

# Job Seeker Toolkit

## Welcome!

Congratulations for taking control of your job search. A comprehensive job search uses a variety of tactics beyond simply applying for online postings. When you use OBIO's *Job Seeker Toolkit*, you will:

1. Expand your outreach to increase the job pool.
2. Improve your search productivity by focusing on proven techniques.
3. Increase your confidence during your search by truly understanding your skills.
4. Develop a simple self-care plan to support your health and wellbeing.

## Introduction: H2BB™ Program

The H2BB™ program is designed to provide a structured, on-the-job learning experience for recent hires and consists of the four elements highlighted below.

- 1) *Candidate/Company Match*: OBIO's Job Board Talent Network platform allows H2BB™ candidates to connect with health science industry employers. Candidates can showcase their skills by building a talent network profile. Companies looking to hire can connect with candidates whose talent network profile matches the skills and qualifications they seek.
- 2) *Extensive Training*: OBIO® provides engaging, content-intensive training modules for new hires during their first few months in their new role. OBIO's interactive training modules, led by industry experts and tailored for the health science industry and member companies, support new hire onboarding, reducing the time needed to become productive.
- 3) *1:1 Mentoring*: OBIO® matches each new hire with a *Subject Matter Expert* (SME) advisor who provides mentorship during the first four months of a new hire's arrival.
- 4) *Networking*: OBIO® provides opportunities for new hires to interact with executives and entrepreneurs in the health science sector through industry-specific events and training.

Whether you are at the start of your career or are an experienced professional that needs a quick refresher, you can make your job search easier if you use the strategies for finding a job outlined in this toolkit.

## Best Wishes for Success!

**Dr. Maura Campbell**  
President and CEO

**Andreea Norman**  
Director, Workforce Development,  
Health to Business Bridge™

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Topic	Page
<b>Job Search Strategy</b> .....	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Path to an Interview</li> <li>• Skills Inventory</li> <li>• Skills Inventory Development</li> <li>• Skills Inventory: Additional Preparation</li> </ul>	
<b>Job Search: Reactive (Job Posted)</b> .....	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify / Customize / Apply / Work It!</li> </ul>	
<b>Job Search: Proactive (No Job Posting)</b> .....	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company Research</li> <li>• Sector-Specific Job Fairs</li> <li>• OBIO® Events</li> <li>• Informational Interviews</li> <li>• Enjoy &amp; Win at Networking</li> <li>• Job Search Bonus: Look After Yourself! (Health &amp; Wellbeing)</li> </ul>	
<b>Prepare for Interview Success</b> .....	22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview Preparation</li> <li>• STAR Method: Responses to Behavioral-Based Questions</li> </ul>	
<b>Accepting an Offer of Employment</b> .....	24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before the Letter of Employment Arrives</li> <li>• Letter of Employment Received</li> <li>• Negotiation: Salary and Beyond</li> </ul>	
<b>Be a Lifelong Learner</b> .....	27
<b>Share Your Feedback</b> .....	27

## Job Search Strategy

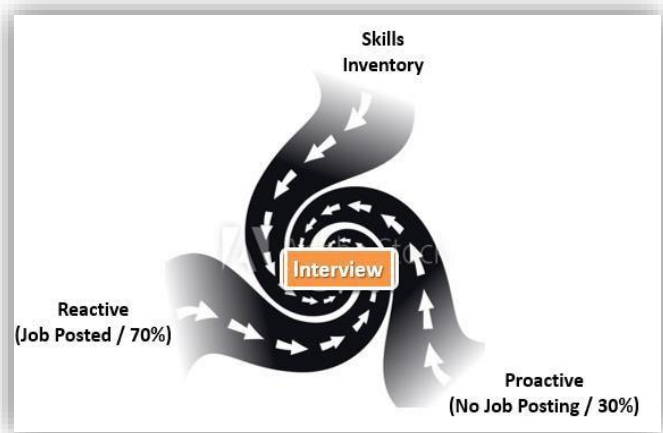
The first step in your job search is to create a strategy designed to direct your efforts to find the career opportunity you want. Invest your time to review this toolkit when developing your strategy because it will help you be productive and focused during your search.

## Path to an Interview

It is a given that the #1 goal of your job search is to get a job. But consider the following:

*If you do not get an interview, you are not even being considered for it; therefore, make securing the interview your focus for this part of your job search.*

In this toolkit, we recommend you follow the three paths (see diagram) that can lead to securing an interview.



## Skills Inventory

It is impossible to convince an employer that you are the best candidate for the job if you do *not* know what you have to offer. Develop your *skills inventory* for the reasons outlined below.

