



JOB SEARCH STRATEGY EXERCISE WORKBOOK



CAREER SERVICES
 CAREER ADVISING | JOB SEARCH RESOURCES | RÉSUMÉ REVIEW
 NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES | DIVERSITY COACHING | WORKSHOPS

Career Services Alberta

It takes more time to find work than to have work, and it is easy to find yourself stuck on how to start. You may feel your only option is sending out resumes to job postings. CPA Alberta supports your career success, and you can obtain further support from Career Services.

We offer free services, including:

Job Search Support, including one-on-one meetings:

- Help to develop your job search strategy
- Cover letter and resume reviews and coaching
- Interview coaching
- LinkedIn profile reviews and tips on how to effectively use all platform options
- Tips on networking for job leads and informational interviews
- Guidance to become a Careerpreneur and build your brand
- Monthly job search networking events: Monday Meetups
- Free job search webinars and an archive of past webinars
- Job Board and Volunteer Opportunity Board
- Support on breaking through unconscious bias and barriers in your job search

Career Development Support, including one-on-one meetings:

- Career coaching
- Career mentorship annual program with mentorship training
- Webinars and an archive of past resumes
- Help in building your career capital and career intelligence
- Coaching on responding to an offer letter, promotions, and obtaining a salary increase
- Assistance in making career changes, mapping out your career path, and determining next steps in your career.
- Preparation for difficult conversations with role playing

Additional for-fee services:

Psychometric assessments

- Emotional Intelligence: EQi-2.0©
- Intercultural Effectiveness (Dealing with difference): IDI©
- Intercultural Conflict Style: ICS©

Resume writing

LinkedIn profile creation/writing

Extended one-on-one services

Even if you're still working while searching for a job, you may experience various cycles of emotions: anger, sadness, elation, grief, and more. These emotions may become overwhelming and begin to impede your ability to function or maintain healthy relationships, or exacerbate mental illness triggers. If you need to access help, CPA Alberta provides CPAs, CPA PEP candidates, and their immediate family with health and wellness support through the CPA Assist Program. For more information, visit cpa-assist.ca or call 1-855-596-4222. If you find yourself in crisis, either please call 211. 211 is a free, confidential service that provides information and referrals to a wide range of community, social, health and government services. If 211 is not available in your area, call 780-482-4636.

How to use this Workbook

This workbook has been created to support you in developing a strategic plan to obtain meaningful work. The information in this handbook reflects research and academic studies from Career Professionals Canada and CERIC, which advances Career Development in Canada by funding research with both the academic community as well as specialized organizational psychologists and other scientific research associations.

The following exercises build on each other, and you are advised to do them in order. You can write directly in the sheets; however, it will likely be easier to use a notebook or a document on your computer.

These exercises will occasionally require you to repeat yourself, but repetition will reinforce your answers in interviews and allow you a greater selection of ideas and scenarios to choose from. In addition, these exercises will help you gain confidence and ability and recognize the strengths that you do have.



Job Journal

Exercise #1. Action Verb Exercise

Skip trying to write your job description on your resume and start here. Listing your work experience in bullets that start with strong action verbs is the best approach to putting together your resume. It will personalize your resume so it stands out amongst your peers. Follow these two steps:

1. Look at the action verb list and highlight every action verb that applies to you.
2. Write notes on where you performed the action verbs, as well as a quick summary of outcomes.

Exercise #2. Accomplishments

Look at your action verb list and pick your biggest accomplishments out of your notes. Write them out in detail to include specific task, action, and result. You can also add any awards, key acknowledgements, projects, and other details.

Exercise #3. Likes and Dislikes

Write the details of what you liked and what you didn't like about past employment. By doing so, you are defining your own job description and ideal corporate culture. This will allow you to narrow your job search and ask effective questions in interviews.

Exercise #4. Gap Analysis

This is a good exercise to evaluate what you have been missing in past employment and what you may be missing to make a career change.

