

XAVIER UNIVERSITY
WILLIAMS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Career Search Action Plan

Beginning the MBA Program is an exciting journey! The business knowledge and skills gained throughout the program can be instrumental in jumpstarting or re-positioning your career. To maximize the value of your MBA, it is important to develop a strategy for marketing these new skills and create a Job Search Action Plan that can be executed to find the right career opportunity for you.

In addition to striving for academic excellence, we strongly encourage students to focus on their careers as well. Finding the right opportunity can be a challenging and time consuming process – the sooner you begin, the better positioned you will be as a candidate and the more confident you will be in the career choices you make!

Attached is a Job Search Action plan that can serve as a guide for your planning process. Use this as a suggested template for your own professional development over the course of your MBA Program – highlighting personal tasks, professional development events, networking opportunities and resources that can provide quality assistance along the way. Whether you are a career starter, career advancer or career changer – these steps can be helpful as you look to reach your career goals. We highly recommend that you partner with a staff member in the Professional Development Center (PDC) to create your own self-driven, proactive career plan.

Below is a look at the typical steps to beginning any career. You will find that many of the items in the proposed Job Search Action Plan relate to one or more of these steps. Throughout the year, the PDC offers a number of opportunities for you to work on these areas in a group setting or through one-to-one coaching.



Career Search Action Plan

Self-Evaluation

Prior to starting your job search, it is important to truly get a grasp of who you are as a person and a professional. It is important to identify your business interests and motivators, while analyzing your skill strengths and weaknesses. Think about what you want out of a job in terms of work tasks, environment, etc. Choosing a career is one of the biggest decisions you will make in a lifetime! Through this evaluation process you will discover what you need in a career to have the greatest possibility of success and happiness. This information will also build confidence in your own career decisions and present you as a better candidate to employers as a person who knows what they want!

- Meet with a Career Coach.** Talking with someone about where you are in your career planning process can help greatly. A Career Coach can talk with you about your needs and interests and assess the next best step in your evaluation process.
- Complete the [CareerLeader Inventory](#).** Used by top business schools throughout the country, this business career self-assessment provides insight into your core interests, motivators, strengths and weaknesses, organizational culture and possible best career path matches.
- Explore additional career self-assessments.** There are a number of self-assessments available to help capture a better grasp of your strengths and interests. [Strengths Finder](#) and the [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator](#) (MBTI) are examples of additional avenues to explore on your own. A career coach can talk with you about the results and provide next best steps in your career planning process.

Market Research

After gaining a true understanding for what you are looking for in your career, it is important to begin researching opportunities that are in line with those interests and identifying the best possible career matches for you. This will help you to develop a more targeted and effective job search strategy.

- Online Career Research.** Utilize online resources to begin looking deeper into the types of careers that center around your interests and skills. [Vault's CareerInsider](#) is a great tool to use and is available to students free of charge. Additional resources include [O*Net Online](#) and the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) to name a few.
- Informational Interviews.** Begin identifying professionals serving in roles of interest to you. Schedule conversations to learn more about the nature of their work and organization. Your Xavier network of classmates, faculty, staff and alumni is a great place to start making these connections.
- MBA Concentration.** Is there a concentration that correlates to your field of interest? This is a good time to review your concentration options with a **MBA Academic Advisor** and plan out your electives.
- Employer Research.** Gather information about organizations that offer the types of opportunities you are looking for. Learn more about companies of interest through informal networking conversations. Additional online resources that can be helpful include [Vault's CareerInsider](#) and a host of XU Library resources including [Business and Company Resource Center](#), [Business and Industry](#), [Research Insight](#) and [Thomson ONE Banker](#).
- Create a Target List.** Begin working on a 'Top 10 (or 20) List' of potential employers for the line of work you are interested in. Explore ways to connect with contacts and research job opportunities at these companies.

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Planning the Job Search

There are a number of items to prepare and steps to take prior to submitting applications and conducting the job search. Once your research is complete, you are now ready to create your job search action plan and begin fully utilizing your networking contacts.

- Marketing Materials.** Create your professional resume, prepare a portfolio of your best relevant work and establish your 'elevator pitch'. Meet with a **MBA Career Coach** to refine these tools prior to your active job search.
- Executive Mentoring Program.** Look into the possibility of connecting with a business professional in the area for a mentoring relationship. Visit the [Mentoring website](#) for further guidelines on eligibility for the program.
- Build Your Resume.** Explore activities such as volunteering, joining a student organization or looking into professional associations. [International study trips](#) can also be a great way to add interesting experiences.
- MBA Internships.** Begin exploring opportunities for an MBA internship. This can be a great way to gain professional experience and exposure to an industry of interest.
- Build Your Job Search Skills.** The PDC hosts a number of workshops and networking events throughout the year. Check out the [calendar](#) and plan to attend sessions of interest!
- Refine Your Online Brand.** Update profiles and resumes on [LinkedIn](#), [eRecruiting](#), [CareerShift](#) and other sites where you are marketing yourself for employment opportunities.
- Create a Plan.** Create a routine in which you utilize avenues such as networking contacts and [online resources](#) to heighten your search. Hold yourself accountable by setting goals to accomplish within designated timelines.

Executing the Job Search

All the prep work you have done will allow you to take on the search in a confident and professional manner. Apply to postings, develop and strengthen networking contacts and proactively move forward with your search.

- Online Job Boards.** Sign up for [eRecruiting](#) – Xavier’s comprehensive online job posting site. Other helpful sites include [NACELink](#), [SimplyHired](#), [LinkedIn](#) and a host of industry specific websites.
- CareerShift.** Build an account and begin using this comprehensive job search tool to identify job postings, network online, track communications and conduct market research.
- Fall/Spring Career Fairs.** Attend Fairs to explore internship or full-time employment opportunities and connect with employers of interest. The Fall Career Fair is the largest University fair of the year – and many employers are most actively recruiting at this time (particularly Finance and Accounting oriented roles).
- On-Campus Interviews.** Review the list of employers who will be conducting on-campus interviews in [eRecruiting](#). Be mindful of application deadlines and ensure you apply to positions of interest for which you qualify within this timeframe.
- Networking.** Take advantage of PDC sponsored MBA Networking Receptions and other networking opportunities provided by professional associations and Chambers of Commerce. Continue building your list of networking contacts.
- Follow Up.** Be sure to follow up with applications within a week after submittal. Also, don’t forget to keep your networking contacts updated on your job search status!

For more information, visit <http://www.xavier.edu/williams/pdc/>.