National Aviation Consortium
Move Yourself Up– Education with a Flight Plan

Employer Engagement Manual
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National Aviation Consortium (NAC)

NAC is a collaborative partnership comprised of education, training, industry and employment leaders throughout five states. The consortium was chartered to develop industry-standard aviation manufacturing training curricula.

In the fall of 2012, NAC was awarded almost $15 million by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration as part of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant program. The grant is part of the Obama administration’s initiative to allocate $500 million nationally in support of job training through local employer partnerships.

NAC’s mission is to “position aviation employers as the central driving force in identification and standardization of required skills needed to close the skills gap being experienced by the aviation industry.”

To help accomplish the goals and outcomes of the grant, NAC has hired Retention Specialists at each of the college sites to serve as a point of contact, liaison and facilitator with responsibilities that include career and job readiness coaching for students and job development, consulting services and retention-related support services for the employers and colleges.

Members are creating industry-based career pathways in their communities

In an effective career pathway system, stakeholders from education, business, the public sector and the community work in collaboration to support and promote a system of interrelated training and educational programs, work experience, and support services, that connect students and workers through a series of skill-advancement and ultimately living-wage employment goals. The career pathway system offers benefits to multiple stakeholders:

- Colleges align their curriculum to standards set by nationally-recognized industry experts, becoming more responsive to the skill needs of business and employers
- Students transition into full-time employment
- Workers enhance their skills and advance in their career
- Businesses perform more competitively and profitably with a skilled workforce
- The community’s workforce and economic development is strengthened

Centered in aviation and manufacturing, the targeted occupations of NAC include:

- Sheet Metal workers
- Electrical Assemblers
- Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians
- Manufacturing Engineering Technologists
- Avionics Technicians
- Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging and System Assemblers
- Aerospace Engineering and Operation Technicians
What is Job Retention?

Career pathway systems have support mechanisms embedded into them to ensure success for the student, worker, and employer. Success can be measured by the job performance of the worker and their tenure with the company. Job retention is the positive result of a strong job match between worker and employer and the subsequent success and continued length of service of the employee at their company.

What is a Retention Specialist?

A Retention Specialist (RS) is a key member of the team that creates and maintains a career pathway for a student, helping them transition from college coursework into employment and career advancement.

A RS also serves as a consultant, job developer and recruitment specialist for employers looking for skilled workers.

As the relationships between the college and employers develop, the RS becomes the point of contact and expert in identifying, analyzing and addressing the skill gaps and retention barriers that exist in the aviation field and its associated business sectors and industries.

Finally, a RS remains engaged in the employment process to ensure the satisfactory performance and assimilation by the new hire and the contentment of the employer.

There are a number of important roles the RS plays to support the student-worker and their job performance through a process that includes preparation, job development, recruitment, job-matching, placement and assimilation.

The length of time a RS serves the student, worker and employer (the primary customers) does not need to be defined in a one-size-fits-all solution. It should be determined on an individual basis addressing the needs of the primary customers.

The relationships forged could potentially last years because the employer will want to continue to do business with you and your college and because of the hope that the worker will continue their education and need academic and career advice.

In addition, ongoing research and documentation is anticipated considering the NAC’s mission to identify and address skill gaps. The RS becomes the primary resource for gathering this data.

Summarizing the roles and job functions of the Retention Specialist:

- Academic and job readiness coach to the student
- Liaison and business consultant to the college and employer (Skill Gap Analyst)
- Job developer and recruitment specialist to the college and employer
- Employment and career coach to the new hire
- Assimilation consultant to the HR department of the employer
- Networking expert within the community
Creating a balance in the “dual-customer” role of a Retention Specialist

The RS has two primary customers they serve: the student job-seeking worker and the employer. Within this “dual customer” framework, the RS's customer base includes a number of different employers as well as many job-seeking students. You will therefore have to balance your time, set priorities and continue to provide what appears to be seamless, direct, and customized service for each of your clients, whether they are students or employers.

The role of a RS includes responsibilities also found in these occupations: customer service rep, sales rep, counselor, business strategist, financial analyst, among others. One skill these professionals have in common is that when they perform their jobs effectively, they have a thorough knowledge of their customers. A section of this manual offers an approach on how to become familiar with your business/employer and your student/worker customer bases.

Knowing your business/employer customer is essential

To effectively serve your business customer, you will need to know some basics. At some point down the road, you will be in a position to ask the customer, “What is it you would like me to know about your business?” But before you can directly ask an employer about their business, you will need to conduct your own research to learn as much as you can:

- What is their industry and business sector and how well is each doing in the economy?
- What does the local labor market information tell you about this employer and their business?
- What are their products?
- Who are their suppliers and customers?
- Does the company have a mission and vision?
- What are the occupations found at this company’s workplace?
- What are the skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies for these occupations?
- Is there a competency model for this industry such as the aerospace fundamentals, aviation maintenance, and advanced manufacturing competency models?
- Where are they in the supply chain of their industry or their region/community?
- What kind of profile do they maintain in the community and in the industry?
- What is their competitive edge?
- What are they most proud of?
- What challenges concern them?
- What are their pressure points?
- How immediate and responsive will they want you to be in your interactions? How much handholding will be required? Where will you find a balance between your interest in remaining respectfully engaged and not becoming a nuisance?
Much of this formation can be learned on the company’s Web site, through internet research by industry or sector, in periodicals and newspapers, by networking with other employers, industry leaders and associations or with the help of a good business librarian.

Job search boards, O*NET and career exploration Web sites can give you clues about the occupations of the workers at this company and the skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies they need to succeed at their jobs.

The more knowledgeable you are, the more confident and helpful you will be during your personal interactions with your customer – whether by phone or in-person. This will help establish your credibility and your professionalism.

Knowing about your students is just as important

It is not entirely inappropriate to think of your caseload of student job seekers as your “product”. If you weave the human aspects of career counseling and job development into the customer relations aspects of sales and service, you can benefit both the job seeker and the employer with a successful employment match.

Taking the “product” analogy further, it is essential that you know your job seeking students in order to advocate for them and “sell” them to your employer clients. These are some basic questions you should consider as you learn about your student job seekers:

- What does their academic background look like? What did they study? How are their grades?
- What do they enjoy doing? What are they good at?
- How familiar are they with career exploration and job search techniques? To what extent have they used these to prepare for their interviews?
- Can they communicate well?
- Can they describe their vocational goals and their avocation? Can they identify where there may be a valuable intersection of the two and do they understand why this could be a plus for them?
- Can they describe their credentials and certifications? If their credentials are issued by a nationally-recognized expert organization, can they effectively describe their value?
- How do their transcript and resume look? Do those align with their career goals?
- Are they job ready? Do they possess soft skills and career-readiness skills? Are they disciplined? Can they dress appropriately and professionally?
- Are they adaptable, flexible, team players?
- Do they understand that they may be required to show proof of citizenship and proof of a clean criminal record?
- Do they have a disability that needs to be addressed in order to be successful at work? Is there a strategy in place to deal with the disability? Are you prepared to advocate for and support the individual with a disability in such a way as to address the needs of your student customer and your employer customer?
Meeting your employer Customer – the first encounter

After you have researched your employer customer using the standard resources below, you are ready to conduct your first meeting by phone or in person:

- Company’s Web site
- Industry or sector Web sites
- Industry organization Web sites
- O*NET, Job Search boards, industry association Web sites such as www.themanufacturinginstitute.org
- Networking interviews with employees, employers, industry leaders and associations
- Business library for books, catalogs, indexes, periodicals and trade papers
- The Competency Model Clearinghouse: http://www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel/

A few key pointers about your in-person meeting

Find out the dress code of the employer and wear clothing that is appropriate: do not overdress or underdress. Arrive a few minutes early and never be late. Ask about how much time the customer has allocated for your conversation. In building a one-to-one rapport, it is best to refer to “I” and “you” and not “we”.