Job Search Accountability Tracking

It is very easy to be stuck spending your time exclusively looking on job boards and sending your resume to what eventually feels like a black hole. A Job Search Accountability Tracker helps you allocate your time to different activities and keep yourself accountable to various aspects you need to do to find work.

Marketing, Value Proposition

Your value proposition is the modern version of an elevator pitch. It serves as a way of portraying your value and what problems you can solve for the audience—those who are hiring, or can promote you to others. Your value proposition should be consistent and used in your LinkedIn, resume, interview, and networking—even your friends and family should be able to articulate it.

Job Search Strategy Checklist

Job Journal

- Action Verb Exercise
- Accomplishments
- Likes Assessment
- Dislikes Assessment
- Gap Analysis
- Weekly Planner
- Application Tracker

Search Strategy

- Labour Market Analysis
- Competition Analysis
- Target Company List
- Target Roles
- Assess Personal Network
- Information Interview List
- Self Marketing Development

Networking

- Conferences, Chapter Event
- Professional Development
- Eventbrite, Meetup
- Social Media
- Information Interview List
- Evaluate Current Network
- Business Cards

LinkedIn

- Professional Photo
- Use Preferred Name
- Slogan, Brand, Value Proposition
- Join Relevant Groups
- Increase Network
- Follow LinkedIn Best Practices
- Login Daily

Resume & Cover Letter

- What problem does the role solve?
- In what context are the skills needed?
- Keyword search job description.
- Open each bullet with action verbs
- Branding statement at the top
- Personalise documents to role
- Confirm References

Interviewing

- Research Company
- Have important questions prepared
- Review your introspection notes
- Determine salary expectations
- Research Team
- Send Thank You Notes
- Other

Recommended Additional Resources

CPA Events: <https://www.cpaalberta.ca/Events/Member-Events-Calendar>
 Attend Monday Meetups
 PD Events <https://www.cpaalberta.ca/Events/Public-Practitioner-Events>
 CPA Career services or email: careerservices@cpaalberta.ca

Job Boards - CPA Job Board, [Indeed.ca](#), [Eluta.ca](#), [Simplyhired.ca](#), [Wowjobs.ca](#), [LinkedIn.com](#)
 Go to company websites and look at career section, not all companies post on job boards.
 Watch Interview Tip Videos on Youtube and other similar sites
 Superior grammar check <https://app.grammarly.com/>

Journal Exercise # 1 – Action Verb Exercise

Action Verb Practice				
	Action Verb	Employer	What was Done?	Outcome?
EXAMPLE	<i>Improved</i>	<i>Company ABC</i>	<i>Utilized system expertise to automate project costing</i>	<i>Saved Time</i>

Tips

- Prepared, Managed, Planned are default verbs that are used in everyone’s resume, choose other verbs when you can.
- Do not repeat the verbs you use in your resume. Leverage this exercise to personalise your work.
- Use this exercise as a trigger to fill out the following tabs.

Powerful Action Verbs

Accounting Action Words

Accounted	Certified	Credited	Identified	Recorded
Acquired Adjusted	Charged	Depreciated	Interpreted	Recovered
Administered	Claimed	Deducted	Inventoried	Registered
Aged	Classified	Determined	Investigated	Reported
Allocated	Closed	Directed	Invoiced	Researched
Analyzed	Collected	Distributed	Justified	Reviewed
Answered	Coded	Entered	Logged	Searched
Appraised	Collected	Estimated	Maintained	Setup
Approved	Compared	Examined	Managed	Solved
Assembled	Compiled	Expended	Measured	Specialized
Assessed	Complied	Evaluated	Merged	Standardized
Audited	Conducted	Examined	Migrated	Studied
Balanced	Condensed	Experimented	Paid	Submitted
Budgeted	Configured	Explored	Posted	Taxed
Calculated	Consolidated	Filed	Prepared	Traced
Capitalized	Controlled	Financed	Processed	Tracked
Captured	Constructed	Fixed	Projected	Updated
Cashed	Converted	Forecasted	Received	Validated
Categorized	Corrected	Generated	Reconciled	Verified

