The online good practice guide on job finding

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Preface

When you are looking for your first job or you are planning to make a career change, you want to make the best of the resources available to achieve your goal.

When you are in the position where you are searching for a job there are many things to be aware of and many questions that may challenge you on your way to finding that job. There are questions like what do I need to know? Where do I find information? Who do I ask? And how do I ask? To find out what you want, you will have to get focused and be clear about what you are aiming at.

The online good practice guide on job finding offers resources, advice and methods to go about finding a job. The guide is not intended as a read from a to z guideline. In this version, the guide is arranged as a document, with a hyperlink structure. However, you can also view the document as small book that is printable if you prefer that.

There are two entries to navigating in the material

- *The ePortfolio Theme* leads you to parts of the online guide that helps You to start Your own process. Through this theme, you can read about how to work with an ePortfolio in order to clarify, focus and improve your job seeking strategies

- *Table of content* provides you with a list of all the material in the guide. If you use the Bookmark feature in the Adope reader, you can have a similar interactive Table of Content open at all times, while you browse the document. You can choose to explore the material based on your needs and the topics that interest you the most or you can choose to read the topics from the beginning to end.

In the text all cross-references are marked with red. These red references are implemented as interactive hyperlinks in the document and clicking them will take you to the mentioned content.

For further information and for finding the digital stories that we link to from within the guide, please visit the L@jost website at: http://www.lajost.eu. Note, that in order to see the content of the site, you have to sign up for membership of this community and afterwards log-in. We use in this guide direct links / URLs to some of the digital stories found as blogs and videos on the l@jost mixxt website. These direct links, do not always work probably, even if you are logged in to the website prior to pushing the link. In many instances they only lead to the main site. However, you can copy and paste the whole URL into your web browser and it will bring you to the digital story (often a blog post).

Table of content

The ePortfolio Theme

ePortfolio – what is that?

An ePortfolio is a purposeful (digital) selection of evidence demonstrating your achievements as reflective learner or professional.

In other words, an ePortfolio is an electronic document that presents information about who you are as learner or professional. It may include information on your values, interests, experiences, learning, skills and competencies. Think of your ePortfolio as a GPS (Global Positioning System), which tells you where you are now and what you have to do to reach the destination you have chosen. But unlike a GPS which can automatically tell you where you are, your e-portfolio is only as good as the data you feed it with. Your ePortfolio is your own personal online space or digital identity. You can choose to keep it to yourself or share it with others.

There are different types or genres of ePortfolio that you may use for different purposes. The ePortfolio as a tool for personal development is a new *genre* that brings imagination and creativity to a field still dominated by rational and structured thinking. The ePortfolio is an opportunity to not simply mimic and copy others but to contribute to the advancement and transformation of your personal practices.

ePortfolio - useful links

General links:
> http://www.tanyamerone.com/
> http://sites.google.com/site/calliegboyd/
> http://people.clemson.edu/~jmwhite/JennaWhiteePortfolio/Welcome_.html
> http://davymacca.com/http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q82f6BJ_Ivw&p=958C23CEBEFAD9AA&index=4&playnext=2

E-portfolios are a rather uncommon way to apply for a vacancy in Germany. Under http://www.e-teaching.org/technik/kommunikation/eportfolio/ there is a short introduction to e-portfolios and some information about their structure and content. Additional information are presented under the following link http://www.e-teaching.org/lehrszenarien/pruefung/pruefungsform/eportfolio/. The website offers a wide range of additional links for further reading.

In Romania e-Portfolios are used and the following list links to sites that are used nationally in Romania:
> https://sites.google.com/site/grupamicac/
> https://sites.google.com/site/odaleeacv/Home
> https://sites.google.com/site/colibapiticilorro/home
> http://sites.google.com/site/alexstrunga/

To get more information you can look in the ePortfolio Guide on the website: http://www.lajost.eu

ePortfolio - a tool to focus your strategy and wishes

An ePortfolio is an easy, potent and useful way to develop clarity and focus when you look for a job. An ePortfolio may help you to turn your process into a learning process where you gradually become better.

ePortfolios are used in a variety of contexts, from initial education to support learning processes and assessment, to lifelong learning and employment, managing one's career as employee, freelance worker or entrepreneur.

Building an ePortfolio should help you to:

- **Plan learning and development** - reflect on your current position and plan further learning through paid and voluntary work, life experiences, leisure activities and courses.
- **Document Learning** - make visible the learning achieved by collecting evidence of your own work, feedback from peers, mentors, teachers, clients, etc.
- **Articulate learning** - organise the evidence collected in a narrative to connect them competency standards against which you make a claim.
- **Review and assess learning** - the reflective observation of your learning to identify what you have learnt, what to do to improve it and the means for achieving it.
- **Recognise learning** - making your learning visible to others will help you to have your competencies and talent to be recognised by your colleagues, peers, current or future employer.
- **Accredit Learning** - to obtain a certificate, a diploma or a statement of achievement, you might be required to submit an ePortfolio to an awarding body, a professional body or a training organisation (e.g. Accreditation of Prior Learning).