1. Increases your job search productivity by quickly recognizing opportunities that match your skill set.
2. Simplifies your interview preparation because you already understand your skill strengths and those to be developed.
3. Increases your awareness of your transferable skills (e.g., leadership, communication, critical thinking, analysis, and organization) that can be used in a variety of jobs, which is particularly important when you are new to the workforce or if your experience is outside of Canada.

## Skills Inventory Development

There are countless skills inventory templates on the internet, so creating one from scratch is *not* necessary. Review several formats and determine the one that works best for you. Keep in mind that your skills inventory summary is only for you, so there is no “right” format to use.

### Sample Format:

- Below is a portion of a skills inventory chart designed for you to rate your skills on a scale of 1-10.
- For each skill, you can identify the following:
  - What skills have I acquired and feel competent using?
  - What skills do I *enjoy*, even if I’m *not* proficient at them?
  - What skills would I like to learn or develop further?

Management and Self-Management Skills	Feel Competent (Strengths)	Enjoy/Favorites	Want/Need to Develop (Weaknesses)
Manage people, delegate tasks, direct, oversee or motivate	10		
Sell, negotiate, convince, promote, or persuade			6
Being patient with others			2
Getting interested/excited about the task at hand		8	
Knowing how to take directions			5
Motivating myself to do what needs to get done	9		

### Upon Completion:

- Once completed, you can easily see your strengths and areas to develop.
- To look at your inventory in another way, sort by “feel competent” so you can see all your strengths grouped together. A sort can be done for the other columns too.



- For skills that need to be developed, consider taking an online course (e.g., [Udemy](#), [LinkedIn](#)) to strengthen your knowledge.
- If you find it becomes an area of interest or is a desirable skill for your role, consider earning a certificate at a post-secondary institution (e.g., [University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies](#)). (Note: Taking courses is also a way to expand your network)

## Skills Inventory: Additional Preparation

Although the two activities below are not skills per se, they are an important part of your job search preparation.

### Finalize References:

Most companies will ask for references before extending an offer of employment, so have them ready to provide on demand.

- Identify people you believe would serve as *academic and professional* references.
- Contact your potential references and ask if they would serve as your reference. Upon agreement, ask which email and phone number is best for them to receive reference inquiries.
- Once you have delivered your references to the potential employer, contact all references directly to alert them to expect a call/email shortly.
  - Tell your reference the company name and role for which you have interviewed. Help your reference help you by providing additional information that you believe is relevant for the role (e.g., employer has indicated being organized is critical for the role). Do *not* send the job description (unless requested); simply send one or two key points, if appropriate.

### Introductions Others Can Use:

- As you conduct your job search, you will expand your professional network, often through introductions by people in your network to their contacts.
- Make it easy for introductions to be made by providing a brief paragraph describing yourself and what you are looking for (e.g., to meet and gather insights into your role).
- Be sure to write it from the perspective of the person doing the introduction.

## Introductions Others Can Use (cont'd):

*Example:*

Sanjay recently graduated with a Ph.D. in \_\_\_\_\_ from University of Ottawa. During his graduate work, Sanjay has continuously demonstrated his (key skills). He is currently researching \_\_\_\_\_ roles in \_\_\_\_\_, and would like to speak with you to gain a better understanding of the culture, types of roles, etc.

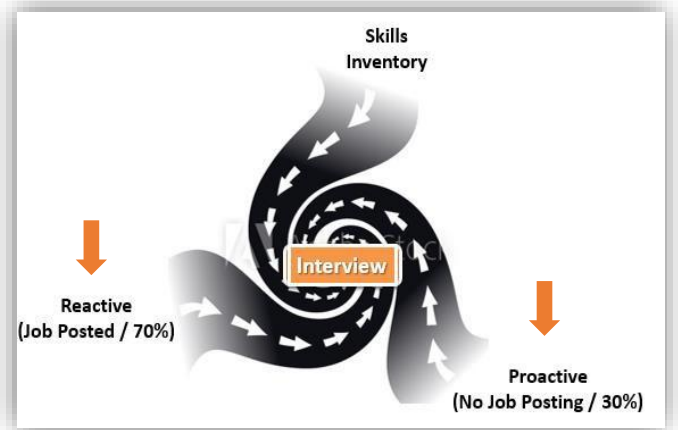


- If you are uncomfortable asking for assistance, keep in mind that people generally like to help others, but they need to know exactly what you are asking for; therefore, it is critical that your request is clear and concise, not vague.