You want to personalize your service delivery and not imply that someone else will serve the customer. Focus on how you will help the customer solve their problems and not how the program will provide services. This one-to-one approach will help you build a rapport and establish your credibility.

Where appropriate (and only if you are able), you can promise a quick response to a question or request. Learn who your points of contact will be and their contact information. Find out if they prefer to be called on the phone or reached by email.

Bring materials with you to share information

Be prepared to share information as well as gain information. Your research may have turned up information or resources the employer has not encountered. Share what you have learned and verify information with the employer. It may also be helpful to bring information about your project and its mission and vision.

In addition, you should be prepared to speak about the students at your college, both individually and as a group or cohort. Be prepared to share resumes or profiles of the students and information about the college and the grant. If applicable, share positive feedback you have received from other employer customers.
Verify what you have learned about the jobs at this company

Ask about the skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies required at the company. See if there are any job orders currently unfilled that you can use. If one does not exist, offer to help the employer create a job order based on your research or with the aid of a competency model or Web site such as O*NET or the Competency Model Clearinghouse.

As the meeting progresses you should feel free to ask questions and follow-up questions that are thought-provoking and focused. Avoid interrogation and pay close attention to the answers. Take notes, if permitted. Focus on solutions, people and past experiences and avoid language about hypotheticals, bureaucracies, and programs.

Never use acronyms. Try to customize and target your solutions rather than speak from a menu list of services. It may be more important to demonstrate that you are listening than to show off what you know.

Describe the services you provide and role you play as a Retention Specialist

During your conversation you will begin to make commitments, promises or pledges that support this partnership. Be careful to stay on message and limit yourself to commitments and promises you can keep.

Review the process you envision for your partnership and ask the employer if they understand your role. Feel free to take notes and to review what you believe are the key points of the discussion you’ve had. Go over your role and your own job description:

1. Bridge the connection serving as a liaison between the college and employer.

2. Develop employer partner relationships that support an effective coaching approach with students.

3. Maintain connections with students from their certification training through the employer’s recruitment, interview, job offer, orientation, and assimilation processes.

4. Identify and address gaps in training and the challenges of student retention at college and employee retention in the workplace.

5. Offer consultation services to the employer. This may be particularly valuable to ensure that the student worker performs well at their job.

6. Develop employer partner relationships to support retention goals. This could come into play if remedial training and support services become necessary.

7. Serve as a point of contact for the employer to address the orientation and assimilation needs of the new hires. Remember that the student’s performance reflects on your performance.

8. Keep records of new hire’s progress and the employer partnership based on pre-determined performance measures. You should offer to establish those performance measures at your first meeting with the understanding that you are open to revising and updating them regularly.
At the end of your meeting, summarize the key points and the promises or commitments you made. Give genuine thanks for the opportunity to meet, make a commitment to follow up and leave a tangible reminder such as a business card or a brochure with contact information.

Immediately afterwards, write up additional notes while the meeting is fresh in your mind and by all means: begin to fulfill any promises and commitments you made with a “thank you” e-mail and follow-up materials. Try to deliver something early and think about other ways you can help the customer solve their problems.

Consider your value proposition

You may be asked by the employer to describe or illustrate your value proposition or your perception of value. Here they would like to calculate or weigh the benefits of doing business with you against the costs. Be prepared to address these and other questions:

- How prepared is the worker to perform their duties and to be successful on the job? How job-ready, reliable, adaptable, flexible and professional are they? How eager and able are they to learn new skills and operations?
- What professional certificates have they earned? Are they in the process of continuing their education and training?
- How much attention will this worker need in the form of supervision or mentoring? What on-the-job training will be necessary for this individual? What is the timeline for this OJT? Is it available? Does the employer’s corporate culture include professional development and promotion from within?
- What support systems can you provide to ensure that the worker makes a successful transition from the college campus to the workplace? Are your support systems prepared to deal with any remedial issues?
- Are there support systems in place to deal with a worker who has a disability?

One of the greatest value-added services you can provide as a RS is your commitment to remain engaged throughout the training and preparation, recruitment, interview, job offer, orientation, and assimilation processes. This is where you will need to promote your skills as counselor, coach, conflict-aversion specialist, problem solver, business consultant and facilitator.

You will also want to establish your credibility with the employer and your interest in fostering a mutually beneficial partnership. Throughout the duration of your partnership, you need to continually ask yourself these questions:
1. Am I responding to the employer’s needs?
2. Am I remaining as engaged as they have asked me to be?
3. Is this partnership or relationship continuing to address the initial need we discussed?
4. Are we exploring and addressing additional needs?
5. Am I adding value to this relationship?
6. Am I anticipating conflicts or problems without appearing to be a worrier?
7. Am I addressing conflicts or problems that arise in a timely manner?
8. Am I getting the support I need from colleagues and strategic partners?
9. Am I asking the employer if they are satisfied with my performance? If they are not, am I dealing with the shortfalls and addressing their concerns?
10. Am I grateful for the opportunity to continue and grow the relationship? Does my performance and behavior show my gratitude?

Job matching involves listening, negotiation, tailoring, proposal, and decision

A chief complaint heard by employers is that their business services rep or job developer “was not listening”. They received a resume or conducted an interview with a candidate who did not meet the requirements of the job order as written or discussed. When these “disconnects” occur it could have a profound impact on your relationship and your credibility. It is important that you listen to your customers’ needs and that you make appropriate, qualified referrals. You should also tell the employer on a few occasions that you are well aware that the hiring decision is for THEM to make and that your role is to connect them with qualified candidates.

You will want to learn why a particular candidate was rejected so that you can refine your own judgment about who qualifies. But make sure the employer knows that they have the hiring authority and that you do not intend to second-guess their decision process. This may seem elementary but employers complain about feeling pressured by the business services rep or job developer.

Remember that even when things seem to be aligned, sometimes the fit just is not right. Qualifications may be met and the applicant’s background may be strong, but sometimes the employer will base the decision on questions like: “Will this person fit in well with our culture and the mood and energy of our office?” or “Will this person be both valuable and fun to work with?”

Consider two different scenarios: one, when a job order (or job description or position description) exists and another when you work together with the employer to create a job order.
When a job order already exists

You should assume that your employer customer has carefully thought through the job description and performance measures including knowledge, skills, abilities, (KSAs) and competencies. It would nonetheless help both you and the employer to go over the description in detail to see why or how the KSAs match up to the job at hand.

Common sense must also play an important role here – you cannot waste the time of your customer by going over a detailed description, especially if they think the description is self-explanatory or non-negotiable. You may be out of line to inquire why a machinist needs good reading and writing skills but, if the employer is requiring a bachelor’s degree, it is reasonable to ask why.

Some job requirements also contain chicken and egg situations such as when an entry level position requires one year of experience. How can that be? It is reasonable to ask whether some other qualification can meet this requirement. What if the student had a summer internship or was awarded a certificate by their school or by an industry-recognized third party such as the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) or the American Welding Society (AWS) or the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC)? That level of negotiation is reasonable. In addition, determine where there might be some flexibility or relaxation of standards without giving the employer the impression that you might recruit a sub-par candidate.

Just as your employer contact has the job requirements and the worker’s role in mind, you should have a general profile of your caseload or cohort of candidates in mind. Perhaps a high percentage of your group was awarded a professional certificate, or their grades were particularly good or they represent diversity in age, ethnicity, geography, etc. Perhaps you have a high percentage of women or veterans (or female veterans).

If you have learned that the company is encouraging diversity in hiring or if they have affinity groups within the organization that cater to minorities, veterans, women, gays and lesbians, etc., it may be a good idea to promote the diversity of your student cohort. If the company is concerned about the age of their workforce and they are facing a demographic cliff (a large number of retirements are expected) you may want to mention that your cohort can address this challenge.