To get an idea of ePortfolio as at focus tool, see the ePortfolio Guide on**: http://www.lajost.eu.

ePortfolio – why should I care?

While the traditional view on the job seeking period is:

- I learn (at school, university, etc.)
- I find a job (as employee, freelance or entrepreneur)
- I work

The vision should rather be:

- I learn how to learn (to become a good citizen and contributor to society)
- I learn how to find a job (which will be useful later, if I want to change my career path)
- I learn while I work (*I work, therefore I learn* is the knowledge economy and learning society motto)

It is by taking into account this vision that you can work on how your *Career ePortfolio* can grow across the different episodes of your lifelong learning journey, and how different *views* of this *Career ePortfolio* can be tailored to the different audiences you aim to reach.

ePortfolio skills

It takes some basic skills to use an ePortfolio. In order to use the various tools, you need to develop your digital literacy but this will in itself improve your chances of getting a job.

In order to start your ePortfolio, you need to select a tool; and there are a number of them available:

- **ePortfolio platforms** are software applications designed to support the development of ePortfolios. They are generally provided by institutions, but some are available for free or for a fee (for list see annex).
- **Content management systems** are applications designed to manage documents, publication and access rights like Plone and Drupal. They are generally provided by institutions.
- **Blogs** are applications designed to manage personal publication, like Wordpress or Elgg. Many blog platforms are available for free.
- **Web publishing**, like Google Site

To learn more, see the ePortfolio Guide on the website: http://www.lajost.eu.

What is important for me to work with in my ePortfolio so that I get focused?

You can go for applications that respond to advertisements or you can go for unsolicited applications. No matter the choice there are some things you have to do to get focused, and to become better prepared at job searching.

> "there are so many information available how to succeed but If I would have to give some suggestions to the ones looking for a job I would tell them first of all to define for themselves what they want"
> See the digital story http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.catalin.martin:4

It is important to know which market you go after and once you have decided for a market or markets, you have to find out what that market demands. Use the ePortfolio to describe a plan for how to explore the markets' demands. You plan which sources to explore or approach, decide how to do it and set up a timetable for when you do it.

Evaluate your results in order to improve your How to do research and find Sources of information.

When you begin to get an overview of the demands, it is easier to get an idea of possible matches between your competencies and wishes and the jobs on offer. Now you can begin to define which positions it makes sense to apply for. Use the ePortfolio to describe and compare matches, in order to get a clearer idea of what you want and what is available. Evaluate your results and experiment with different matches.

As you gradually get a clearer view on the possible matches, it becomes easier to be aware of and identify your own values, competencies, skills, strengths and weaknesses and begin to sort them out after different groups of matches. Use the ePortfolio to develop focused descriptions and to reflect on your interests. You can use all kinds of job-experience you have, to discuss and explore your experience and get focused.

> "I had the freedom to choose what I felt that it is for me. My current job. So that's why, I encourage the students to get involved as much as they can during study and to learn how to be a volunteer."
> See the digital story http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.catalin.martin:5

Share your ePortfolio

It is both relevant to identify whether you need more experience or education for some jobs or whether you may be (over)qualified and discuss in the ePortfolio, what this means for your job search. That is, you have to reflect on what to write in an application or what to say if you come to a Job interview. This part of self-reflection and improving of your strategies can also help you to identify when and how to limit yourself.

You can get far by challenging yourself in your ePortfolio, but it is also a good idea to share your thoughts, ideas and doubts with others. You can make your ePortfolio shared by inviting friends or participants from the Lajost-site to discuss with you. To learn more, see about how to Share your ePortfolio.

To share your ePortfolio and to network is important for many reasons. One is to keep your motivation going because you must expect to produce many applicants and to apply for many jobs. Usually it takes 2-5 job interviews before you get a job and you will have to accept to wait up til five months before you get a job.

Representational-portfolio

You can use an ePortolio as a presentation – see ePortfolio-genres - when you apply for jobs. When you do that, it is important that you design your presentation ePortfolio as an interactive and user-friendly presentation.

Employers do not have much time to look through long and complex text, so short chapters and easy overviews are advised. Try to put yourself in the reader's position and make your personal experience complete.

However, if you want to keep the reader curious you should not be too specific. See What employers recommend

See also further readings in the Literature *list.*

You can get useful inputs from peers if you invite others to comment on your presentation ePortfolio.

How to read advertisements (ads)

What is important

> "In the job finding process it was especially important for me to learn knowing about my preferences towards certain job offers and to learn where I would have chances." See the digital story: http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.students.posts:6

It is important to read and compare ads in order to learn to understand the language of ads. Ads are usually constructed over one of a limited number of patterns. The ad contains core concepts that you have to learn the meaning of in order to apply. This is why it is sometimes a good idea to network or to contact the company for further information.