Project Related Action Words

Accelerated	Coordinated	Fabricated	Introduced	Qualified
Appointed	Crafted	Focused	Launched	Quantified
Arranged	Created	Formalized	Mapped	Resolved
Assigned	Deciphered	Formed	Observed	Spearheaded
Began	Detected	Formulated	Operated	Synthesized
Benchmarked	Differentiated	Gathered	Orchestrated	Targeted
Brainstormed	Discovered	Headed	Ordered	Tested
Built	Deployed	Implemented	Organized	Thwarted
Chaired	Designed	Incorporated	Oversaw	Tracked
Championed	Developed	Initiated	Piloted	Troubleshoot
Charted	Devised	Innovated	Pioneered	Visualized
Conceptualized	Drove Established	Installed	Planned	
Controlled	Executed	Instituted	Produced	

You Saved the Company Time or Money

Combined	Diagnosed	Leveraged	Realigned	Retrieved	Yielded
Conserved	Exploited	Located	Rectified	Safeguarded	
Decreased	Fortified	Optimized	Reduced	Terminated	
Deducted	Lessened	Pinpointed	Reserved	Thwarted	

You Increased Efficiency, Sales, Revenue, or Customer Satisfaction

Accelerated	Considered	Expedited	Improved	Outpaced	Unleashed
Achieved	Delivered	Focused	Incentivized	Seized	Won
Advanced	Elicited	Furthered	Lifted	Stimulated	
Amplified	Embraced	Gained	Maximized	Strategized	
Bolstered	Enhanced	Grew	Monetized	Surpassed	
Boosted	Expanded	Handled	Optimized	Sustained	

You Changed or Improved Something

Adapted	Deployed	Modified	Refocused	Revamped	Strengthened
Catapulted	Eliminated	Normalized	Reinvented	Revised	Succeeded
Centralized	Embraced	Overhauled	Remodeled	Revitalized	Surpassed
Clarified	Fortified	Propelled	Renewed	Routed	Terminated
Constructed	Grew	Realigned	Reorganized	Simplified	Transformed
Converted	Influenced	Rectified	Replaced	Specialized	Transitioned
Customized	Integrated	Redesigned	Restored	Standardized	Upgraded
Decided	Intensified	Refined	Restructured	Streamlined	

Team and Stakeholder Relations

Advised	Conferred	Engaged	Leveraged	Proposed	Solicited
Advocated	Considered	Enlisted	Maintained	Provided	Supervised
Aided	Consulted	Facilitated	Mentored	Recommended	Taught
Aligned	Cooperated	Fielded	Mobilized	Recruited	Trained
Appointed	Contracted	Forged	Monetized	Rectified	Tutored
Arbitrated	Contributed	Fostered	Motivated	Referred	Unified
Arranged	Cultivated	Guided	Navigated	Reinforced	United
Assisted	Decided	Harnessed	Negotiated	Renewed	Utilized
Assigned	Directed	Hired	Originated	Restored	
Bolstered	Educated	Informed	Partnered	Reinforced	
Coached	Empowered	Inspired	Presided	Regulated	
Collaborated	Enabled	Instilled	Prioritized	Secured	
Compelled	Encouraged	Interacted	Propelled	Shaped	

You Wrote or Communicated

Addressed	Compelled	Debated	Emphasized	Persuaded	Spoke
Advised	Composed	Defined	Explained	Presented	Suggested
Articulated	Contacted	Described	Expressed	Promoted	Summarized
Authored	Conveyed	Differentiated	Formulated	Publicized	Targeted
Briefed	Convinced	Discussed	Illustrated	Responded	Transmitted
Campaigned	Corresponded	Documented	Judged	Reviewed	
Crafted	Counseled	Drafted	Lobbied	Showcased	
Co-authored	Critiqued	Edited	Outlined	Specified	