## Job Search: Reactive / Proactive

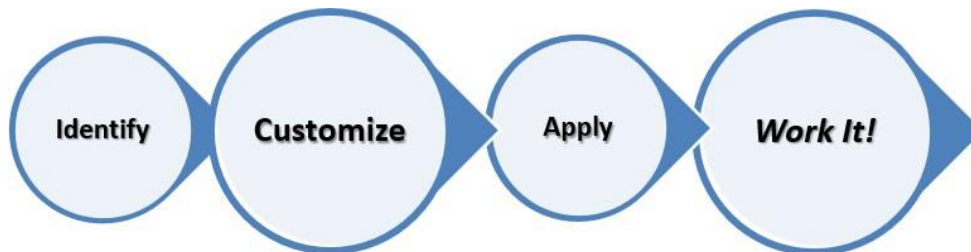
With your skills inventory completed, you are ready to conduct your job search.

You can now invest your time looking for career opportunities, both reactively and proactively, as outlined below.



## Job Search: Reactive (Job Posted)

### Four Step Reactive Job Search Approach:



### Step 1: Identify

Activate your search by reviewing online job boards because they not only show current openings, but also provide insight into the current job market.

#### *Before Investigating Job Opportunities:*

- You will increase your job search productivity when you research and identify job titles and roles that are applicable for your current experience and skillset.
- Understanding your target role will also help you when networking and conducting informational interviews.



## Step 1: Identify (cont'd)

### International Job Boards

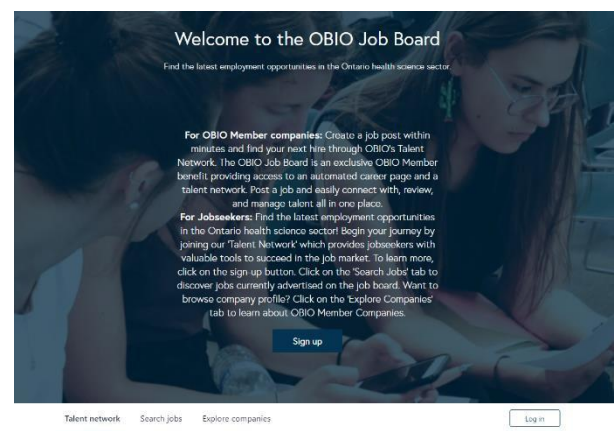
Below lists some of the most popular international job boards because they advertise positions available around the world. Search these job boards to see opportunities in different industries, companies, job types, and locations.

- [Indeed](#)
- [Monster](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Hired](#)
- [ZipRecruiter](#)

### Local Job Boards

Refer to local job boards on a regular basis because local companies may not advertise on international job boards. From a company perspective, local job boards, such as those listed below, give companies the opportunity to tap into a pool of candidates who are looking to contribute immediately.

- [OBIO® Job Board](#)
- [The PetriDish](#)
- [MaRS Discovery District Job Board](#)
- [Workintech](#)



- Consider creating a profile on various job boards because recruiters access them when looking to fill a position.
- Choose to receive notifications of new job postings that match your profile, if offered.

## Step 2: Customize

Now that you have identified a job opportunity, it is essential to make it clear to the employer that you are the right person for the job.

Your most relevant experience and accomplishments should appear in the *upper portion* of your resume because research indicates the recruiters only spend a couple of seconds looking at a resume. They might also view your resume on a smartphone or tablet, which limits their already quick glance to just the top third of the page. (Source: [The Muse](#))

### Customize Your Resume:

As you review your resume, consider the points below.

<b>DO</b>	<b>DON'T</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep your resume clear, concise, targeted, and honest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include unnecessary personal or confidential information</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customize your professional summary statement for each opportunity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make a general statement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlight the experience most connected to the job you are applying for by bringing it to the top</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List ALL experience, especially when <i>not</i> applicable to a role</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reframe experience to match the job description</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use unnecessary jargon or acronyms</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use simple words and action verbs as well as words from the job description to highlight your skills/experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use multiple fonts and colours</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Bold</b> or <i>italicize</i> to highlight key words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit your resume and cover letter without someone else proof-reading it</li> </ul>

Below highlights descriptive, action-oriented words useful as you customize your resume and cover note.

Skill	Describe Your Skill with Action Words
Team Player	Work with, collaborate, partner, participate, merge, unite, contribute, develop relationships with
Leader	Facilitate, manage, supervise, teach, direct, delegate, mediate, recruit, advise, administer, moderate, instruct, guide, counsel, coach, arbitrate, liaise, coordinate, inspire, influence
Thrives in a Fast-Paced Environment	Prioritize, expedite, organize, manage, multitask, dynamic environment, high-volume
Strong Communicator	Compose, write, present, speak, interview, lobby, persuade, negotiate, author, discuss, interface, clarify, articulate
Creative	Introduce, initiate, solve, create, implement, design, launch, pioneer, innovate
Self-Starter	Independently, anticipate, identify/resolve, offer, volunteer

Source: [The Muse](#)

For additional descriptive words from Zety see:  
[240 Resume Words: Action Verbs, Power Words, Good Adjectives](#)

Customizing your resume again and again can feel monotonous. When the hiring manager quickly reviews your resume and can immediately see that you are a good fit for the role, you will be happy you took the time to customize it.