You can also look for good sentences in ads and reuse them in your application so that you prepare yourself to relate to the company in your application

See also What is important, CV-genres and CV rules, examples

Job advertisements very often require much more qualifications than what an employer is actually willing to accept to hire. This means that if you often don't have to match all qualifications that an add demands. *(J. Scheuer 1998) see the* Literature list.

In Germany graduates of educational science, sociology and psychology do not usually find jobs through recruitment agencies such as Manpower, Adecco, Randstad, JOB AG, jobs in time, DIS and similar (both temporary and permanent jobs). Company or institutions do not use recruiter to select or preselect future staff mainly because there are too many applicants available in the job market and employers tend to receive far too many applications already by publishing vacancies on the own homepage, in relevant job search engines and on national newspapers. Additionally, it has been observed that employers sometimes keep the application timeframe (time between the publishing of a vacancy and the deadline for submitting your application) tight especially if they expect a high number of applications. This means that they set up an additional formal criterion to select people beforehand to reduce the global number of applicants. Application timeframe can be as short as two weeks and can range up to 6 weeks.

How to do research

What do I need to know

Dr. Michelizzis tells about using many channels in order to find a job is described: "Once she received her degree, Dr. Michelizzi sent her curriculum to every company that had a human resources division. She completed application forms of institutional sites, she sent e-mails to generic addresses for personnel selection, she sent her curriculum by fax or post. Furthermore she enrolled in work search engines - INFOJOBS and MONSTER - that send out newsletters with the parameters that the candidate sets up. She set no limits for her searches and the newsletters that came in were for Tuscany, Pisa and Florence. In addition to all this, she registered on the lists of the Employment Centre that, after an orientation interview, helps to set up a curriculum and to understand the sector one would like to work in. In an internal database, she classified on the lists of the Employment Centre and was selected when a position in line with her profile appeared. Read her story at: http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.catalin.martin:9

> "I found it especially important during the job search process to be perserverent. My social network of friends and people I know has helped me to stay informed about current job offers." See the digital story: http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.students.posts:2

No matter your strategy you will always need to find out

- What the market wants
- The *sources of information* because vacancies are published, but informal networks are important
- Whether working experiences rank higher than formal education or vice versa. See What employers recommend
- What kind of different CV-genres do employers prefer, e.g. whether a presentational ePortfolio are accepted or not. See also *The ePortfolio Theme*.
- Some employers use tests to identify the ideal candidate after pre-selection
- Student jobs are often considered relevant
- Employers hire students for student jobs, see Internship
- When it is a special job, courses are considered. In Denmark education is necessary for specific job types while it seems to be in e.g. Germany.
- You must be able to explain how to become flexible and open-minded. See also about Your personal approach

Some issues are related to your chosen approaches to job search:

- **If you want to follow job ads**
  You have to find out which positions it makes sense to apply for
  It is important to understand the language of ads, see also What is important.
  You have to Know various possibilities and where the vacancies are published
  The time that passes from add/contact to employment may vary
- **If you want to send uninvited applications**
  You have to find out which positions it makes sense to apply for. See also What is important.
- **If you want to create your own job**
  Networking varies between countries. Find out which structures Similarities/differences are relevant if you search in a foreign country

Sources of information

- Ads – see What is important.
- Business network sites:
    - LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/nhome/
    - Plaxo: www.plaxo.com/
    - INFOJOBS: www.infojobs.net/
    - Stepstone: www.stepstone.dk
    - MONSTER: www.monster.dk
    - indeed: www.indeed.com
    - EURES: ec.europa.eu/eures/homzze.jsp?lang=en
- Official Monitor Magazine (Romania)
- Local employment Centres (Italy, spain)
- Guidance counsellors (Italy)
- Newspapers
- The organisations and companies web-sites – vacancies
- Unemployment Funds network and trade union-based networks (Denmark)

Read about

If you want to find job ads/opportunity then you should find some big players in your job domain and find and contact people who work/worked there. Navigate on the websites of organisations. Read general internet sites on your profession and follow links to organizations.

When you have found a job add, then read the website of the organisation carefully, evaluate from the job add whether it is welcome to phone, contact people you know there, work/worked there, etc.

Ask people who knows (FOAF)

FOAF is the internet-abbreviation for "Friend of a Friend". See Knowledge sharing

Recruitment agencies/employers

Dr. Campanile who works as free lance professional consultant in the training area for small and medium sized enterprises (SME), underlines the importance that there is a step prior to doing research, namely to assess what are the knowledge and competences one can offer to a client, and what are the aspirations, then to "understand the gap between what one has today and one's aspiration".
Read her story at http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.catalin.martin:10

Networking

Establish networking

"Profile at xing.de, which is a platform to share business dates, meeting people, offer jobs etc. The second way was to visit job fairs to distribute my vita …. Another strategy was using the internet: job portals, homepage of relevant firms/organizations …" Read the story Digital story: http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.students.posts:9

There are many business networks available on the Internet. E.g. LinkedIn and Plaxo (where you have to be invited). But there are others – including the Lajost-site – where you can create an account on business network and use it together with your other networks.

