

# MODERN RULES FOR ENTRY Level Job Seekers

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Compared to previous generations, entry level job seekers today have more flexibility in some ways and less flexibility in others.

On the one hand, many recent graduates have higher student debt. It's natural to feel pressured if you're tired of living with your parents and concerned about your credit score.

However, **you also have more choices**. Social media makes it easier to find information and make contacts. You also have more options when it comes to creative working arrangements.

As you might expect, **you'll make more progress if you focus on your advantages**. Find your first position with these tips for using job boards and other entry level search methods.

## Using Job Boards

Job boards can be a valuable resource in your entry level job search. They're one of the fastest ways to identify a large number of potential employers.

### Use these strategies with Job Boards:

1. **Strengthen your resume.** When you're one applicant in a crowded field trying to impress a blind contact, your resume needs to be impressive. Be sure to use relevant keywords, quantify your achievements, and proofread carefully.
2. **Write cover letters.** Regardless of how many applications you submit, it's

**important to customize each one.** Think of your resume as describing your background while your cover letter tells an employer the value you would bring to them.

- 3. Follow up.** Unless you're instructed not to make contact, it's usually smart to reach out. A quick phone call gives you a chance to ask questions, offer more information, and express your enthusiasm. As a bonus, it also makes you more memorable.

### Using Other Methods

You'll probably want to spend the majority of your time on methods other than job boards. **Your most promising opportunities are likely to come from networking and other more personalized activities.**

**Incorporate these ideas into your job search activities:**

- 1. Intern and volunteer.** Think beyond full time salaried jobs. Your first professional opportunity may be an internship or consulting gig. You can also gain experience and make contacts doing volunteer work while you're unemployed.
- 2. Interview for information.** Even though you want a paycheck, you'll gain more if you focus on gathering information. Talk with your contacts about how they started their careers and what advice they can give you.
- 3. Grab coffee. Let others know that you respect their time.** Ask them if you can meet at their office for an hour or less or suggest a quick cup of coffee.
- 4. Make calls.** While face to face communications are ideal, some of your contacts may be available only by phone. You can make the most of a 10 or 15 minute

phone call by being prepared and asking if you can stay in touch.

5. **Explore campus resources.** Remember that your college or university wants to help you find a job. Visit your career office on campus or online to check job listings, attend job fairs, and access other services.
  
6. **Contact recruiters.** Executive search agencies filling senior positions may be interested in you, too. Send them your resume so they can keep you in mind in case their clients have additional openings.
  
7. **Brand yourself. Start packaging yourself as soon as possible.** Clarify your professional values and career goals. Build up your social media presence and look for opportunities to help others. Ask others for feedback on areas where you need to grow.
  
8. **Be consistent.** Approach your job hunt like a full-time job. Get organized, project a professional image, and make a to do list for each day. The more time you spend searching, the sooner you'll be employed.

**Ask yourself what you can learn from your first job and how will it prepare you for the next step in your professional life.** Choosing an entry level job wisely can help launch you on a rewarding career path.