

## Tips for Breaking Into a Tough Job Market

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*From: NACE (National Association of Colleges & Employers),  
the leading source of information about the employment of college graduates.*

Finding a job is work, and that's true even when the job market is warm and welcoming to job seekers. In a tough job market, conducting a job search can be all the more daunting.

- **Set realistic goals.** Even the best job market does not guarantee you a dream job. Have a firm understanding of your abilities and qualifications, and how they might match an employer's needs.
- **Research employer.** Identify employers seeking someone with your qualifications, thus helping you focus your search; helping you craft a cover letter and resume that addresses the employer's needs; and giving you an edge in the job interview.
- **Target resumes/cover letters to specific positions and people within an organization.** Customize your resume for each position. It should reflect your skills, experiences, and educational background as it relates to the position you are applying for. Address the cover letter to an individual in the company, preferably the hiring manager.
- **Get work by working.** Consider a job that is "less than perfect" with a company that really interests you. Internal candidates often have an edge on new job opportunities.
- **Take a volunteer position that uses talents and skills that would be used on the job.** You may meet people or people-who-know-people that know of job opportunities or who can be helpful in the job search. You'll also be in a position to know about job opportunities at your volunteer organization.
- **Expand your network.** In a tight job market, it is often who you know. More importantly, many jobs are never advertised, so networking can help you find leads to unadvertised opportunities.
- **Don't rely on want ads!** Or any single job search method, for that matter. In a tight market it is important to use all the resources available to you.
- **Contact your alma mater for assistance.** Career Centers and Job Placement Offices at many colleges assist alumni and offer services such as resume development and critiquing.
- **Most importantly:** Remember that no matter what the job market looks like, employers still need good people with the right skills.