Links that you may use are listed here

Apart from business networks, the typical networks to use are:
- Use family and friends
- Use other students and academic staff
- Alumni networks

Use your network

Dr. Gabriella Campanile (50 years) work as free lance professional consultant in the training area for small and medium sized enterprises (SME). In the story we hear how she value the networking aspects of getting a job, as this provides a channel to getting the right amount of information in order to provide an offer for a customer as a free lance professional. Read her story at http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.catalin.martin:10 . Network proves to make a difference.

Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing is an activity through which knowledge (i.e. information, skills, or expertise) is exchanged among people, friends, or members of a family, a community (e.g. Wikipedia) or an organization. Organizations have recognized that knowledge constitutes a valuable intangible asset for creating and sustaining competitive advantages. Knowledge sharing activities are generally supported by knowledge management systems. However, technology constitutes only one of the many factors that affect the sharing of knowledge in organizations, such as organizational culture, trust, and incentives. The sharing of knowledge constitutes a major challenge in the field of knowledge management because some employees tend to resist sharing their knowledge with the rest of the organization.

One prominent obstacle is the notion that knowledge is property and ownership thus very important. In order to counteract this, individuals must be reassured that they will receive some type of incentive for what they create. However, Dalkir (2005) [see the Literature list] identified the risk in knowledge sharing is that individuals are most commonly rewarded for what they know, not what they share. If knowledge is not shared, negative consequences such as isolation and resistance to ideas occur. Shared knowledge offers different viewpoints and possible solutions to problems. To promote knowledge sharing and remove knowledge sharing obstacles, the organizational culture should encourage discovery and innovation. This will result in the creation of organizational culture.

Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia last modified on 27 September 2010 at 19:55)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_sharing

Preparing CV

CV-genres

- classical application by letter

- online application by e-mail,

- online application by web forms

- short CV, different styles (e.g. for artists/web designers)

How to work with CV

> "I tried to emphasize the disciplines that I have studied, the practice I had done in schools and the books I had read in order to compensate for my lack of experience". See the Digital story: http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/posts.lianaercean:4851

You must work carefully with your CV and the CV must be targeted at the current job, with accordance to the relation between position in the ad - see What is important - and your own experiences.

Also, the CV must have a clear focus. See also What employers recommend regarding presenting yourself in a Resume or CV

Gaps in CV

How to mention employment gaps in the CV - What employers recommend

When dealing with employment gaps in the application letter or resume, employers recommend "to be honest" and *explain the employment gaps*.

- One employer elaborated: "Be honest and note gaps either in cover letter, resume or application. Also be prepared to discuss them in the screening and interview process."

- Another employer explained: "By diminishing the appearance of gaps I feel that people are trying to hide something. My view is that everyone has gaps in employment for some reason...I'd just like to know the honest reason why upfront instead of finding out later*." (Frohrib 2007: 7) in th*e Literature *list*

What employers recommend regarding presenting yourself in a Resume or CV

Based on a survey with 600 hiring managers, Robin Ryan (a career counselor and MA in Counselling and Education) writes in the article "21 ways to improve your resumé" on how to capture an employer's attention. Below are *nine of the employers' recommendations* on how to write a resume or CV.:

- **Emphasize results**. In the resume, state the action you have performed and the achieved results.

- Use action verbs. Start each sentence with a descriptive action verb. Example: Designed the company's new marketing flyer.

- Be targeted. Offer only the specific qualifications you have to best perform the job advertised. Employer screening will eliminate any broad scope or generalized resumes submitted.

- Use keywords. Employers who sort resumés electronically look for keywords. Be sure to include potential keywords for job duties in your resume.

- Add a summary of qualifications section. Employers find this highly desirable in the survey.

- One page is best. Employers stated resumes get less than a 15-second glance, so concise and to the point worked best no matter what level of position the candidate applied for.

- Do not lie. Employers stated that over 50% try to exaggerate their skills, which is almost always uncovered during interviews and reference checks. So state your skills, qualifications, and experience as positively as possible without misstating the truth.

- Be complete. No abbreviations or acronyms. Spell out names of schools, cities, business terms, and titles.

- Be perfect. This was employers' number one stated mistake that job hunters make. No spelling errors, mistakes or typos, especially in emails.