If the company expresses a need to hire more veterans or people with disabilities, it may be a cue to mention the makeup of your cohort if it includes these groups. To remain on the legal side of Equal Employment Opportunity, however, you must not discuss the irrelevant, non-professional characteristics of a specific candidate when you get that far in your job matching process.

After your meeting, you will consider which candidates to recommend for interviews. As you narrow the field of qualified students you must be sure that most, if not all, requirements are met. If there is some uncertainty, discuss it with the student and give them a chance to fill in any information gaps that could support their candidacy.
If appropriate, help the student tailor their resume so that it is aligned with the requirements of the job. Under no circumstances can you allow a false or misleading statement to enter the picture. Acceptable edits may include a revised description of the student’s background or experience, an addition of coursework that was originally left out but now seems relevant, community service that is relevant to the job, a change in the order of a list of courses or skills to accentuate the positive, etc.

The student must also be prepared for a potential interview. You should share what you learned from the employer and conduct a mock interview to be sure the student will promote their candidacy and make you both look good before the employer.

Review the section of this manual entitled “Knowing about your students is just as important.” Make sure the match is solid based on what you know about the job, the employer and any flexibility you negotiated. Coach the student to be absolutely honest, upbeat, confident, and professional in their presentation and appearance. Make sure they know their own resume and transcript from top to bottom to avoid an unpleasant surprise question.
If a job order needs to be drafted

There is a possibility that the employer will not have a job description in mind when you meet. Perhaps a new job is being created or staffing changes are underway and a new hire will be part of that reorganization.

Large companies with HR departments will probably have a few professionals dedicated to developing job descriptions, setting salaries, standards, and performance measures. Other companies may need assistance and there is an opportunity for you to offer your consultation services. These are among the tools and resources available to you to help the employer develop a job description:

Conduct research using the O*NET Web site

Using O*NET you can type in a job title such as Computerized Numerical Control Operator and have access to this information:

- Tasks (What tasks are required to do the work)
- Tools and Technology (The tools and technology that will be used)
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Abilities
- Work Activities (Similar to tasks but perhaps broader)
- Work Context (Offers a list of potential things to consider)
- Education (Average education background of those surveyed)
- Interests (Holland interest codes associated with occupation)
- Work Styles (Personal and professional characteristics of the worker)
- Work Values (Environment and conditions most valued by the worker)
- Wages, Employment Trends (Nationally and by state)

This information is extremely valuable in counseling both the employer as they draft a job description and in counseling the student as they draft their resume and prepare for their interview.

Many other resources are available on line, at a business library and through personal contacts and networking, including:

Job search boards including private companies like Monster.com and state-sponsored boards such as kansasworks.com or indianajobbank.com or jobgateway.state.pa.us.

Once you are on the site, you can type in a job title and review the job descriptions that other companies have created and posted.
Research the Web sites of industry-based job boards and trade organizations

In manufacturing for example, these are among the available job boards where you can find detailed job descriptions:

The Competency Model Clearinghouse

The Web site contains a wealth of information about the KSAs and competencies for many industries and sectors including these associated with manufacturing:


Manufacturing Job Board Network
http://www.manufacturingjobboardnetwork.com/

Manufacturing Jobs
http://manufacturingjobs.com

Information can be found in a database of resumes

If you have access to a collection of resumes at the college, you may find job descriptions, action verbs and other valuable information you can use in your research.

Information can be found by networking with other professionals

As you develop your professional network; you can ask associates for examples of good job descriptions and resumes or ask them to validate what you have learned yourself.
An illustration of the job retention process – Student Worker Scenario

Jan Bishop was a student at Wichita Area Technical College, downsized by an aircraft company and studying toward certification as an Aircraft Mechanic and Service Technician. Jan’s RS would meet regularly with her to assist her through the reemployment process by first interpreting her assessment tests, transcripts, resume and other available documentation to help her develop a job market plan, an “elevator speech” and a targeted resume for a job at a local aviation manufacturer.

Together they drafted a job search or market plan – an action plan that includes targeted companies, how she can prepare for interviews and what skill gaps she would need to address. The RS paid special attention to the skill gaps identified – this will become part of their regular report to the college and the NAC.

They developed an “elevator speech” – a presentation taking between 30 seconds and two minutes to describe Jan’s background, professional goals and targets, attributes and commendations, and an idea of what she could contribute to the new employer.

They researched the roles and tasks of an Aircraft Mechanic and Service Technician using Web-based tools and job descriptions provided by aviation and aircraft employers.

They updated her resume to incorporate the research. Their goal was to submit a resume that was accomplishment-oriented and able to provide the employer with an idea of how she could contribute to solve the company’s problems and move the company’s mission forward.

They conducted mock behavioral interviews to be sure Jan was ready for “face time” with the employer. During behavioral interviews an employer asks a job candidate to provide examples of when they faced certain challenges at work and how they overcame those challenges using actual, behavioral examples. Jan and her RS anticipated questions she would be asked and developed concise, honest, accomplishment-oriented answers.

Jan and her RS made sure that she was job-ready. Jan had the soft skills or job readiness skills that most employers seek: She dressed appropriately, she was prompt for her meetings, she demonstrated a professional demeanor, she was flexible when asked about alternative approaches or protocols and she was adaptive in her strategies.

Jan was able to speak authoritatively about her work-related knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies and she had an answer for every question she was asked. If she did not know the correct or complete answer, Jan could share her strategy for how she would explore or deal with the unknown.
Jan and her RS also drafted a list of questions she would ask at her interviews in case certain specifics about the job tasks, her roles and responsibilities, the chain of command, etc. were not yet known.

When a job offer was made, Jan received sound advice from her RS and they were able to consider the pros and cons of the offer based on their research, on Jan’s personal goals and aspirations and on her work values (the things she values most about work).

Jan and her RS remained in contact after she was hired at her new job. The RS asked Jan if she felt better prepared by her orientation and her first week of work. Together they discussed the certainties and some uncertainties about the new assignment. They speculated about what might or might not represent a challenge and they made efforts to avoid barriers and to deal with issues that conflicted with Jan’s expectations.

When Jan was experiencing what seemed like extraordinary stress at work, she and her RS found a counseling service that was recommended by a contact at Wichita Area Technical College. It turned out that Jan’s stress was related to child care and transportation challenges she was facing.

Thankfully, both of these challenges could be addressed by the support the RS and the college found through strategic partners at Wichita area community-based organizations. Jan’s RS remained her career advisor and job coach for many months. As Jan was awarded professional skill certificates and opportunities for advancement became available, she and the RS developed strategies to pursue her career advancement at the company.
Flow of Job Retention Process—Student Worker

1. Meet regularly with student/job seeker
2. Conduct assessment tests: interests, work values and KSAs (if appropriate)
3. Review transcript and resume to identify skill gaps and set training goals
4. Develop accomplishment-oriented “Elevator Speech”
5. Develop Marketing or Job Search Plan
6. Research Web for tasks, KSAs, and occupational outlook
7. Adapt resume and elevator speech to incorporate research and/or specific job order details
8. Review job readiness and soft skills checklist
9. Conduct mock behavioral interviews and create sample questions to ask and answer
10. Weigh and determine a value of the components of a job offer
11. Accept job offer and begin work
12. Meet to discuss orientation and initial feelings about the job
13. Identify potential challenges in the new job
14. Establish a strategy to address challenges (when necessary)
15. Make referrals to address challenges and monitor progress
16. Meet to review progress, share and document information
17. Meet to consider continuing education and professional development
An illustration of the job retention process—Employer Scenario

Aircraft Basics Corporation (ABC) is a mid-size business in the Wichita area that has joined the NAC strategic partnership as a growth-oriented employer with a few job openings. In their first conversations, the RS asked ABC about which workforce challenges they were facing and what ideal characteristics they were seeking in their new hires. This led ABC to share a draft of some possible job descriptions they were thinking of posting on area job boards.