- Have someone proofread your resume and cover letter **before** submitting them because it is difficult to proofread your own document.
- Services like [jobscan.co](http://jobscan.co) compare your resume to the job description and provide guidance for enhancing it. Do *not* invest too much time updating your resume to suit the system. Simply use jobscan’s feedback as a guide.

### Customize Your Cover Letter:

You may have heard that cover letters are no longer necessary, but that is *not* true. A one-page cover letter is important because it expresses your personal interest in the job and highlights why you are the best candidate under consideration.

Cover letters typically follow the format outlined below.

1. **Salutation:** A professional greeting that addresses the hiring manager by name.
2. **Introduction:** An attention-grabbing opening paragraph that introduces you and the application for the open role.
3. **Body Paragraphs:** At least two paragraphs that read as a guided story to describe how your unique blend of education, professional experience, and ambitions combine to demonstrate you are the ideal candidate for the job. Do not simply reiterate your resume.
4. **Closing Paragraph:** Include a call to action (CTA) such as asking the hiring manager to invite you for an interview.

(Source: [ResumeGenius](#))

Be sure to allocate ample time to develop your cover letter because each letter requires time and energy to present yourself professionally to employers.

### Step 3: Apply

You have invested a significant amount of time to identify the job opportunity and to customize your resume and cover letter, so make sure you follow the stated process to apply for the role. For large companies, you must apply via the official process, even if you have a contact willing to forward your resume to the hiring manager.



#### Attention Women:

- The Harvard Business Review reveals that men apply for a job when they meet only 60% of the qualifications. Women apply only if they meet 100% of them.
- *Women ... have more faith in yourselves.*

## Step 4: Work It!

Your work does *not* end once you apply for the job. Remember that your focus right now is to secure an interview. During this final step, your goal is to get your resume in the hands of the hiring manager. If the decision-maker does *not* see your resume, you are *not* going to be considered for the job.

### Identify the Hiring Manager:

With a little bit of research, you can identify the hiring manager because the job description typically indicates who the role will report to (e.g., Laboratory Coordinator reports to Laboratory Manager) on a daily basis.

#### 1. Search LinkedIn:

- Conduct a search for Laboratory Manager and the company name.
- The search results will either clearly identify the name of the Laboratory Manager (Manager) or from the people listed, you can make a reasonable guess.
  - *Mutual Contact:* If you have a mutual contact, reach out to the person you know and ask if s/he knows the Manager because often people do *not* actually know those in their LinkedIn network.

If your contact knows the mutual contact, ask if s/he would be open to forwarding your resume/cover letter to the Manager. You are *not* asking for an interview because that is *not* appropriate; your goal is to get your resume in the hands of the hiring Manager.

Once completed, send an email note of thanks and indicate you will let him/her know the outcome. Be sure to follow up once you know if you secured the interview or not.

#### 2. Contact Manager Directly on LinkedIn:

- The goal of contacting the Manager is to get your resume to him/her.
- In your brief note, approximately 100 words, simply introduce yourself, indicate that you have applied for the position and ask him/her to review your resume. You are *not* asking for an interview (or informational interview) because it is *not* appropriate, and you should follow the hiring process.
- Note: If you have the Manager's business email address, you can send a message directly instead of using LinkedIn. Your brief note should be the same as described above.

## Identify the Hiring Manager (cont'd):

### 3. *Notify Your Network:*

- Do *not* rely exclusively on LinkedIn to determine if people in your network have a contact at the company with the job you applied for. Send a brief email to your contacts and ask if anyone knows someone in the company.
- In the event they do know someone at the company, ask your contact if s/he would be open to introducing you to their contact. Provide the self-introduction you wrote while preparing for your job search (see page 7).
- If you connect with the company contact, your goal is to find out if s/he would be open to forwarding your resume/cover letter to the Manager because an internal referral almost always guarantees your resume will be reviewed; it does not guarantee an interview.
- Once completed, send an email note of thanks and indicate you will let him/her know the outcome. Be sure to follow up once you know if you secured the interview or not.