See all 21 recommendations via *Robin Ryan: 21 ways to improve your resume*, in the Literature list

Other general qualities employers are glad to see in a CV (ePortfolio):

good skills in communication (to be able to communicate clearly and concisely, both written and verbal, and recognize that for good communication must know how to listen and to extract the necessary information.),

leadership (We assume the responsibility to achieve the objectives laid down and you take the inititative without being told what to do;

focus problems: you are able to identify and analyze potential or existing problems and find appropriate solutions for each situation;

reliability (know your strengths and know what you're capable of and what you can achieve);

flexibility (to adapt slightly depending on the situation and are open to new ideas and people);

energy (You like to work and are willing to invest time and effort to reach your goals);

teamwork (you like teamwork and at the same time you can work well individually).

CV rules, examples

CV rules/Writing general rules: e.g. http://jobsearch.about.com/od/jobapplications/a/jobapplicationguide_3.htm

Note, that in Italy you need to get a competence certificate

Have an updated CV, without mistakes, spelling grammar errors

Have different CVs, according with the job's descriptions stands out the qualities but to be honest. Because recruitment agencies get a large number of CVs, their first screening will be performed by a computer program, the keywords entered will be the job for which it was submitted. For this reason, a model CV should contain specific keywords for that job.

CV – useful links

CV models&related instructions,

1. for different activities' sectors: http://www.recrutam.ro/sfaturi/Curriculum-Vitae/Model-CV.html
2. in different languages, for Europass: http://www.recrutam.ro/sfaturi/Curriculum-Vitae/Model-CV/CV-European.html and some instructions (into Romanian) related to what to fill in an Europass CV at http://media.realitatea.ro/multimedia/other/201008/cv-instructiuni_78651900.pdf
3. other suggestions for an electronic CV, could be found at: http://www.recrutam.ro/sfaturi/Curriculum-Vitae/CV-ul-electronic.html

Prepare presentations as ePortfolio

ePortfolio-genres

Presentational ePortfolio

> "I found my job by a job advertisement in a newspaper. [….] I was invited to a job interview where I had to introduce myself and had to hold a short presentation which I could prepare in advance." See the digital story http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.students.posts:4

See the ePortfolio guide at the website, and explore the *The ePortfolio Theme*

Write applications

What is important – applications

Before you write an application you should explore about the company and the job by using various Sources of information. You will need to know about

- Explore how high is the salary and what kind of contract
- Job description, the way of working and possibility of travelling
- Environment and colleagues
- Size of company
- Companies reputation
- Company's values
- When you write, look for good sentences in the add and paraphrase and reuse core concepts form the add. See also What is important.
- Send a brief application letter without recommendation letters
- Explain personal interests in the position in an authentic way

"For job search it is important to … learn how application documents should look like and to know the special rules for online applications." See the digital story
http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.students.posts:7

"I cannot believe that it was me who has written these. I became really so much better in writing the applications over time …" See the digital story http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.students.posts:4

Invite yourself in

What is important

> "the day of engagement was too early (I had not finished my studies at this time), so that I couldn´t be hired for this job." See the digital story
> http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.students.posts:14

To invite yourself in means to send an uninvited application or to create your own job

In both cases you will have to use sources of information and your network to find out about the company

- How high is the salary
- What kind of contract
- Job description and the way of working
- Possibility of travelling
- Environment and colleagues'
- Size of company
- Companies reputation
- Company's values

> "… was most important to get the job was that I actively participate in the development of my future job design when I was still a student" See the digital story:
> http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.students.posts:13

In order to get in contact with the company you may contact the companies directly, see Invite yourself in.

You may also apply for Student-jobs, Internship, Part time jobs, temporary jobs e.g. as a substitute.

How to practice and what to avoid

You can use temporary jobs of all kinds to get experience and get inside

Job interview

How to prepare

On the personal level you should expect that the job often feels like no fit at all

You will notice that the way you cope with the pocess improves after the first interview, especially if you work on your experiences and learn from them. You can benefit from using an ePortfolio for this purpose. See *The ePortfolio Theme*

> "the main things I relied on while I was in the interview were: being honest and showing that even though I have no experience I am open to learn and a hard working person. I am not sure what made the commission decide for me but I know I got the job." See the digital story
> http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.catalin.martin:4

Before you go to a job interview you will have to use various Sources of information and use your network in order to collect important knowledge

> "… I did some research on the internet: how should I behave, what should I say, what I should not say, tips and tricks and more. Frankly, the information that I obtained from the great Google wasn't very helpful. The most important thing is to be yourself" See the digital story:
> http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.students.posts:1

- How high is the salary
- What kind of contract
- Job description and the way of working
- Possibility of travelling
- Environment and colleagues
- Size of company
- Companies reputation)
- Company's values

How to behave

The Impression during a job interview is important and you should know what to answer when asked about availability, starting date, desired salary, etc.