You Oversaw or Regulated

Approved	Dispatched	Intervened	Normalized	Strategized
Authorized	Enforced	Itemized	Routed	Systematized
Blocked	Ensured	Maintained	Scheduled Streamlined	Verified
Considered	Inspected	Minimized	Screened	
Delegated	Instructed	Monitored	Scrutinized	

You Achieved Something

Attained	Earned	Outperformed
Awarded	Elicited	Reached
Completed	Exceeded	Showcased
Demonstrated	Obtained	Succeeded

Journal Exercise # 2 - Accomplishments

Employer	Problem/ Situation	Action	Quantifiable Outcome Increased/Saved Money Saved Time
EXAMPLE <i>ABC. Inc</i>	<i>Manual Financial Statements</i>	<i>Automated Financial Statements</i>	<i>Reduced month end by 5 days</i>

Tips

- It is important to quantify your results in your resume and interview. If you are missing this information, go back and ask a colleague or boss for the information.
- This exercise will help you answer interview questions with the S.T.A.R. methodology.
- You will also be able to use this to solve the “Prove It or Lose It” issue in resumes.
- Treating this as an ongoing document can help you build a business case for a raise or a promotion.

S. T. A. R.
Situation
Task
Action
Result

Journal Exercise # 3 - Likes

EXAMPLE

Likes	
Team	Company
<i>Enjoyed going for drinks on Friday</i>	
Physical Environment	Company
<i>Liked open concept and being able to freely communicate with team</i>	
Leadership/ Boss	Company
<i>Enjoyed open door policy and easy access to feedback</i>	

Journal Exercise # 3 – Likes Continued

Tasks/ Duties	Company
<i>30% of my time spent doing training and development</i>	
Organisation	Company
<i>Values, Benefits, Reputation</i>	
Other	Company

Tips

- This exercise will help you be very specific in answering and individualizing questions in interviews.
- Will help you more effectively evaluate job offers.

Journal Exercise # 3 - Dislikes

EXAMPLE

Likes	
Team	Company
<i>Too chatty, not enough commitment to getting work done</i>	
Physical Environment	Company
<i>Too dark and isolating</i>	
Leadership/ Boss	Company
<i>Never followed through on promises</i>	

Journal Exercise # 3 – Dislikes Continued

Tasks/ Duties	Company
<i>30% of my time spent doing administrative duties like filing and answering phones</i>	
Organisation	Company
<i>Values, Benefits, Reputation</i>	
Other	Company

Tips

- This is a good method to privately unload your baggage regarding your work dislikes.
- Writing out your dislikes/likes can help you frame things more positively.
- You can interview more effectively by focusing on what you like and less negativity.

Gratitude

To interview more effectively take a look at your list of dislikes and pick out the opposite value. Then acknowledge with gratitude the fact that this dislike has demonstrated to you the importance of the value you didn't have. For Example:

- **Dislike:** Too chatty, not enough commitment to getting work done
- **Value:** Dedication, accountability, results oriented.
- **Gratitude:** I am grateful that ABC Inc taught me just how much I value commitment, dedication and accountability.

Journal Exercise # 4 - Gap Analysis

Gap Analysis					
	Task Description (Liked)	Task Description (Not Liked)	Task Description (Would Like)	Other	Notes
EXAMPLE	<i>Project Management</i>	<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>Lead a large system implementation</i>	<i>Saved Time</i>	

Tips

- Use the tasks you like and what you discover in your gap analysis to determine the right job description for you.
- Flag what you feel is missing in your career and incorporate that into your interview.
- Once you identify what you feel has been missing, you can start to participate in targeted networking.

Job Search Accountability

Weekly Activity Planner					
Activity	Start Date	Duration	Actual Start	Actual Duration	Percentage Complete
Complete Job Journal Exercises					
Prepare Resume					
Prepare LinkedIn Profile					
Develop Target List					
Perform Market Research					
Informational Interviews					
Targeted Networking					
Practice Interviewing					
Perform Self-Marketing					
Respond to Postings					
Perform Cold Calls					
Perform Warm Calls					

Tips

- Tracking your activity allows you to determine if you are investing too much time in “Busy Work” or work that is not generating sufficient positive outcomes.