### ***Don't Give Up!***

- Continue to try to raise awareness for your resume until you secure an interview, or it appears (e.g., no communication three-weeks after the application deadline) you are *not* being considered for the role.
- Ask other job seekers for their suggestions on how to connect with the hiring Manager during your job search.
- The *Networking* section (see page 20) provides ideas for expanding your network, which will help your efforts.



## Job Search: Proactive (No Job Posting)

It is vital for an effective job search to research companies of all sizes in your target industry to identify potential opportunities. Below highlights tactics you can employ to conduct a proactive job search.

### *Before Investigating Job Opportunities:*

- You will increase your job search productivity when you research and identify job titles and roles that are applicable for your current experience and skillset.
- Understanding your target role will also help you when networking and conducting informational interviews.

## Company Research

### *Company Websites:*

A company website contains enough information to help you determine if it is an organization that you would like to pursue. Review the following website pages to gain insight into the organization:

- Careers section (e.g., open positions, “working for” describes benefits)
- Various departments/divisions (i.e., identify in what area you would like to work)
- Leadership Team
- Company Mission, Vision & Values
- Annual Report
- News (press releases) & Events
- Social Media (links to various platforms)

### *News Media Stories:*

For an external, independent, third-party perspective of the company, conduct a Google search for recent news stories. Search for general media coverage (e.g., Globe & Mail) and industry-specific publications for recent updates about the company and its competitors. Reading recent media coverage will help you gain perspective on the company’s reputation and position in the sector.

## Sector-Specific Job Fairs

Before you attend a job fair, develop a plan (see below) to make the most of your time there.

- *Prior to attending:*
  - Pre-register for the job fair, so you will receive a list of participating companies. Review each company and identify those you want to talk with about open positions.
  - Bring multiple *printed* copies of your resume and business cards, if you have them. Although you will likely have to email your resume to be considered for a position, it is good to have your resume on-hand for recruiters to quickly review it and ask questions.
  - Prepare a brief self-introduction that includes a description of the type of job you are searching for and your qualifications for it.
- *Attending a Job Fair:*
  - Visit your target companies and have a conversation with at least one recruiter.
  - Consider recruiter conversations as mini-interviews, so stay focused and present yourself professionally.
  - When discussing the position you want, get an understanding of the key requirements (job descriptions do not always make it clear) and the hiring process.
- *Post-Job Fair:*
  - Within 24-hours of a job fair, email a brief note to the recruiter and reiterate the position you would like to interview for and indicate that you have applied (will apply).
  - Send a LinkedIn Connection Request with a personalized message (e.g., Great meeting yesterday at the Job Fair...) to everyone you met because you want to expand your professional network. If you promised to follow up with information, be sure to send it quickly to demonstrate you are reliable and trustworthy.



- There are a number of websites that offer free (or inexpensive) business cards.
- Offering your business cards during an introduction demonstrates a professional approach to your job search.



## OBIO® Events

OBIO® events include pre-employment training, such as professional skills and company presentations on hiring practices, as well as investment, regulatory, and state of the industry by OBIO® network members.

Sign up for the OBIO® newsletter and/or join the OBIO® Talent Network to receive event notifications.

### *Preparing to Attend:*

- Follow all of the same steps as described above.
- Since this is *not* a job fair promoting open positions, when talking with people, if appropriate, describe the type of work you are looking for and ask if they know of any job openings at your level.

## Informational Interviews

An informational interview is an informal conversation with someone working in an area of interest to you. The purpose of the interview is *not* to get a job or ask for an interview for an open position. Instead, the goal is to find out about jobs you might like and see if they fit your interests and personality or to get an inside look at a company.

### **Informational Interview Process At-A-Glance:**

1. *Identify a person to interview.*
2. *Prepare and send your email:*
  - a) Include a brief self-introduction, name of mutual contact and your hopes for the meeting.
3. *Prepare for and conduct informational interview.*
4. *Post-Interview Follow-up.*

## Informational Interviews (cont'd)

### Interview Preparation:

- Develop authentic questions.
- Understand what you *really* want to learn.
- Ask open-ended questions encourage discussion.
- Define your ask (i.e., what do you want from this person – contacts? aware of opportunities?). Have several asks in mind, but only ask for one.

### Conduct Informational Interview:

1. Restate your objective (i.e., gather information).
2. *Brief* overview of yourself, education and/or work experience.
3. Direct the interview by keeping the conversation flowing and on topic.
4. Limit meeting to the agreed-upon timeframe (e.g., 30-minutes).
5. Wrap-up with the meeting with your ask.
  - You may have to change your ask on-the-spot based on your conversation. You prepared several asks, so move down to the next one.