> "I was called for the first interview where I was asked to introduce myself, to say something about my qualities and about the jobs I had until then ..." See the digital story
> http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.ruxandratanasescu:1

Think scenarios to be prepared

Expect challenges and negotiation of wage and opinions

What to expect

> "Surprisingly they didn't ask questions regarding the content of my study but a lot of questions about what else I did in my life, e.g. volunteerism, internships and hobbies." See the Digital story:
> http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.students.posts:11

Job interviewers do often not ask about the type of experience you have as newly qualified or unemployed. For example, the content of your education or your student activities and experiences are often not considered as relevant in relation to the future job situation. (J. Gumperz 1979) in the Literature list

Learn from your experience

ePortfolio for personal development

Use the ePortfolio to

- become aware of your own values, competencies, skills, strengths and weaknesses
- reflect on your interests
- reflect on when am you may be (over)qualified
- Use all kinds of job-experience in your e-portfolio to gain experience and get focussed

The ePortfolio is an tool to improve your process. You can use it to evaluate job interviews and to train your patience.

You can evaluate how you network and become better, as networking is a valuable way to keep motivation up and keep on trying.

This is important because you must expect to produce many applicants and to apply for many jobs. Usually it takes 2-5 job interviews before you get a job and you will have to accept to wait up til five months before you get a job.

Internship

Internship

When Dr. Michelizzi originally graduated she felt that a degree would be immediately useful for finding work. After a while the difference was actually work experience, even small jobs that enriched her degree and made her "stronger" and easier to place. Read her story at http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.catalin.martin:9

Dr. Cioni, is a classroom tutor and an external consultant. About internships she stresses that students who enter the working world must give their very best during internships and show that they are determined and willing, and go even beyond the assigned schedules and duties. In their university period students should try to create possibilities for internships and training." Read her story at http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.catalin.martin:12

> "I got to know my current employer by a case study I carried out about this company within one of my study courses. I think that internships are mainly important to make contacts that could be useful for finding a job later ..." See the digital story
> http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.students.posts:3

In a study of 344 employers, 84% of employers felt that *references are very important* in the decision to hire. 82% rated *internships*, co-op or clinicals as somewhat beneficial in gaining employment. *(Frohrib 2007: 2)* in the Literature list.

What employers recommend

Regarding your applications employers expect

- High informative value targeted at the current job. 81% of the employers stated in a study from 2007 *(Frohrib 2007)* that applicants should *relate the content of their resume to the prospective job*, instead of just delivering a general resume. See the Literature list
- Accordance between the position in add and your own experiences
- Clear focus in How to work with CV

Regarding the Job interview, the employer will expect that you

- Are prepared for job interview. An employer gives a tip on how to *include local knowledge* during the interview by reading a local newspaper: "If you are from a different town get to town early and pick up the local paper. The local news may come in handy during the interview and shows that you have taken an interest in their hometown." (*Frohrib 2007: 22).* in the Literature list
- Are able to present how you prefer to work
- Are able to explain how and why you created your personal set of tools, competencies and knowledge
- 72% of employers stated in a study on 344 employers that job candidates should bring relevant samples of his/her work to the job interview. ." (*Frohrib 2007: 2).* in the Literature list
- Regarding when to show up at a job interview, an employer states that: "Being too early is almost as bad as being a little late. Too early means you are not respecting the interviewer's time. I suggest that you arrive 20 minutes early, go for a walk around the block to calm your nerves and enter the office 10 minutes early." (*Frohrib 2007: 22).* in the Literature list

Employers believe that applicants should gather as much experience and knowledge as possible.

Employers expect relevant job experiences, qualifications, communicational and organisational skills.

There should be a professional profile match to vacancy, personal match

The ideal candidate match, See OECD competence list found at :
http://wiki.bath.ac.uk/display/charlescornelius/OECD+Key+Competencies

Sometimes working experiences rank higher than formal education

Student jobs are often considered relevant

Employers hire students for student jobs

When it is a special job, courses are considered). In Denmark education is necessary for specific job types

Employers expect computer literacy and language skills – minimum and sometimes other languages are relevant too

General competences

Languages

"I think that … English is a must and necessary to keep contact to international partners...." See the digital story:
http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.students.posts:2

IT skills

CT literacy that encompass different levels of competences

- General computer literacy, meaning that you possess the functional and basic skills required when undertaking particular operations.
- information literacy, meaning that you are able to search for and evaluate online information
- social online competencies, meaning that you are able to perform as a participant in online communication, knowledge sharing and collaboration

Collaboration competences

OECD competence list found via: http://wiki.bath.ac.uk/display/charlescornelius/OECD+Key+Competencies

Methodological working skills are also important

Lifelong learning

In order to stay attractive for the job-market you must keep your motivation for self initiated learning motivated and update your knowledge of field, your Self-marketing skills, Networking skills

Participate in exchange programmes

Learn how to do and use an e-portfolio

Need to train digital literacy

Do internships in renowned institutions. In a study of 344 employers, 84% of employers felt that *references are very important* in the decision to hire. 82% rated *internships*, co-op or clinicals as somewhat beneficial in gaining employment. ." (*Frohrib 2007: 2.*) in the Literature list

