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Job Search Tip of the Week, by Brian Krueger, author of "College Grad Job Hunter"

### **"Setting up Job Search Central"**

Job-hunting is serious business. To be successful, you will need to organize your job search like a business. Having a manila folder labeled "Jobs" buried under a pile of papers on your desk will not be adequate for long-term survival. You need to set up a control center for your job search, what we will refer to as "Job Search Central."

Job Search Central is a physical location where you can organize and plan your job search. For many, Job Search Central will be located at their desks in their residence hall room or apartment. But don't fight for space within an otherwise unorganized life. Job search requires the utmost in organization to be fully effective.

First, plan out and organize the physical area itself. You need to set up a workspace where you can quickly access your information, make phone calls, and plan out your search. Get a comfortable chair that you can truly do productive work in for long periods of time. Make sure you have plenty of desktop space in which to work. And keep the workspace clean and neat, not because Mom asked you to--do it because it will make you more efficient and productive. You might even consider placing some inspirational quotations or phrases on your wall to cheer you up and cheer you on when the going gets tough. Even the most effective job search will comprise a series of rejections before the ultimate acceptance. So make your work environment as positive and uplifting as possible.

Once your physical workspace is set up, it's time to get organized. Excessive layers of wood pulp strata on top of the desk, tend to suck in and obliterate any new information, so beware. The "piling filing system" only serves to perpetuate disorganization. Do not make your end-of-year move the only time you sort through the paper mountain. Worse yet, disorganization can unwittingly serve as an accomplice to procrastination, because you can have a perpetual feeling that you "can never seem to get organized." And your disorganization can serve as a convenient excuse for not beginning your job search, perpetually putting it off. Master the mountain now, even if it means filing all paperwork in a vertical file marked "General" until it is later sorted. Always keep your work area open and accessible.

As part of a successful job search, you will be gathering and utilizing enormous amounts of information. It is not enough to just write down notes on slips of paper and pile them onto an open corner of the desk. Believe me, there is nothing worse than losing the phone number of the company / school district that just called to set up an interview. Set up and label vertical files to organize information on each and every company / school district that you have an interest in. In this way, you can file away any information you gather until it is needed and necessary. You

may also want to set up files on job search topics that you run across. Your copy costs will likely go up dramatically this semester. But do not just accumulate and file away worthless information. Always ask: "Will this help me in the future?" Then file it--or throw it away.

One of the most basic elements of tracking information is a simple "While You Were Out" pad and pen tacked down next to the phone. If you live alone, it gives you an automatic location for capturing information. If you live with others, it can be a lifesaver (or job saver) for capturing that critical phone call. It is amazing how often phone numbers are lost or taken down incorrectly, especially in the college environment. When I hear, "Just a minute, I have to find something to write on," I know that my name, company name, and phone number are being written on a gum wrapper, an empty twelve-pack box, or maybe worse. Make sure you have the message pads available and ask anyone/everyone who answers your phone to use them. If you are personally taking down the information, it is best to take it down directly in a pocket organizer, such as a Day-Timer or Franklin Planner so that it is captured and logged for future reference. As a fallback, make sure that you have an organized way for yourself and others to capture the information. Remember "The Roommate Factor"--the probability of your roommate losing the phone number is directly proportional to the importance of the call. Have a central location--a bulletin board on the wall next to the phone--for posting the message.