### Post-Interview Follow-Up:

- Within 24-hours, send an email expressing your thanks for the meeting.
  - Do *not* ask for anything in this email because it may appear that you are saying thank you to simply get something else.
  - If you promised to provide information, include it in the email to demonstrate you are reliable and trustworthy. If you need additional time to prepare the information, send the thank you email as planned and indicate when you will send it.
  - Send a LinkedIn Connection Request with a personalized message (e.g., *Thank you again for meeting with me to discuss ...*) to the person you interviewed because you want to expand your professional network.

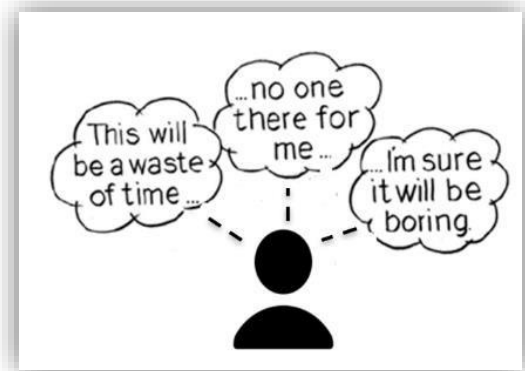
## Enjoy & Win at Networking

Does the cartoon capture some of your feelings when you think about networking? For many, the answer is yes.

To start to enjoy networking, stop thinking of it as “networking” -- think of it as making friends or simply having a conversation with interesting people.

By thinking of an event as an opportunity to meet and talk with new people and possibly learning something new, you eliminate the self-imposed pressure to “network”.

During your conversations, you can share ideas, contacts, information, and resources with many interesting people, and they will likely do the same with you. When you prepare before each event your confidence will increase too.



- *Quality vs. Quantity:* Networking success is *not* measured by the number of business cards you collect or distribute. Keep in mind that 10 mutually beneficial business relationships are much better than 75 casual contacts. (See [Five Principles of a Mutually Beneficial Partnership](#))
- *Networking Do's and Don'ts*

Do	Don't
Listen/Learn/Ask Questions	Always be selling
Be authentic	Be ingenuine
Offer help (e.g., connection)	Make it all about you
Before leaving the conversation, ask for permission to contact them (if appropriate)	Forget to follow-up

## Enjoy & Win at Networking (cont'd)

### Networking Preparation:

When you develop a plan to meet people at industry events, you create a road map to achieve your goal of expanding your network, you also increase the possibility of having fun along the way.

- *Where can I network?*
  - OBIO® Events
  - Associations: Professional and Alumni
  - Meetup.com
  - LinkedIn Groups
  - Conferences / Trade Shows
  - Board of Trade / Chamber of Commerce
- *Develop and practice your “personal elevator pitch”.*
  - To open up a conversation and quickly captivate people, create a self-introduction that engages them.
  - Your elevator pitch is a way to share your expertise and credentials quickly and effectively with people who do *not* know you.
  - Give your elevator pitch to your mentor/advisor and ask for feedback.
  - Practice your elevator pitch, so that it flows easily when you use it.
- *Find out who will be at the event:*
  - Review the people and companies slated to attend and identify specific people you would like to meet while at the event.
  - For your first few in-person events, find a co-worker or friend to go with you, so you have someone to walk in with because it will increase your comfort level.

### Networking at an Event:

- Whether in person or online, always be yourself -- be authentic -- at an event.
- As you meet people, listen to what they have to say and ask questions. Remind yourself that you are simply having a conversation. As the conversation unfolds, you will start to determine if this is someone you would like to keep in touch with after the event.

## Post-Event Networking:

- Follow-up with emails to your new contacts and express that you enjoyed the conversation and if you offered to provide information (or similar) include it. When you follow through on your commitment you build trust and respect.
- Send a LinkedIn Connection Request with a personalized message (e.g., *Great to meet you last night at (event name) ...*) to the people you met because your goal was to expand your professional network.

### Meeting People at Virtual Events:



- You will *not* be able to shake hands, but you can connect to people and start building relationships during virtual events.
- Review the [15 Tips on Networking During a Virtual Event](#) written by event platform company, Whova.

## Job Search Bonus

### Look After Yourself! (Health & Wellbeing)

- *Define job search hours:*
  - You *cannot* look for a job 24/7.
  - Each week establish your work hours (e.g., 9:00 AM – Noon; 1:00 – 5:00 PM).
  - Structure your “work week” knowing that you want to allocate time toward your proactive/reactive job search and networking.
- *Complete your daily wrap-up activities:*
  - Develop a plan for the following day summarizing priority activities.
  - Take a few minutes to review your accomplishments and acknowledge your work. Be sure to recognize the “little successes” (e.g., new contact replied to your email).
- *Schedule and take your personal time:*
  - Be sure to spend some time each day doing activities that you enjoy (e.g., exercise, hobbies, talking with friends, watching Netflix).