Participate in workshops

Engage in student groups

Networking skills

Online Social Networking see: http://www.questcareer.com/networking_skills.htm

How to acquire competences

This story is an in depth example of how the pathway to ones carrier for some persons is very long. For Dr. Barbara Lorieri it took several years, many educational initiatives and several jobs to find out what motivated her and gave her life value. Once she found this pathway, she was determined in getting the competences, educational and practical experience needed. Read her story at http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.catalin.martin:13

Searching for job in other countries

Similarities/differences

In Denmark education is necessary for some specific types of job

In Italy you need to get a competence certificate

In Romania, Italy, Spain it is normal to network using family and friends. In northern Europe it is more frequent to use friends and professional networks.

In Germany formal education/certification is quite important to apply for many jobs.

Useful links

The websites www.livejob.dk, which opened in 2007, and the English-speaking www.livejob.eu from 2008, are job recruiting systems based on VideoCV's from employers as well as from job seekers. According to their website it is apparently the worlds first job recruiting initiative based on VideoCV's and video

Stepstone, www.stepstone.dk is an online job portal network represented in 13 European countries and offering recruiting in 23 European countries. Job seekers can register their CV online and add pictures and documents to the CV. The English version is www.stepstone.com

Denmark
1. www.livejob.dk
2. www.magisterjob.dk (union)
3. http://ida.dk/Sites/English/Sider/IDA.aspx (union)
4. http://www.djoef.dk/OmDJOeF/DJOeFTemaer/WorkingandlivinginDenmark.aspx (union)
5. http://www.aak.dk/ (unemployment Insurance Fund for Academics)
6. Http://www.ma-kasse.dk (unemployment Insurance Fund for Masters and PhD's)
7. www.workindenmark.dk is an official job seeking website connecting international job seekers and Danish companies, which is hosted by The Danish Labour Market Directorate ("Arbejdsmarkedsstyrelse") in collaboration with EURES (the European Employment Services).
8. www.stepstone.dk and www.jobcard.dk are private companies offering professional help for job seeking, CV production, application writing and job interview training. JobCard is a collaboration partner with another Danish job portal, www.jobzonen.dk, which has developed a number of multimedia initiatives, e.g. an interface for mobile phones to access to the job database, and a cooperation with Danish public TV station, TV2.

Germany
List of job search engines available to German graduates specifically for the field educational science, sociology and psychology:

1. http://www.bildungsserver.de/db/stellen.html?fpp=1 (Educational Science and Pedagogy)
2. http://www.fachportal-paedagogik.de/start.html (see "Stellenmarkt")
3. www.academics.de (Mainly for jobs in Universities and Institutions)
4. http://www.hogrefe.de/psychjob/ (Psychology)
5. www.jobs.zeit.de

6. www.jobware.de

A comprehensive overview about search engines for internships, jobs, jobs abroad, freelance jobs can be found under http://www.stellenboersen.de/stellenboersen/spezial/bildung/

Romania

List of search engines for recruitment sites

1. ejobs, http://www.ejobs.ro/
2. bestjobs, http://www.bestjobs.ro/
3. a very comprehensive list of national and international jobs could be found on http://www.util21.ro/afaceri/jobs-locuri-munca-Romania.htm
4. http://www.infocompanies.com/firme/companiiromaniadetalii.php-c=e.b.25.html (a list where people could find the information according to county, services etc.)
5. http://www.jobinmarketing.ro/lista-agentii-de-recrutare-romania/ (an alphabetical one, where people can search, subscribe etc.)

National differences regarding the job market

Romanian national job market short overview

Like many other countries, Romania is facing a population diminution. The gap in the demographic transition of over one decade between Romania and the European countries makes of Romania an (still) attractive source of younger, high-skilled and relatively cheaper labour force. The migration for labour from the East to the West is favored by the EU member countries contrary to the South to North migration of less skilled labour.

The most significant structural changes with a major impact on the labour market are:

- The most important decrease occurs in the 18-30 years groups. Only 25% of Romanian youngsters manage to find a job in this economical instability period. Even though the unemployment rate (7,35 %) had a short decreasing in September 2010, Romania is still in the top of the countries with one of the lowest unemployment rate in Europe.
- The demographic diminution affects the labour supply, but additionally the young contingents with a higher working potential (some being highly skilled) "vanish" from the national labour market by migratory labour flows. Such societal losses cause imbalances in the national labour market and diminish Romania's competitiveness in the international and EU markets. But such individuals cover the deficit and diminish the imbalances in the labour markets in the beneficiary countries, thus increasing their productive and creative power.
- The 50-59 years labour force increases throughout the period, which is a factor of potential tensions in the labour market. At this age, the professional mobility diminishes, and after dismissals the re-integration is more difficult when unemployment is long, thus causing discouragement and marginalisation. Also, at this moment the retirement age is a sensitive topic in Romania, which has direct implications on the labour market policies, national economy and social work.

