RESEARCHING EMPLOYERS

The purpose of this lesson is to help you find employers that are most in line with your skills and career goals. The closer the match between a job and your work preferences, financial needs and transferable skills, the more likely you will be successful and happy in that job.

HOW TO FIND JOB OPPORTUNITIES?

The following is a list of ways you can research careers:

- Job shadow
- Volunteer
- Internships
- Training or apprenticeship programs
- Job share
- Employment counseling
- Fact-finding calls: Interview people at the company
- Read business magazines or the business section of newspapers
- Small Business Administration
- Colleges and universities
- Temporary agencies/services
- Internet
- Social networking
- Reach out to your network

EXPLORE YOUR CAREER OPTIONS

My Next Move for Veterans and the Department of Labor have interactive tools for new job seekers, students, and other career explorers to learn more about their career options. With My Next Move, you can:

- Explore over 900 different careers and see important information including skills, tasks, salaries, and employment outlook on easy-to-read career reports.
- Look at related apprenticeships and training, and search actual job openings.
- Find careers through a keyword search; by browsing industries; or through the O*NET Interest Profiler, a tool that offers customized career suggestions based on a person's interests and level of education and work experience.

Career reports feature the most important knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the work, explained in language that's easy to understand. Outlook and Education sections let users
find salary info, job postings, and training opportunities. The visual design enables users to identify a career's key points or explore a career in depth.

Visitors interested in specific careers can get exploring quickly with an intuitive keyword search; over 900 career options are only a few keystrokes away. Users looking for a broader range of opportunities can browse industries, exploring over a dozen; each featuring a range of careers to choose from, including those in the green economy and with a bright outlook for job opportunities.

**Military Occupation Codes Crosswalk** ([http://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC](http://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC)) helps you find a civilian career similar to your military job. This tool will assist you to translate military occupational codes (MOC) into civilian skill equivalents and learn about related civilian career paths.

**National Labor Exchange** ([http://us.jobs/index.asp](http://us.jobs/index.asp)) As mentioned earlier, the National Labor Exchange (NLX) is a unique public-private partnership sponsored by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) that leverages private (non-profit-owned) technology and existing state workforce development agency resources.

**FACT-FINDING CALLS**

Calling a company to obtain information can result in valuable insights as well as the possibility of speaking with a hiring manager. There are cold calls and referral calls (warm leads). Your networking efforts will help to create these warm leads. Preparedness and professionalism as well as asking relevant and concise questions go a long way towards building your network. Here are some guidelines for calling a company for information:

- Research the company website to gather information and formulate questions.
- If you are asking for someone’s time, be clear about your intention; you want to set an appointment for a phone conversation or meet in person.
- Find out what it is like to work for the organization or company.
- Find out how the managers manage their team.
- Get a snapshot of the day-to-day business.
- Identify the hiring manager.
PREPARE TO MAKE THE CALL
There is no substitute for preparation—know what information you want to gather before you make the call. Being prepared will give you confidence and credibility.

- Identify companies where you might like to work. Make a list of places to call, including the company name, address, phone number and any facts about the company you may obtain from your contacts or research results. Use the template at the end of this section to make a company information form of your own.
- Find the name (and as much information as you can) about someone who has a connection to the position or works at the targeted company.
- Write an outline of what you are going to say on the phone. This will help you to be less nervous and to assure you get all the information you need. Additionally, you will be perceived as organized and professional. See the scripts at the end of this section.
- Rehearse what you’re going to say; it becomes easier to make these calls after you get into a rhythm.
- As you research companies, keep a record of the following information on your company information form. Keep this information organized and easily accessible:
  - Number of employees
  - What the company does (service and/or products)
  - Business volume, net worth, profit and loss, company stability, etc. (see the company’s annual report if available)
  - Company competitors
  - Company history and future plans
  - Company locations (headquarters, branch offices, international offices, retail outlets, etc.)
  - Salary range or hourly rates paid for various positions
  - Contact names (department heads, human resource manager, people you know who work there, former employees, etc.)
  - Employment activity (recent hiring, firing, layoffs, etc.)
  - Titles of positions that interest you
DURING THE CALL

Introduce yourself. Begin the conversation using the name of the person who referred you (i.e., “Hello, Jane, John Doe suggested I call....)

- Give a brief description of your background.
- Mention you need only ten minutes of the person’s time.
- Ask the receptionist for the name of the person who you should contact; if calling human resources, that may be the head of a department, shop manager or foreman, etc. Write down the person’s name. Then ask to speak to that person.
- Find out the position of the person you are talking to. Giving your speech to the wrong person can be a waste of time for both parties.
- Do not give too much information. If your purpose is to get a face-to-face appointment, tell enough to interest the person in your skills, set an appointment and get off the phone.
- Ask the employer how your skills can benefit the company and what additional skills would make you more employable.
- Use a friendly, conversational tone of voice.
- Try to speak at the same pace as the person you are talking to. This will help you communicate clearly and effectively.
- Keep good records. Make notes about every call you make. You never know when you will have to refer back to a conversation.
- Try to obtain some sort of information from everyone you contact.

AFTER THE CALL

Persist. Make new contacts every day and follow up on every lead. This is not easy for everyone. You will hear “no” more often than you hear “yes.”

- Send a follow-up thank you email when appropriate.
- Be sure to log each call on your Company Information form.
- Evaluate your process and performance after each call.
USING A SCRIPT

When making your phone calls, use a script if it makes you more comfortable. It may help to get the conversation started smoothly. When you are not sure what career you want to pursue and are in the initial stages of exploration, you want to speak with individuals who can look at long range projections and understand your field of interest. For example:

“I am seeking information about the (medical, aviation, electronics) field and I would like your advice. I know you are very busy, but I only need about 5-10 minutes of your time.”