The HR manager at ABC readily accepted the RS’s offer to help expand and enhance the job description using available tools such as the Aerospace Fundamentals, Aviation Maintenance, and Advanced Manufacturing Competency Models found on line at the Competency Model Clearinghouse. In addition, they helped expand and clarify job tasks and requirements with research they found on O*NET and job descriptions posted on line by other employers.

At times it became appropriate for the RS to offer other advice to ABC. The RS made notes about the knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies that were identified by ABC and prepared to report these findings to the NAC as part of their mission to identify and address local skill gaps. Meanwhile, the RS offered information gathered about both the local job market and the student workforce studying at Wichita Area Technical College. This helped manage ABC’s expectations about the available workforce and their professional and academic backgrounds.

Working together ABC and the RS began to build a collaborative rapport and the RS gained valuable information about the ABC’s expectations and corporate culture. This helped in the RS’s role to counsel and prepare students for interviews.

When it came time to match recruits with jobs, the RS provided resumes from candidates that matched all, if not most of the requirements of the job. One candidate did not mention experience reading blueprints on their resume. The RS and ABC agreed that, if necessary, the new hire could take a course in reading blueprints and this did not pose a serious challenge.

The candidate was interviewed by ABC and this skill gap was probed. ABC’s HR manager and the floor manager/supervisor were satisfied that other experience and the candidate’s ability to learn quickly would compensate for any shortfall and they agreed to hire the candidate. More importantly the candidate made a strong, professional impression during the series of interviews with the ABC managers.

The RS remained in contact with the HR manager at ABC throughout the orientation process. It was agreed beforehand that they would speak to one another every week, then every other week to check in on the new hire’s progress. Eventually they checked in only periodically to verify what the supervisor or the new hire reported and to touch base after the new hire got their first performance evaluation.
The RS and ABC were impressed by the smooth assimilation of the new hire into ABC’s corporate culture and work environment. As a result of this attentive customer service, ABC returned to NAC for more recruits as their business grew. The service offered by the RS included excellent listening skills, problem solving skills, negotiation skills and exemplary follow-up.

**Flow of Job Retention Process – Employer**

1. Contact and meet with HR manager and supervisor/floor manager as appropriate
2. Ask about the company’s workforce challenges
3. Begin to share ideas of how you might address the challenges
4. Review job description and KSAs
5. Offer consultation to expand or improve job description, if appropriate
6. Consult competency model clearinghouse, O*NET and other resources
7. Negotiate KSA and task priorities, if appropriate
8. Organize thoughts about case load and possible candidates
9. Compile resumes of recruits who match all or most of the requirements
10. Meet the potential candidate to clarify unknowns and prepare for interviews
11. Present resumes to company, answer questions, address concerns

12. Arrange interviews

13. Follow up with candidate and employer

14. Ask yourself: Were you listening to the employer? Did you help solve their problem?

15. Tactfully ask the employer the same questions

16. Check in with employer during orientation to measure progress

17. Establish how often employer would like continued contact

18. Be sure company’s feedback reflects both the HR manager and the supervisor’s assessment

19. Continue to check in with employer to measure progress, review evaluations and address any potential challenges

20. If a challenge arises, seek support from the college and other NAC strategic partners

21. Remain in contact with employer and new hire until challenge or problem is resolved

22. Work with employer and new hire to consider further professional development

23. Determine how long the employer would like to continue the retention process
Resources, Tools, and Addenda

A. Sample Job Description
B. Sample KSA list from O*NET
C. Values Assessment Questionnaire
D. Resume Builder
E. Marketing Plan and Networking
F. Job Readiness Checklist
G. Behavioral Interview Questions
H. Components of a Job Offer
I. RS Checklist
J. Template for Creating a Job Description
CNC Operator/Machinist Job Description Sample
Taken from Monster.com

This CNC operator/machinist sample job description can assist in your creating a job application that will attract job candidates who are qualified for the job. Feel free to revise this job description to meet your specific job duties and job requirements.

Description: CNC Operator/Machinist

CNC Operator/Machinist Job Purpose: Produces machined parts by programming, setting up, and operating a computer numerical control (CNC) machine; maintaining quality and safety standards; keeping records; maintaining equipment and supplies.

CNC Operator/Machinist Job Duties:

- Plans machining by studying work orders, blueprints, engineering plans, materials, specifications, orthographic drawings, reference planes, locations of surfaces, and machining parameters; interpreting geometric dimensions and tolerances (GD&T).
- Plans stock inventory by checking stock to determine amount available; anticipating needed stock; placing and expediting orders for stock; verifying receipt of stock.
- Programs mills and lathes by entering instructions, including zero and reference points; setting tool registers, offsets, compensation, and conditional switches; calculating requirements, including basic math, geometry, and trigonometry; proving part programs.
- Sets-up mills and lathes by installing and adjusting three- and four-jaw chucks, tools, attachments, collets, bushings,cams, gears, stops, and stock pushers; indicating vices; tramming heads.
- Loads feed mechanism by lifting stock into position.
- Verifies settings by measuring positions, first-run part, and sample work pieces; adhering to international standards.
- Maintains specifications by observing drilling, grooving, and cutting, including turning, facing, knurling and thread chasing operations; taking measurements; detecting malfunctions; troubleshooting processes; adjusting and reprogramming controls; sharpening and replacing worn tools; adhering to quality assurance procedures and processes.
- Maintains safe operations by adhering to safety procedures and regulations.
- Maintains equipment by completing preventive maintenance requirements; following manufacturer’s instructions; troubleshooting malfunctions; calling for repairs.
- Maintains continuity among work shifts by documenting and communicating actions, irregularities, and continuing needs.
- Documents actions by completing production and quality logs.
- Updates job knowledge by participating in educational opportunities; reading technical publications.
- Accomplishes organization goals by accepting ownership for accomplishing new and different requests; exploring opportunities to add value to job accomplishments.

Skills/Qualifications: Conceptual Skills, Process Improvement, Verbal Communication, Functional and Technical Skills, Controls and Instrumentation, Supply Management, Tooling, Coordination, Inventory Control, Attention to Detail, Judgment
Sample KSA list from O*NET

O*NET OnLine
A proud partner of the american job center network

Details Report for:
51-4012.00 - Computer Numerically Controlled Machine Tool Programmers, Metal and Plastic

Develop programs to control machining or processing of metal or plastic parts by automatic machine tools, equipment, or systems.


View report: Summary Details Custom
Tasks | Knowledge | Skills | Abilities | Work Activities | Work Context | Job Zone | Education | Interests | Work Styles | Work Values | Related Occupations | Wages & Employment | Job Openings | Additional Information

Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Determine the sequence of machine operations, and select the proper cutting tools needed to machine work pieces into the desired shapes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Revise programs and/or tapes to eliminate errors, and retest programs to check that problems have been solved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Analyze job orders, drawings, blueprints, specifications, printed circuit board pattern films, and design data in order to calculate dimensions, tool selection, machine speeds, and feed rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Determine reference points, machine cutting paths, or hole locations, and compute angular and linear dimensions, radii, and curvatures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Observe machines on trial runs or conduct computer simulations to ensure that programs and machinery will function properly and produce items that meet specifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Compare encoded tapes or computer printouts with original part specifications and blueprints to verify accuracy of instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>Enter coordinates of hole locations into program memories by depressing pedals or buttons of programmers.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Core Write programs in the language of a machine’s controller and store programs on media such as punch tapes, magnetic tapes, or disks.

Core Modify existing programs to enhance efficiency.

Core Enter computer commands to store or retrieve parts patterns, graphic displays, or programs that transfer data to other media.

Core Prepare geometric layouts from graphic displays, using computer-assisted drafting software or drafting instruments and graph paper.

Supplemental Write instruction sheets and cutter lists for a machine’s controller in order to guide mental setup and encode numerical control tapes.

Supplemental Sort shop orders into groups to maximize materials utilization and minimize machine setup time.

Supplemental Draw machine tool paths on pattern film, using colored markers and following mental guidelines for tool speed and efficiency.