## Prepare for Interview Success

**Congratulations, you got an interview!** Now it is time to prepare for the interview, so you can demonstrate that you are the best person for the job and the best fit for the company.

### Interview Preparation:

1. *Do your homework on the company:* Revisit the *Job Search: Proactive* in this guide for research steps.
2. *Be a great storyteller:* Using your skills inventory, develop clear, concise stories that highlight your skills (see *STAR Method* below) and how they apply to the job.
3. *Ask smart questions:* Good interviewers will always ask if you have questions and it is important that you have two or three questions related to the job or company. For examples of relevant questions, Google “good interview questions to ask employer”.

### Practice, Practice, Practice

Practice your interview answers to help reduce stress during your actual interview because this will allow you to focus on connecting with your interviewer rather than struggling to answer.

The more familiar you are with the types of interview questions and how to answer them effectively, the better prepared you are to demonstrate that you are the best candidate for the job.

Source: [The Balance Careers](#)

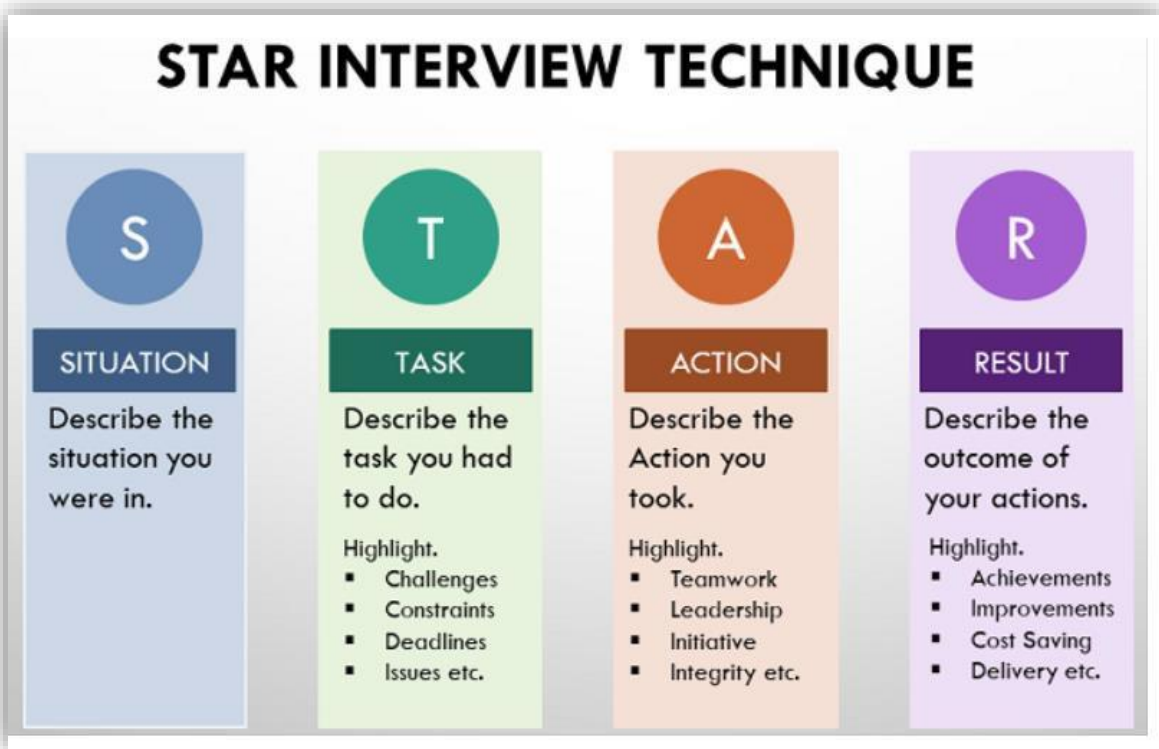


### STAR Method: Responses to Behavioral-Based Questions

Behavioral interview questions are asked to gauge your problem-solving skills because they require you to share a *specific experience highlighting your strengths and skills* (see STAR chart below). Your answers provide the interviewer with insight into your personality, skills and abilities.

To successfully answer behavioral-based questions you must prepare and practice. There is *no short-cut* to prepare for behavioral interview questions.