Job Search Accountability

List Alternative

Date: _____ JS (Job Search) or NJS (Not Job Search)

Morning

Number of Hours	Activity	JS/NJS

Afternoon

Number of Hours	Activity	JS/NJS

Evening

Number of Hours	Activity	JS/NJS

Application and Interview Tracker

Company	Position	Source	Pre-screen	Interview	Thank you note sent	Outcome
EXAMPLE ABV Inc.	Senior Financial Analyst	LinkedIn	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unknown

Resources (Search the suggested resources below for more information)

Job Boards	Top Employers	Networking
CPA Job Board	Alberta's Top Employers - 2019	CPA Alberta Member Events
SimplyHired	Alberta Venture Magazine	Eventbrite
Indeed	Edmonton Journal - 2019	Meetup
Google	Canada's Top 100 Employers - 2019	LinkedIn
Eluta	Canada's Top Employers - Forbes	
LinkedIn	Glassdoor	
Workopolis		

Recruitment Agencies

Company	Contact	Outcome

Marketing



Marketing is the social process by which individuals and organizations obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value with others. The process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return.
Kotler and Armstrong (2010)

The CIM definition looks not only at identifying customer needs, but also satisfying them (short-term) and anticipating them in the future (long-term retention).
THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF MARKETING (CIM). ACCESSED 2012
www.marketingteacher.com/what-is-marketing-2

What is your objective | What would you like to accomplish and why?

Branding | What is the promise you can make to an employer about what they can expect from you?

Competitive Research | LinkedIn
Informational Interviews

Social Media | LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Pintrest, Facebook, Blog

Market Research | Networking, LinkedIn, Conferences, Informational Interviews, Agencies, Economic projections

Direct Marketing | Cold Calls Applications Interview Job Boards

Salary | Surveys, Informational Interviews, Personal Rate

Public Relations | Networking, References, Work Relationships, Volunteerism, Recruitment Agencies, Social Media Connections, Employment Relationships

Value Proposition Exercise

Buying Motivators

Buying motivators address why an employer wants to hire you. Every role exists to solve a problem. How can you solve their problem? What qualifications do you have that demonstrate you have the background to solve the problem? What previous examples can you advertise that you have previously solved the problem? What makes you stand out amongst your peers? Think about what employer problems you can solve. How can you support that? What are your supporting qualifications? Where is the added value?

What organisational problems can you solve?

What organisational problems have you solved?

What Added Value Do you bring?

1. Use as elevator pitch
2. Use as opening statement in resume
3. Refer to in cover letter
4. Use in you LinkedIn Summary

Your positioning statement should go something like...

I offer [PRODUCT/SERVICE] for [TARGET MARKET] to [VALUE PROPOSITION]

<https://www.shopify.ca/blog/how-to-build-a-brand>
<https://freshsparks.com/successful-brand-building-process/>
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/dailymuse/2012/02/14/the-first-step-to-building-your-personal-brand/#31c273f06201>

Recommended Additional Resources

CPA Alberta Events: www.cpaalberta.ca/Events/Member-Events-Calendar

Attend Monday Meetups

PD Events: www.cpaalberta.ca/Events/Public-Practitioner-Events

[CPA Career services](#) or email: careerservices@cpaalberta.ca

Job Boards: [CPA Job Board](#), [Indeed.ca](#), [Eluta.ca](#), [Simplyhired.ca](#), [Wowjobs.ca](#), [LinkedIn.com](#)

Go to company websites and look at the career section; not all companies post on job boards.

Watch Interview Tip Videos on [YouTube](#) and other similar sites

Superior grammar check app.grammarly.com

www.shopify.ca/blog/how-to-build-a-brand

freshsparks.com/successful-brand-building-process

www.forbes.com/sites/dailymuse/2012/02/14/the-first-step-to-building-your-personal-brand/#31c273f06201