Supplemental Align and secure pattern film on reference tables of optical programmers, and observe enlarger scope views of printed circuit boards.

Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Mathematics — Knowledge of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics, and their applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Mechanical — Knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Design — Knowledge of design techniques, tools, and principles involved in production of precision technical plans, blueprints, drawings, and models.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Engineering and Technology — Knowledge of the practical application of engineering science and technology. This includes applying principles, techniques, procedures, and equipment to the design and production of various goods and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Production and Processing — Knowledge of raw materials, production processes, quality control, costs, and other techniques for maximizing the effective manufacture and distribution of goods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Computers and Electronics — Knowledge of circuit boards, processors, chips, electronic equipment, and computer hardware and software, including applications and programming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>English Language — Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Education and Training — Knowledge of principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Customer and Personal Service — Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Physics — Knowledge and prediction of physical principles, laws, their interrelationships, and applications to understanding fluid, material, and atmospheric dynamics, and mechanical, electrical, atomic and sub-atomic structures and processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Administration and Management — Knowledge of business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership technique, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Public Safety and Security — Knowledge of relevant equipment, policies, procedures, and strategies to promote effective local, state, or national security operations for the protection of people, data, property, and institutions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communications and Media — Knowledge of media production, communication, and dissemination techniques and methods. This includes alternative ways to inform and entertain via written, oral, and visual media.

Building and Construction — Knowledge of materials, methods, and the tools involved in the construction or repair of houses, buildings, or other structures such as highways and roads.

Clerical — Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.

Chemistry — Knowledge of the chemical composition, structure, and properties of substances and of the chemical processes and transformations that they undergo. This includes uses of chemicals and their interactions, danger signs, production techniques, and disposal methods.

Personnel and Human Resources — Knowledge of principles and procedures for personnel recruitment, selection, training, compensation and benefits, labor relations and negotiation, and personnel information systems.

Psychology — Knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.

Transportation — Knowledge of principles and methods for moving people or goods by air, rail, sea, or road, including the relative costs and benefits.

Telecommunications — Knowledge of transmission, broadcasting, switching, control, and operation of telecommunications systems.

Sales and Marketing — Knowledge of principles and methods for showing, promoting, and selling products or services. This includes marketing strategy and tactics, product demonstration, sales techniques, and sales control systems.

Law and Government — Knowledge of laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, government regulations, executive orders, agency rules, and the democratic political process.

Economics and Accounting — Knowledge of economic and accounting principles and practices, the financial markets, banking and the analysis and reporting of financial data.

Foreign Language — Knowledge of the structure and content of a foreign (non-English) language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition and grammar, and pronunciation.

Sociology and Anthropology — Knowledge of group behavior and dynamics, societal trends and influences, human migrations, ethnicity, cultures and their history and origins.

Therapy and Counseling — Knowledge of principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental dysfunctions, and for career counseling and guidance.

History and Archeology — Knowledge of historical events and their causes, indicators, and effects on civilizations and cultures.

Medicine and Dentistry — Knowledge of the information and techniques needed to diagnose and treat human injuries, diseases, and deformities. This includes symptoms, treatment alternatives, drug properties and interactions, and preventive health-care measures.

Philosophy and Theology — Knowledge of different philosophical systems and religions. This includes their basic principles, values, ethics, ways of thinking, customs, practices, and their impact on human culture.

Geography — Knowledge of principles and methods for describing the features of land, sea, and air masses, including their physical characteristics, locations, interrelationships, and distribution of plant, animal, and human life.

Biology — Knowledge of plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.
About three dozen work-related values are described below. There is no limit to how many values are important to you. You may also want to add comments to each of the values that are important to you. The point of this exercise is to identify what you value about work. You can then evaluate job offers or job leads based on how they measure up to your values. This can also be used as a tool for interviewing. By completing this exercise you prepare yourself for when an interviewer asks “What do you value most about work?” Expect that over time, throughout your career your values and your priorities will change.

**Achievement** is an important value when:
- I like accomplishing something with excellence
- I like to achieve goals I set for myself
- I want to see results of a job well done
- I want to feel rewarded for an assignment that I have completed

**Advancement** is an important value when:
- I want to be promoted when I do my job well
- I want to advance to higher positions in a reasonable time frame
- I want to move up rapidly in my work organization
- I want to progress to more responsibility and better pay in my job

**Adventure** is important if:
- I want to feel excitement and action
- I like taking risks to get a job completed
- I like daring assignments that require courage
- I like to gamble and take chances to achieve an outcome

**Aesthetics** are important if:
- I like to study, be around, and appreciate beauty and beautiful things
- I like using my artistic, musical, theatrical, or literary abilities
- I like to contribute beauty and harmony to the world
- I like to make attractive things that people will see, hear, read, experience

**Altruism** is important when:
- I want to help other people solve their problems
- I like instructing people how to do things to benefit themselves
- I want to care for people who are underprivileged, sick, needy
- I want to teach students how to improve their education, welfare, health
Authority is important when:
I want it to be clear who is in charge
I value a chain of command
Everyone understands his/her role, whether as leader or team player
I respect those in charge and I am comfortable following orders

Competition is important if:
I like competing against others, either on a team or by myself
I want to come out ahead of others in order to move forward
I like contending with others who are rivals for the same reward
I like competing with others for bonuses, prizes, honors, rewards

Creativity is an important value when:
I like using my imagination to create new things
I like designing new ideas, products, and things
I like inventing products, new approaches, and new ways of doing things
I like expressing new ideas in art, music, science, literature

Early Entry into a field is important if:
I like starting a job right away without much training
I like doing things that require little or no education and training
I like beginning jobs without delay for school
I like working in jobs that don’t require years of costly education

Exhibition is important when:
I like gaining the attention of other people
I like showing my skills and talents to other people
I like having my achievements noticed by other people
I like being the center of attention

Fairness is important if:
I like working at places where the policies are reasonable
I like having a boss who treats everyone the same and is fair
I like working for and with people who are honest and truthful
I like when everyone I work with plays by the rules

Formality and appearances of professionalism are important if:
I like to address people using proper etiquette and decorum
I prefer keeping things more professional and less friendly at work
I want to stick to the work and not socialize too much
I enjoy working where people are focused almost entirely on work
**Friendship** at work is important when:
I like making friends among my co-workers
I like meeting new people who share my values
I like cooperating with associates at work
I like sharing stories and things with friends at work

**Health** is an important value if:
I want to avoid stress and physical strain at work
I want to stay in sound physical and mental condition
I want to avoid burn-out or getting run down at work
I want to avoid hazardous and unsafe work conditions

**Monetary Reward** is important when:
I want to have more than enough money to live on
I want to buy more than just the necessities of life
I want to earn extra money for luxuries and additional possessions
I am willing to make personal sacrifices for more compensation

**Family and Leisure Life** is valued if:
I want to be at home more with my family
I am willing to make professional sacrifices for time off
I want opportunities for longer vacations and time off
I work in a place that offers a flexible schedule

**Independence** is an important value when:
I like doing my work the way I prefer
I like having the freedom to make my own decisions
I am proud of my self reliance and my ability to teach myself things
I prefer to work without supervision

You take an **Interest** at work when:
I want to work in my main field of interest
I enjoy being challenged at work
I get so involved at work that I don’t notice time passing
I think about work when I am off the job

**Leadership** is an important value if:
I like managing and directing other people
I enjoy having the power to make decisions affecting others
I like feeling responsible for what others do
I want to administer programs and organize the activities of others
**Lifestyle** is an important value when:
I want to live the kind of life I enjoy and respect
I want to be comfortable with who I am
I am the kind of person I want to be
I like choosing the way I spend my time and money

**Loyalty** is important when:
I feel an allegiance to my job, my boss and my employer
I enjoy working in an environment where allegiance is appreciated

