



C A R E E R
V I S I O N

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The First Professional Challenge for College Grads is Finding a Job

In newly-minted resumes, college graduates often declare that they are seeking a challenge. Little did they know that this year, the first challenge they need to meet is finding a job for themselves.

With a slow economy, some companies are cutting back their hiring projections, and a few have even retracted employment offers. Organizations are focused on treading water until the economy improves, and are putting additional hiring on hold until the outlook grows more hopeful. This situation can be disheartening to fresh college grads who already have spent months trying to ferret out open positions and get an interview.

In a recent interview, [William J. White](#), author of *From Day One: CEO Advice to Launch an Extraordinary Career*, offered three suggestions for recent graduates who are still looking for a job:

1. **Develop a well-defined job objective** and support materials, such as resume and cover letter. A broad approach, like a shotgun, is too diffuse. Making your search more focused, like a rifle, increases the likelihood of hitting the target.
2. **Broaden your social network.** Keep talking to everyone you know, and those you may not know, during your commute, at sports events, anywhere. Be ready to articulate what kind of job you are looking for, the kind of company you want to work for (and their names, if you have done your homework properly), and what geographic area is most desirable, even within a metropolitan area. Most jobs are found through networking, not online.
3. **Work in a parallel manner.** When you have a job lead, keep looking further for others. This way, if the first one doesn't work out, you will have plenty of other opportunities on which to follow through. The most fortunate position to be in is where you are deciding among several job offers.

In addition to White's advice, we would like to encourage young job seekers to cut back on the online activity surfing for jobs and encourage them instead to seek out local job search resources. As an example, in the Chicago area, there are four well-established community career centers with permanent physical locations and tremendous resources. There are also a number of other job search groups which provide support and expertise in assisting the job seeker with resume writing, interviewing skills, networking, and job leads. While some have a cost associated with membership in their group, most are free or very low cost. Many meet at or are sponsored by a church, but all job seekers are welcome.

Young adults should know that they will clearly be in the minority in these groups, typically drawing members in their 40s and 50s. However, the payoff is great. Learning job search strategies from seasoned professionals and volunteer coaches are practical [Career Literacy™](#) skills not taught in any classroom.

As a public service, Career Vision maintains a list of Chicago area community [career centers and job search groups](#) on our website.