STAR Method (cont'd):



- Review Indeed's article and video, "[30 Behavioral Interview Questions to Prepare For \(with Example Answers\)](#)" when preparing for interviews.
- You can develop answers to these questions well in advance of securing an interview, so you can practice your clear, concise answers. *Do not wait until the day before your interview to prepare.*

## Accepting an Offer of Employment

**Congratulations!** Your job search strategy and hard work paid off – *you have a job offer*. Whether this is your first or tenth offer of employment, you must review it carefully, so you understand the commitment you are making to the company and what you are receiving in return for it.

### Before the Letter of Employment Arrives:

- Often the hiring Manager will make a *conditional verbal offer* of employment before sending an email. During this conversation you typically discuss start date and salary as well as answer questions you may have.
  - If there are specific dates you must have off work (e.g., one-week vacation planned) mention them during the call.
- The offer of employment is *not* official until both parties have signed the “letter” (typically sent via email).

### Letter of Employment Received:

Despite your excitement about receiving a job offer, do *not* accept it immediately because you want time to review your compensation package. **Most job offers have a time limit** (e.g., 1-3 business days) for acceptance, so it is critical that you act quickly, or the offer could be withdrawn.

### Offer Letter Elements:

Every company has their own process for issuing job offers, but the offer letter (typically an email) includes the elements highlighted below.

- Start Date:
  - The date should reflect the verbal agreement you made with the hiring Manager. It is possible that the date reflects the desired start date by the company and was not updated to reflect the agreed upon date. Mistakes happen, so simply flag it for correction.
  - If you are hired on contract, an end date will be included.



### *Offer Letter Elements (cont'd):*

- Salary:
  - During your verbal acceptance of the job offer, you would have finalized your salary, so it should be the same in the letter. For salary negotiation details, see page 27.
  - In addition, you would have reviewed salary surveys for your position to determine if it is within the acceptable range.
- Vacation/Paid Time Off (PTO):
  - Most companies establish standard vacation/PTO durations (e.g., two weeks in the first year) and it will be documented in your letter.
  - If you have secured an agreement from your Manager on specific time off (e.g., planned vacation), ensure it is included in the letter.
- Job Title / Reporting Relationship:
  - Your job title and Manager's name is typically included in the letter of employment.
  - It is important to note that although your Manager has been named, by the time your first day arrives, this may change due to an organization restructure, resignation/termination, among other reasons.
- Hours of Work:
  - If you have agreed to working hours outside of the company norm, request to insert it into the letter, so it is documented. It is important to note, however, that this agreement could change in the future.
- Employment Termination:
  - Companies outlined the desired number of weeks of notice for you to give if you decide to leave the company.
  - The letter may also outline reasons the company could terminate your employment or direct you to the employee handbook.
- Condition of Employment:
  - In the health science sector, it is not uncommon for employees to sign non-disclosure or confidentiality agreements as a condition of employment.
  - Other conditions of employment will be summarized in the letter or directed to the employee handbook.

### Offer Letter Elements (cont'd):

- Offer Sign-Back/Acceptance:
  - As mentioned previously, job offers typically have a time limit (e.g., 1-3 business days) to accept the offer of employment in writing.
  - Assume that this timeframe is **not** negotiable. If you need additional time, you can ask for it, but risk losing the opportunity.

### Negotiation: Salary and Beyond

To enter a compensation package negotiation, you must understand your worth in the market (e.g., salary range) and the unique skills you bring to the company. Research compensation ranges by consulting salary guides and other online recruitment aids before entering a negotiation. H2BB™ resources provide access to several salary guides.

In addition, look beyond salary when negotiating by considering benefits such as paid parking or public transit pass, gym membership, additional vacation days, and more.

It is recommended that you research the market to ensure your expectations are reasonable and then spend time learning how to negotiate. The internet has countless articles and videos on how to negotiate a job offer; below are three informative articles.

- TheMuse: [How to Negotiate Salary: 37 Tips You Need to Know](#)
- LinkedIn: [How to negotiate starting salary when you're a new graduate](#)
- WayUp: [The Best And Worst Things To Say During Entry-Level Salary Negotiation](#)

## Be a Lifelong Learner

Be a continuous learner throughout your career. Employers want employees who not only have the knowledge, skills, and ability to do the job well, but are also committed to growth and development today and tomorrow.

The job market continually changes due to technological innovation, offshoring work, and other trends. To successfully navigate the ever-changing work environment, ongoing skills development and the mastery of new technologies is a must. Build lifelong learning into your professional life for advancement and personal satisfaction.

## Share Your Feedback

Our goal is to make this toolkit relevant to job seekers today and in the future. If you have suggestions to enhance or update this toolkit, please take a moment to share your ideas by emailing us at [andreeanorman@obio.ca](mailto:andreeanorman@obio.ca). Your feedback is greatly appreciated.