**Geography and Location** is important if:
I would like to work near where I live
I like working at a place that is easily accessible
I want to avoid any transportation problems getting to work

You value **Physical or manual** aspects of work when:
I like using my hands and my body at the workplace
I enjoy operating tools and equipment
I rely on my physical strength and muscular coordination

You value **morals and ethics** when:
I prefer working where we abide by a high moral standard
I want my co-workers and I to be ethical and fair
I don’t want to ever be asked to cheat to achieve something

You value your **work environment** when:
I have a strong preference for working either outside or inside
Cleanliness, light and the décor of the office are important to me
I prefer a level of privacy around my desk at work
I like when my office is attractive

You value **camaraderie** if:
I like to meet people at work and make friends
I like performing direct services for other people
I prefer dealing with people rather than ideas and things
I like working on a team toward a common goal

You value your **physical appearance** when:
I like wearing nice clothes at work
I prefer to dress any way I want at work
I like dressing in professional clothing
You value **routine** if:
I like following established procedure and customs
I like when my duties are clear, predictable, and don't change
I don't mind following instructions of others
I think I am adaptable but I don't like when things change a lot

You value **recognition** when:
I like knowing that other people are aware I did a good job
I enjoy public attention and approval
I like being praised and held in high esteem by others, esp. the boss
I like being rewarded with extra pay and attention

You value **job security** if:
I want my job to survive even during a recession
I am more comfortable knowing my job will last as long as I want
I feel threatened when a downturn requires layoffs and separations

You value **status and prestige** at work when:
I enjoy being respected and looked up to by others
I want others to feel that my job is important
I enjoy having higher status than others at work
I like when people listen to me and respect my opinion

You value **variety** in your work if:
I like having my duties, assignments, and projects change
I enjoy multi-tasking and doing different projects at once
I like when I face many new people, projects, and situations
I prefer not doing the same thing over and over again

You may also choose to explore this Web-based values exercise by Rutgers University:
http://careerservices.rutgers.edu/OCAvaluesassessment.shtml
Resume Builder

Your resume is one of the most important elements of your communication strategy. The resume’s main purpose is to get you an interview and it should support, by example and illustration, your career objective. Don’t feel that you need to include everything you’ve ever done, like some legal document that traces your work history. Focus on supporting your objective. If you’ve worked for 15 years or more, your resume will probably be two pages long.

YOUR NAME, any credentials or initials
Street address
City, State, Zip Code
Phone number
e-mail address

PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVE:
This should be one brief statement or phrase that indicates your target industry and the role you want to play in that industry. This option is recommended for people changing careers and for people starting out after school or after training. You can also go right into the Summary and include your objective as the first sentence of your summary. Examples:
CNC Machine Operator in Aviation
Senior Quality Control Manager in Manufacturing

SUMMARY:
Alternatively, for job seekers with experience who are remaining in their fields, the summary is used as a concise description of who you are professionally, what your career focus has been, what the scope of your experience has been and some key highlights or accomplishments. The summary may run three or four sentences but should not take up more than four or five lines of your resume. The reader should know your career objective from reading either the Summary or the Professional Objective, if you choose that option.

EXPERIENCE:
COMPANY NAME, City, State
1999 - 2000
Your Title
A scope statement about your job. Here’s where you might want to describe the responsibilities, the number of staff members on the team, total budget of the department, number of customers you served, number of products you launched, number of projects you worked on. You may be quantitative and descriptive in this section.

• Here is where you detail particular accomplishments, in order of importance and in order of how well the example supports your career objective.

• These bullet points should not be descriptive in nature. They should state accomplishments as facts, offering quantitative details.

• The bullets should answer the readers' questions: "Why do I need to know this about you?", "So what did that mean for the company or organization?", "What difference did you or your actions make?"

• Key accomplishments include: saving money, saving time, streamlining operations, improving quality, increasing sales, lowering costs, meeting or beating deadlines, uncovering new ground, receiving promotions and recognition.

• Each employment experience should have between 3 and 5 bullet points.
The Experience section should be organized in reverse chronological order. If you had multiple titles within the same firm or if you left the firm and returned, you can organize the job title section like this:

**Company Name**, City, State 1997 - 1999
Title (19XX - 19XX)
Previous Title (19XX - 19XX)
Previous Title (19XX - 19XX)

Notice that the years of employment at the company are NOT in parentheses, but the years per job title, if applicable, are in parentheses. We no longer use months of employment anywhere. If you spent a few months within the same year, just write the year once (not as a range). In general, you should go back 15 years or so. Beyond 15 years, you can create a section called:

**EDUCATION**

Exact name of Degree, School Attended, City and State, Major course of study (do not add year of graduation unless it is very recent). For example:

B.A. in Social Science, State University of New York, Purchase, NY (Political Science Major)

If you did not complete your degree program, indicate the number of years you successfully completed. If you list the college you attended, you do not have to indicate that you have a high school diploma - it is assumed. If you are a recent college graduate or a student and you have little or no professional experience, your Education should be listed higher up in the resume, after your Professional Objective or Summary.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

Here you can add professional certificates or continuing education courses that are relevant to your professional objective. It may also include licenses. If listing professional credentials that are awarded by an industry-recognized certification organization, be sure to note full name of the organization. Also note that in manufacturing, “ACT” is now used as the organization’s name. It is not an acronym. Examples:

National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC) – ACT
Certified Production Technician (CPT) – Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC)
CNC Operator, Turning Level I – National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS)

**SOFTWARE AND OTHER SKILLS**

This is an optional section that may include software you use, foreign languages you speak or other skills that are relevant to your professional objective.

**AFFILIATIONS/MEMBERSHIPS**

This optional section that may include community groups, professional trade organizations, or committee work if it is somehow relevant to your professional objective.

Other optional sections include Military Service, Credentials, and Publications.

Do not put "References Available Upon Request" or personal information not relevant to your professional objective on your resume. This went out in the 1970’s and it is assumed that you’ll provide references when asked.
Outline of a Marketing Plan

The Retention Specialist can use this tool to help the student and job candidate organize their job search. Some questions connect directly to what should appear on the resume, what should be researched before the interview and what may come up during your informational interviews or job interview. Diligent networking is essential to a successful job search.

What is your professional objective and desired occupation?
- What skills, knowledge, competencies and experience qualify you for this profession and this occupation? Are they detailed in your resume?
- Would the potential employer find your role vital to their operation? To what degree and why?
- What specific challenges, problems and critical issues does this industry or this profession encounter?
- How can your past experience contribute to addressing these challenges and solving the problems of your future employer?
- How will your skills, personal attributes and accomplishments contribute to the employer’s mission?

What is your Target Industry or Field?
You should limit your search to one, two, or three focuses. Research them all. In the NAC example this may be aviation, aerospace, and advanced manufacturing.
- How is the industry doing? Is it in growth mode or in decline?
- What are the challenges, problems, and critical issues of this industry?
- What core competencies, skills, and knowledge does the industry seek?
- Who are the major players of this industry - companies and individuals?
- What associations do people in this industry join?
- What periodicals do people in this industry read?
- What websites contain useful information for this industry?

What are the target companies where you want to work?
(you should explore at least one dozen companies in and around your geographic area)
- What is this company’s mission statement or product line?
- What core competencies, skills, and knowledge do they need?
- How can you demonstrate a good competency fit?
- What is their niche in the market? What is the company motto?
- What is their reputation in the market?
• What is the corporate culture like at the company?
• How does the company measure up to your criteria and your work values?
• What is the size of the company: revenue, profits, employees, physical space?
• What is the company’s ranking in the industry? How did they do in recent quarters?
• Who are the hiring managers you need to meet?

What is a good networking strategy to follow?

Job Searchers should be networking and conducting informational interviews, using these meetings to help reach their job search goals.

With whom should you network?

Networking starts with your professional and personal address book including former co-workers, fellow students, clients, vendors, volunteer colleagues, your family, your neighbors, social groups, faith-based groups, college alumni resources, personal acquaintances, service providers, and trade associations. Those groups include people you already know.

