build your network. Build it before you need it.
  - b. Don’t hesitate, initiate! Always ask. The worst anyone can say is no.
  - c. Connect. Focus on connecting with a person and not a title.
  - d. Keep track of your connections. Take names, track, and categorize them.
  - e. Be memorable. Define your [personal brand](#) and embody it.
  - f. Keep the conversation going: After connecting with someone, make sure you [follow up.](#)

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

[How to Tell if You Have a Good Personal Brand | The Muse](#)

[LinkedIn Resources and Checklists \(Profiles, Job Searching, Networking\)](#)

## STEP 6

# Improve Your Interview Techniques and Build Your Confidence with Big Interview

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Congratulations! You've made it to the interview stage. To get to this point, the company has already decided that you meet their basic criteria for the position but wants to learn more about your knowledge, skills, and abilities. Your company research will help you in showcasing your fit, but you also need to think about how you are going to sell YOU. Although you may have interviewed before for internships and part-time roles, you can never get enough practice with your interviewing skills. By the time your interview ends, you want the hiring manager to know that you are the right candidate for the position. This section's tasks will help you to practice a few key interview questions that are common across industries and provide you with real feedback from Toppel coaches on how you did.

### THE PLAN

1. Learn about the best method for answering interview questions, the STAR method. Have you ever been asked an interview question that starts with "So, tell me about a time that..." This sounds like a behavioral-based interview question where you recall the behaviors you have displayed in past scenarios. This is a favorite type of interview question that interviewers love to ask, so it is important to prepare yourself for them. Watch this [brief video](#) from our partners at [Big Interview](#) to learn how to navigate these questions effectively.
2. Write out a STAR story that you can utilize during an interview.

### STAR Story #1

What is the topic of this story about? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the situation. Set the scene, and give any important contextual details.

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Highlight the task. What was the task you needed to accomplish or the challenge you needed to face? \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe your actions. What approach did you take? Focus on your specific actions rather than what the group did, when possible. Mention specific knowledge, skills, and abilities that were utilized. \_\_\_\_\_

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End with the results. How does the story end? Were any of the results tangible or quantifiable? Focus on positive endings or lessons learned. \_\_\_\_\_

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What competencies does this story demonstrate? Hint: For what topics could this story be used for?

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- Now that you have generated the content of your answer, practice saying it aloud. Are there any important details that you missed? Consider sharing it with a friend to get their feedback.
- 3. Practice your interviewing skills utilizing a pre-recorded interview we created on Big Interview. The questions you will be asked are common questions you may face during an upcoming interview in any industry. You will get feedback on your interview answers from Toppel staff shortly after submitting them. [Click this link](#) to create your Big Interview account using your UM email. Once logged in, click on Assignments and enter this code: b87109. Explore additional interview prep resources offered by Toppel [here](#).



## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Articles:

[Your Ultimate Guide to Answering the Most Common Interview Questions | The Muse](#)

[The STAR Method: The Secret to Acing Your Next Job Interview | The Muse](#)

[50+ Questions to Ask in an Interview | The Muse](#)

Video Lessons:

[Big Interview New Graduate Interview Curriculum](#)

## STEP 7

# Stay Motivated, Cope with Rejections, and Move Forward

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

So, you didn't get the job you wanted or hear back regarding the application you spent hours on completing. Regardless of how we manage disappointments, rejections hurt and may cause us to lose confidence, motivation, and focus. To help us move on from rejections or unknowns, it is important to approach the process with a growth mindset.

Throughout this section, we will focus on implementing constructive and productive strategies to stay motivated, manage rejections, and move forward, while building resilience. Before we get started, let's keep in mind that many factors come into play when choosing applicants to interview or selecting the final candidate for a role. Therefore, we will focus on what is in our control. Let's get started!

### THE PLAN

1. Put a twist on the stories you tell yourself. Let's convert negative experiences to good ones.
  - o Complete the "Finding the Hidden Treasures" exercise on pages 36-37 of the [Picture Your Career Workbook](#).
2. Give yourself permission to mourn a job you did not get and then, keep going!
  - o The first step in moving forward is accepting what happened. Do not allow yourself to live in denial or dwell on this rejection. Write down the status of your application or candidacy for that one job you really wanted? \_\_\_\_\_
  - o Do not blame yourself or doubt your value as a job candidate. Remember: Who got that degree? \_\_\_\_\_ (Hint: YOU!) Who found the motivation to apply for that job? \_\_\_\_\_! Who took the initiative to read this resource? \_\_\_\_\_! Who will keep going? \_\_\_\_\_!
  - o We all deal with rejections differently. Think about what you need to help you get over this rejection. Write down an activity you will complete to help you with this process (e.g., talk to a friend, go for a walk, journal, do something fun, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Create a list of "bragging rights"
  - o Write down your top 3 skills, strengths, or talents:
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
    3. \_\_\_\_\_

Having trouble with this question? Consider taking the Career Explorer or StrengthsQuest assessment. Click [here](#) for information about how to access these tools.

- Write down at least 3 personal and/or professional accomplishments. Remember, you made those accomplishments come into reality!

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

- Write down at least 3 contributions you have made in the past (as part of a team, project, company, or role). What action did you take? What were the results?