- What do you see as a growth area for this industry?
- What problems or issues do you see that will affect this area in the future?
- What job titles do you see as hard to fill in the future and why?

SAMPLE SCRIPTS FOR CALLING FOR SOMEONE WHEN YOU HAVE THE RIGHT NAME

Call the organization, and when someone answers, merely ask to be put through to the person you are trying to reach. If you are asked, “What is this call regarding?” avoid saying you are calling about a job. This reply will almost certainly get you redirected to human resources. You are better served by saying something such as the following:

“I am researching your organization, and I was told this person could help. Is he or she in?”

This follow-up question (“Is he or she in?”) is a redirection technique used in sales to provide a suitable answer to the individual’s question and immediately get the person thinking of the next task, which is to answer your question. Simply ask to be put through.

If the person who has answered the phone is not going to put your call through, remain polite and end the call without being difficult. Do not give up; just call back another day, preferably at a different time of day, even at lunch time. The backup person who answers the phone during a break may often connect you to the contact.

If you are transferred to the person’s voice mail, leave a message similar to the email script provided. Your purpose is simple: a brief conversation about the work environment, company culture and what is required to work in specific occupations.
You want to make a good connection with them, so do not call too frequently or talk too long. It is a good idea to make a long list of people you can call to maximize your research.

**CALLING SOMEONE WHEN YOU DO NOT HAVE THE NAME**

- **Employer:** “Thank you for calling XYZ Company; how may I help you?”
- **Applicant:** “Hi. I hope you can help me. I would like to speak with the supervisor of the [insert appropriate department].
- **Employer:** “All right, I will connect the call.”
- **Applicant:** “Thank you. Can you tell me that person’s direct number before you transfer me?”
- **Employer:** “What is this in reference to?
- **Applicant:** “I am interested in knowing more about the [specific position] in your company and hoped to get more information.”

**SENDING AN EMAIL TO SOMEONE YOU DO NOT KNOW**

An email that would be appropriate to send to someone you do not know might read like the following:

Dear [insert the person’s name],

I am a [insert your job title or even your veteran status] researching careers in the [type of industry]. I am reaching out to you because I came across your profile while doing my research and thought we should speak. I am considering my next move and want to know more about [insert company/business/organization name]. My hope is to connect with you for a few brief minutes to get your opinion on what it is like to work there.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Your name

Your phone number

Your email address
SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR FACT-FINDING CALLS

- **Employer:** “Thank you for calling XYZ Company; how may I help you?”
- **Applicant:** “Hello, just a quick call to introduce myself. My name is [insert your name here], may I have a few minutes of your time to ask you about your company?”
- **Employer:** “No.”
- **Applicant:** “I completely understand. Who else can I speak to?”
- **Employer:** “xx.”
- OR the employer may ask,
- **Employer:** “What is this about?”
- **Applicant:** “Thank you. I am interested in learning about your company. I would like to get your opinion on what it is like to work there. Do you have a few brief minutes to talk?”
- **Employer:** “xx.”
- **Applicant:** “Thank you for your time today. Who else should I speak with at your company? Will you introduce me through phone or email?”
- **Employer:** “xx.”
- **Applicant:** “You have been so helpful, thank you. Goodbye.”

RESEARCHING SALARIES

When researching and evaluating a position you wish to apply for, you should determine the typical salary range for that position. This is especially true if the position announcement does not include salary information or if you are uncertain whether your salary expectations are realistic.

WHERE TO RESEARCH

These websites provide average salaries or salary ranges for particular job titles and locations:

- **Salary.com:** [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com)
- **Salary Expert:** [https://www.salaryexpert.com/](https://www.salaryexpert.com/)
- **Glassdoor:** [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com) provides salary information for actual positions within local companies. You may have to register (for free) to use Glassdoor for detailed searches.
You can also research salaries by talking to someone in a position that is the same or similar to the one you are applying for, either in the same company you wish to work for or in a comparable business.

Bear in mind that pay may vary depending on what a company can afford to pay, seniority or years of experience with a company, and how much the company values the role.

**ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES FOR VETERANS**

Here are some additional links to employment resources of Veterans to help translate your military skills and find a job:

- **Military Skills Translator** [https://www.careerinfonet.org/moc/](https://www.careerinfonet.org/moc/)
- **My Next Move for Veterans** [https://www.mynextmove.org/vets/](https://www.mynextmove.org/vets/)
- **California Department of Human Resources** [https://www.calcareers.ca.gov/](https://www.calcareers.ca.gov/)
- **California Employment Development Department (EDD)** [http://edd.ca.gov/](http://edd.ca.gov/)
- **O-Net Online** [https://www.onetonline.org/](https://www.onetonline.org/)
- **Work for Warriors** [http://workforwarriors.org/](http://workforwarriors.org/)
RESOURCES

FIND A VA FACILITY
Use the facility locator or call 1-877-222-VETS (8387).

CONTACT YOUR COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE
CalVet strongly recommends you work with the CVSO nearest you. Your CVSO can guide you through the benefits and services available as well as help connect you with other local resources.

The County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO) are locally funded agencies established to assist veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services accrued through military service. These County Veteran Service Offices promote the interest and welfare of veterans, their dependents, and their survivors by enhancing their quality of life through counseling, education, benefits assistance, and advocacy. They connect veterans to their benefits by assisting in their interactions with the VA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Visit the CalVet website for more information, OR
Find the CVSO closest to you.

VA HOTLINES
Veterans Crisis Line
- 800-273-TALK (8255), or
- Text: 838255

Combat Call Center
- 877-WAR-VETS (927-8387)

Women Veterans Call Center
- 855-VA-WOMEN (829-6636)
SOURCES