As a job searcher, when you recognize that your networking effort has stalled, it’s time to cultivate new relationships and to approach people you don’t already know. As a result of research you conduct in the library and on the internet, you should be able to identify leaders in your field and their colleagues. Consider crafting a letter that requests an informational interview and seeks career advice.

You should develop a list of subjects that represents areas of your expertise. These subjects become your talking points when someone assesses why they should meet with you.

Where do you find the names of people to whom you can write for career advice? Sources include the internet, universities and colleges, newspapers and periodicals, conferences and trade association meetings, television programs devoted to news or business developments, personal contacts and the leads they provide.

How do you contact these people and what should you ask?

When you’re ready to write people asking them for advice or for an informational interview, try to customize and personalize your letter as much as possible. Show that you’ve done research and that you’ve thought about what can be accomplished at such a meeting. You may pique this person’s interest by offering an opinion or a solution about some professional or business challenge they’ve publicly discussed. You may be able to offer expertise on issues facing their company.

“Networking is not about superficial connections and brief encounters. It’s about cultivating relationships with others in a meaningful way so that you have people to turn to when you need information and support, and people you can help when they need someone to turn to.”

Research the company’s Mission and Vision statements which are frequently posted on the internet or written into their annual report. Company profiles are available in databases at the library, such as Hoover’s, Dun and Bradstreet, American Business Disc, etc. A business librarian can become your best friend and career advisor as they teach you how to research companies.

While you develop your network, ask people familiar with your target companies to share valuable information you can use in your introductory letters or in future informational or employment interviews.

Your letter or email-of-introduction should include your contact information and can have the following outline:

I. Describe how you are familiar with this contact, the work they do and they company at which they are employed. Add whether someone has recommended that you contact this person.

II. Describe the nature of your job search:
   - I have just completed training or I have just received my degree
   - I am relocating to your area
   - I recently became unemployed
   - I have begun a job search in a new field

III. Consider adapting this transitional paragraph:
   “I realize there may not be a position available at your company at this time. I would nonetheless like to meet you to discuss our industry and to gain some direction and ideas about my job search and my career”.

IV. Describe how your past experience can be valuable to the field you are entering – give examples of work you did and how it can be applied to a new position.

V. Ask for 20 – 30 minutes of their time (you will have to strictly adhere to this when you meet them). Ask them to reply by emailing or calling you. Offer to call them as a follow up in the coming days. Thank them.

What should you do at an informational interview or networking meeting?
When someone has agreed to meet you, give serious thought to what you are going to tell them and what you are going to ask them. It will depend upon the type of meeting you have arranged. Informational interviews to gather research on a company differ from informational interviews designed to learn more about a specific occupation, a job opening or a job description. Networking interviews differ depending upon whether your contact works at one of your target companies or if they know someone who is employed there.
Remember that you are also offering valuable information to them. They may be interested in developments you've learned about other companies or about the direction the industry is headed. Through other meetings and research you may know of new product lines being established, a potential merger underway, a hiring freeze at a major employer, a shift in executive leadership of a company, etc. Respecting all confidential sources and information, you may be able to share some of what you’ve learned with these networking contacts.

You should start your conversation by presenting the "pitch" or "elevator speech" you have developed, describing your background, expertise, training and education, skills and competencies, your target occupation, industry, employers, etc. Your "pitch" is the answer to the inquiry "Tell me about yourself". Move on by asking your questions, seeking guidance, requesting referrals to other contacts, and offering to help this contact in any way you can.

Remember to ask the right questions of the right people. Don’t ask your networking contacts about job openings they may have. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce yourself and to encourage them to keep you in mind if they hear of any job openings appropriate for you. If a networking contact tells you up front that they don't know of any job openings, don’t let this discourage you - tell them it will be valuable to meet them to seek career advice and to expand your network of contacts for when future opportunities arise.

Consider the following questions and use common sense. Each question may not be appropriate for every contact you meet:

- Now that I’ve described my background and you’ve seen my resume, what advice would you give me to help me achieve my professional goals?
- Do you think someone with my background, experience, and interests can be successful and satisfied in this industry or in this occupation? In other words, am I setting reasonable and achievable goals for myself?
- What compensation can I expect given my skills and competencies, my education, and my experience?
- Who are the key players in the field? Which individuals are the most accessible in the field or at my target companies? Do you know any of them and would you feel comfortable introducing me to them?
- What associations or organizations should I join? What conferences or meetings should I attend? Which journals, periodicals or trade newspapers should I be reading regularly? Are there biographies, autobiographies or other books written about the company, my target job, or a target hiring manager or executive?
- What companies or organizations should I monitor for their potential growth, their intention to restructure or downsize, or for industry leadership?
- Where do professionals in my field gather socially and professionally?
- Where can I learn more about my target companies?
- Can you recommend someone else for me to contact to broaden my network?
- Would you be comfortable making that introduction for me or perhaps allowing me to use your name when I reach out to this person?
- Is there something I can do for you?
- Would you mind if I remain in contact with you to update you on my progress? I would imagine checking in with you every four or six weeks, if you wouldn’t mind.

After the meeting be sure to send a thank you note or email and remain in touch with your contacts if they’ve agreed.
Job Readiness Checklist

I. Assessment tests
II. College Transcripts
III. Research on the most likely occupations and job titles
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Assessment tests
Have you reviewed any assessment tests the job candidate has taken that may reflect on their skill level and preparedness to enter the job market? Depending upon the job requirements and the candidates skill level and experience you may want to suggest that the candidate take assessment and proficiency tests such as Work Keys or TABE.

College Transcripts
Has the candidate provided copies of their college transcripts so that you can get an idea of their academic background, their grades, and how they might align with the desired industry or field? It’s a good idea to go over your candidate’s transcript and engage them in a discussion about their college experience and their grades. This will be useful as they prepare for interviews.

Research on the most likely occupations and job titles
Has the candidate researched the job titles or occupations they are targeting? Do they know the KSAs for the occupation and the likely tasks and challenges this professional faces? Can they provide a connection between their background, experience, and education and the occupation? Do they use their resume to make that connection during mock interviews?

Prepare, adapt, update resume
Has the candidate prepared, adapted, or updated their resume in order to meet the KSAs and requirements of the job description.
Test the candidate about their resume

Has the candidate prepared a resume? Does it illustrate their readiness to enter the job market and their connection to the industry? Is the resume accomplishment oriented? Does it have the appropriate Professional Objective(s)? You should make sure the candidate is completely familiar with their own resume.

Elevator Speech

Has the candidate prepared an elevator speech that describes their background, interests and professional goals within a 30 second to two-minute time frame? Rehearse the speech with them so that they are comfortable with the presentation: direct, concise, confident.

Dress for Success and Professional Demeanor

Has the candidate prepared proper attire for an interview? Take time to go over what is and is not appropriate to wear on a job interview.

Promptness for interviews and meetings

Have a dress-for-success discussion with the candidate. Do they know what the dress code is for this company and for interviews? Do they present a professional demeanor and will they arrive a little early (but never late) for the interviews?

Mock interviews using behavioral interview techniques

Conduct a few mock interviews with the candidate. If possible, invite a colleague to join these mock interviews – sometimes more than one hiring manager will interview a candidate.

Does the candidate know when they’ve really received a job offer?

Make sure they’ve asked “Is there anything else I can tell you that would support my candidacy?” If appropriate they can also ask “How does my background and experience compare with others you are interviewing?” Be sure they use common sense to gauge when and whether to ask these questions. Be sure they are able describe their professional credentials and certificates. Some employers may not be familiar with stackable, portable credentials.

Components of a job offer

Review the components of a job offer to be sure they understand their status and the protocol. Make sure they’ve actually ASKED to be hired for this job – some employers report that the candidate did not seem interested in the job during the interview.