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

4. Reflect on the reasons why you were not selected for an interview or a job after an interview.

- Review the “[Top 10 Reasons You Did Not Get Selected for an Interview \(first section of the article\)](#)” to identify potential areas for improvement and reassess your job search strategies. Notes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Review the “[Top 10 Reasons You Did Not Get the Job After an Interview \(second section of the article\)](#)” to identify potential areas for improvement and reassess your interviewing techniques. Notes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Are there any skills listed in your saved job descriptions or mentioned in an interview that you would like to gain or strengthen?** Complete a virtual company project on [Forage](#) and/or lesson on [LinkedIn Learning](#) (Free for students; cost associated for non-students) to gain relevant knowledge and skills.

5. Develop manageable goals to create structure and avoid burnout.

- When submitting applications, remember to focus on quality over quantity. For example, your chances of hearing back may be higher if you dedicate 2-3 hours tailoring one application than if you were to submit various applications within the same timeframe. Pace yourself by setting a daily and/or weekly limit of hours you want to spend on your job search. Write down your goals: \_\_\_\_\_ hours/day \_\_\_\_\_ hours/week

- Plan to assess your job search strategy weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. Ask yourself:

What is working for me? \_\_\_\_\_  
What should I change? \_\_\_\_\_

- Check-in with yourself. Ask yourself: How am I doing (emotionally and/or physically)?

- Allow yourself time to recharge and refocus. Plan pre-determined free days where you take time off from your search. Which days will be your free days? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Seek advice, motivation, and feedback.

- [See a Toppel coach](#) to discuss your job search process and set actionable goals. Write down the date you plan on speaking with a Toppel Coach:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Ask your mentors for feedback on your application materials or interview answers. List 1-3 mentors you can ask for feedback:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Follow up with the recruiter, HR representative, or hiring manager to ask how you can improve your application, qualifications, or interview skills for the future.
- Step away from your resume, applications, and job search sites to look up your career role models. Go onto LinkedIn or other social media sites to search for professionals who have your dream jobs or who work at companies you are interested in. Write it down:  
Who did you look up? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
What did they do to get to where they are at? What stands out? Is there a theme?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Activities:

Take a few minutes to create a list of 5-10 things for which you are grateful.

Create a vision board. Refer to pages 32-34 in the [Picture My Career Workbook](#) for instructions on how to complete the “My Inspired Life Vision Board” activity.

Write down your thoughts and fears. Refer to pages 72-73 in the [Picture My Career Workbook](#) for instructions on how to complete the “Transforming Fear to Hope” activity.

### Articles:

[How to Move on When You Didn't Get the Job | The Muse](#)

[How to Keep Going When the Job Search is Getting You Down | The Muse](#)

[What to Do When You Hear Nothing Back from A Job You Really Want | LinkedIn](#)

[How to Stay Motivated in a Frustrating Job Hunt | The Muse](#)

[How to Handle Rejection | JobGet Blog](#)



## STEP 8

# Consider Alternative Options to “Traditional” Full-Time Roles

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Many recent grads spend several months to several years completing a variety of alternative options to starting a traditional, full-time position. Does this option make sense for you? Maybe you have a passion for a social issue unrelated to your studies, and you want to give back before starting a position in that field. Perhaps you are still unsure about what type of career you are looking for, and a short-term opportunity to gain extra insight and skills seems appealing. Maybe you want to push yourself out of your comfort zone and try something completely new and exciting. Alternative options can be found in a variety of industries and cover a range of topics. This section’s tasks will help you to learn more about what types of opportunities exist and which ones would best fit your needs and interests.

### THE PLAN

1. To start, we want to highlight some of the many alternative options that exist:

**Service/Volunteering:** There are paid and unpaid opportunities to address a variety of social and global issues including poverty, education disparities, and the environment. Many of these programs offer a salary or stipend for your work.

**Fellowships:** These opportunities focus on the professional development of the “fellow” and are sponsored by an organization that seeks to build leaders in the field. These are paid opportunities that usually last one to two years.

**Internships:** Internships are not only for students. These are a great choice for graduates who did not gain much experience in their industry during college and want to continue testing it out or gaining new skills. Internships can be both paid or unpaid. Search for [internships by major](#), micro-internships through [Parker Dewey](#), and more opportunities through our other job and internship search tools [here](#).

Answer these questions to consider if an alternative option is right for you.

- What might I hope to gain from doing an alternative option instead of a traditional, full-time position?

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- What possible options are available to me? List all options you are already familiar with.

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- What are my interests that I want to explore?

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- What skills do I want to gain?

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2. Research one alternative option that aligns with your career interests. Next, we want you to find one alternative option to explore. There are a few places you can go to look up these options such as [Handshake](#), our [Gap Year webpage](#), or our curated list of [gap year opportunities](#).

- What opportunity did you find?

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- What did you learn about this opportunity?

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- What skills or knowledge will you gain from completing this opportunity?

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- How will this opportunity meet your goals?

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- When is the application deadline for this opportunity?

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### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

[AmeriCorps](#): Serve with organizations making a difference in communities across America. Through our programs, we offer opportunities with different time commitments and requirements, meaning you can serve in whatever capacity works for your goals and lifestyle.

[Could you be a Professional Volunteer?](#)

[Benefits of a Gap Year After College or High School |The Balance](#)