Thank You notes or emails

Help the candidate develop thank-you notes and emails and encourage them to send these immediately after the interview. If appropriate they may want to include some research they mentioned during the interview. Perhaps they could attach an article or include a hyperlink for the hiring manager’s benefit.
Behavioral Interview Questions

You may expect to be asked the standard questions everyone anticipates at a job interview:

Tell me about yourself. Why should I hire you? What do you bring to the company – what contribution can I expect you’ll make? What are your strongest and weakest points? Where do you expect to be in one year, five years?

You should also expect to be asked behavioral interview questions. Those questions ask how your past professional experience might illustrate how you’d perform your job in the future.

Behavioral interview questions often start with “Tell me about a time when you…” Examples might include:

“Tell me about a time when you…”

- Faced a particular challenge and how you addressed it
- Faced what seemed to be an impossible deadline and how you met it
- Ran into a conflict with a colleague and how you dealt with it
- Were confronted by a difficult customer and how you served them
- Resolved a complicated issue at work
- Won over a difficult supervisor or boss

Another approach the employer might take is to describe a challenge and ask how you’d handle it based on how you’ve handled similar challenges in the past. Examples might include:

- We have a difficult customer who keeps changing their specifications. They are inflexible about their deadlines but want to make changes that may set us back in our scheduling.
- We’ve run out of some raw material that is essential to filling our order.
- Due to weather conditions highways were closed and we could not meet our deliveries.
- A co-worker has reported to you that one of our production lines is unsafe.

The Retention Specialist should work with the job candidate to consider these questions and formulate honest, direct, and concise answers that will impress the hiring managers.
Use this tool to coach a job candidate as they are about to interview for a job and negotiate a job offer. Be sure the candidate will also use common sense – some of these questions will already be answered and based on the corporate culture it may not be appropriate to ask certain questions.

What is the job title?
To whom will you report? What is the chain of command beyond that?
What is the salary?
Is it an hourly wage or exempt?
Is it established by collective bargaining?
When will the job begin?
What are the days and hours of operation and when will you be expected to report to work?
Is there flexibility in the work schedule?
What is the lunch time available to you?
Where will the work take place?
Will you have a desk? Do you work on a shop floor? In a laboratory?
Will you be required to wear and to buy a uniform or protective gear?
What are the main challenges that you will be asked to address?
How will your success in addressing these challenges be measured and by whom?
Is there a probationary period for this job? When does it begin and end?
How often is your job performance evaluated and by whom?
Are you likely to get a bonus or a raise based on excellent performance?
Is there a protocol to follow if you are unsatisfied with the evaluation?
What benefits are offered by the employer?
- Health care – what will be your contribution and the employer’s contribution to the premium?
- What is the deductible?
- Are there benefits for your family?
- Are there dental and vision care?
- Can you contribute to a 401 (K)? Is there also an employer contribution?
- Does the employer reimburse tuition costs for continuing your education?
- Are there other benefits you should know about?
A Retention Specialist can use this tool to assist an employer who is creating a job description. This template contains many sections the employer may not choose to use. It nonetheless gives you an idea of all the information that may be contained in a job description.

Opening paragraph:
Begin with a paragraph about the company’s mission and vision. Identify the department for which the new hire will work. Add one or two sentences about how this department or this job fits into the company’s overall mission.

Job Title:
What is the title of this job based on company naming convention and based on a more familiar term? For example the company may use a title of Machine Technician when a more familiar term may be Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operator or Computerized Numerical Control Operator.

Description:
An overall description of what the job entails. What are the general responsibilities of this job and what are the outcomes or products of this work?

Reporting hierarchy: To whom will this worker report and what are the general performance measures that will be considered for evaluation?

Salary: Is the salary an hourly wage or a per-annum salary? Is the salary specified or is it listed as CWE (commensurate with experience)?

Is this job exempt or non-exempt? Non-exempt jobs may be subject to overtime rules. Exempt jobs tend to be based on salaries that are not tied to an hourly wage.

Collective Bargaining: Is this job within the company’s collective bargaining unit? This would apply if the company has a trade union or labor-management agreement.

Hours of operation: You may want to mention the traditional hours of operation, how many days per week and whether or not there are flexible scheduling options.

Tasks: What are the top tasks involved in performing the duties of this job? Try to list ten tasks and try use verbs whenever possible.

Where is the work performed? Here you may want to describe the indoor or outdoor environment and you will mention the general location of the work facility.
Tools and Technology: What tools and technology will likely be used at this job? Will it be necessary for the worker to have experience with these or can it be learned on the job?

Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, Competencies and Work Activities:

Samples of these can be found at O*NET or in a Competency Model.

Examples:

Knowledge: Mechanical, math, production

Skills: Monitoring, operating, thinking, analyzing

Abilities: Hearing, steadiness, precision, vision

Competencies: An example of an industry-wide technical competency may be Quality Assurance or Supply Chain Logistics

Education and training level: Be sure to specify whether or not a degree or a professional certificate is required. Distinguish between a college-issued certificate and an industry-recognized third-party professional credential.

Interest and Work Styles: sometimes a company may suggest some characteristics of the ideal candidate. For example: The ideal candidate should enjoy solving problems and should be dependable, adaptable, flexible and be willing to take initiative. They should be comfortable working independently (or working in a team or leading a team) and enjoy working in an indoor environment (or working under varied conditions).
Retention Specialist Checklist

☑ Understand the mission and vision of the National Aviation Consortium

☑ Research the industry and related sectors as they relate to the local economy

☑ For NAC that would be aviation, aerospace and manufacturing (at a minimum)

☑ Identify and connect with community-based and faith-based partners that may offer support services such as remedial training and education, soft skills or employability skills training, child care, transportation, substance abuse counseling, immigration services, etc.

☑ Research and identify the nationally recognized industry-endorsed certification partners who can work with the college to align curriculum with industry standards. In manufacturing that would include ACT, NIMS, AWS, MSSC and others.

☑ Create or learn the career pathway designs for students moving into aviation, aerospace and manufacturing careers. These designs show a connection from college coursework to employment from entry level to advanced career level. The designs should include occupation or job titles, what education, certification and stackable credentials are required, salary levels, etc. These designs are works-in-progress – they evolve as the college continues to develop partnerships with business and industry.

☑ Determine a process for how you will help the college and strategic partners identify and address skill gaps in the workforce. This work could begin with brainstorming sessions at strategic partner meetings, one-on-one interviews with local employers, research of other grant-funded projects in the country that address similar skill gaps and challenges, one-on-one interviews with students and workers, local, state and national workforce conferences, research conducted by industry experts such as the Manufacturing Institute. To every extent possible, validate findings with local stakeholders through conferences, interviews and/or surveys. Be sure to include a process to continually update data and to further validate findings.
Follow-Up and Retention Schedule for RS and the Student-Worker Customer

- Incorporate the Job Readiness process described in the Job Readiness Checklist.

- Working with your student-worker customer, determine how often you will remain in contact through their job search, recruitment, hiring, assimilation and retention processes. Capture and update all contact information include landline telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, email addresses, etc. Create “ticklers” on your electronic or hard-copy calendar that remind you when these update conversations should take place. Be sure the student-worker customer does this as well. As a guide (to be customized for each case) consider this schedule:

  - In-person meetings at the beginning of the process – usually once per week
  - Afterwards: phone call follow-up conversations to discuss progress – once per week
  - In person meeting to perform “elevator speech” and to conduct mock interviews – as scheduled
  - Follow-up phone or in-person discussion after interview – within 1 to 2 business days after interview
  - Check-in phone discussion on the first day or work – within 1 to 2 business days after first day of work
  - Follow-up phone discussion during orientation or probation period – at the end of each week
  - Follow-up phone discussions during assimilation period – once or twice a month as needed
  - On-going job retention phone discussions – monthly or as needed. More frequently if a challenge arises that needs attention.
  - Phone or in-person discussion about continuing education and professional development – as needed