The National Agency for Employment has 41 county agencies, the Bucharest Agency, 88 local agencies and 156 working points. Its services are addressed to unemployed and traders. Its main objective is increasing the employment of the labor force and reduces the unemployment rate by default.

From the institutional point of view, ANOFM:

- Organises the employment services;
- Organises, finances and carries out professional training services for unemployed persons;
- Makes proposals of drafts concerning the employment activity;
- Implements training programmes.

The Danish model

The organisation of the Danish labour market differs from other countries in the EU. The organisational form - the so-called Danish Model - was implemented in the September Settlement of 1899 and also the unemployment benefit system has existed for almost one hundred years. The Danish Model has been considered a model for the EU system and the unique system impacts on what it means both to be job seeking and to be employed/unemployed in Denmark. Due to this history Denmark has had a tradition for not only a large degree of public involvement, of using trade unions as the entry point for job seeking processes, but also having unemployment insurance funds and governmental supported initiatives for educating the general public about how to find and get jobs.

The Danish Model consists of the three elements: Collaboration between three parts (employees, employers and the state), the organisations (unions and the employers' associations), and collective agreements.
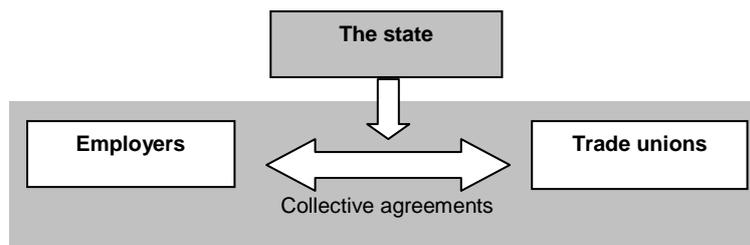

Figure 1: The Danish labour market Model

The three parts have different interests. However, as long as the employers' and employees' organisations collaborate and reach collective agreements they control the regulation of labour market matters and the state does not interfere with statutory regulation. The framework for collaboration between the organisations is established in the General Agreement, while wages and working conditions are decided in the bargained agreements. In case of conflict the final agreements are set by the Industrial Arbitration or in the Court of Labour Law. Strong labour market organisations with a high membership rate are preconditions for a system based on the social partners' self-regulation and this is also the case in Denmark and thus, illegal strikes are rare in Denmark compared to other EU countries. However, the co-operation in the EU has led to legislation in different fields, but the core issues are still exclusively left to the social partners to decide through the collective bargaining system.

Since the mid 1990'ies, The Danish Model has been extended with the so-called Flexicurity (contraction of flexibility and security). Flexicurity combines flexibility on the labour market with social security and an active labour market policy with rights and obligations for the unemployed. The flexible rules make it easy for employers to dismiss and hire new employees depending on the state of the market. The security rules guarantee the wage earners a legally specified payment when unemployed. This payment, called 'unemployment benefit', is on a relatively high level, regardless of the spouse's income, and for a limited period. The labour market system offers guidance, job or education to all unemployed.

The system differentiates between the unemployed insured persons (who may receive unemployment benefits from an Unemployment Insurance Fund) and the unemployed uninsured persons (who may receive social assistance or

start help from the municipality). Unemployment insurance is a voluntary scheme administered by the unemployment insurance funds that are private associations of employees with the sole purpose of ensuring economic support in the event of unemployment. Unemployment benefits are, however, largely financed by the State. In case of unemployment the person register at the Public Employment Service (called 'Job center') on the first day as unemployed and contact his or her Unemployment Insurance Fund. It is important to notice that Trade unions and unemployment insurance funds are not the same. In many cases, however, there are close ties between specific trade unions and insurance funds.

Trade unions

The professions related to the L@jost Project are covered by three major trade unions. These three unions all have offers for job seekers, newly graduated and unemployed members. However, the depths as well as the width of the offers differ as the unions are independent organisations. They all offer an English translation of their entire websites but only DJØF and IDA offers special information aimed at job seeking foreigners.

- The Danish Association of Masters and PhDs – DM – www.magisterjob.dk
  The union offers an online job finding database that is public (see figure 2). When logging in at the website, members are offered more sophisticated options, such as a job agent with online CV etc. The union also offers advice in job seeking, career guidance, and competence development courses. The union facilitates network communities among members, based on a combination of a virtual forum and physical meetings. However, the networks are aimed more at knowledge sharing than job seeking.

- Danish Association of Lawyers and Economists – DJØF - http://www.djoef.dk/OmDJOeF/DJOeFTemaer/WorkingandlivinginDenmark.aspx
  DJØF offers a job agent for members. But the union has a more distinct profile regarding job seeking and career development than DM. Thus, the DJØF website offers a wide selection of services. Furthermore, DJØF offers specific information for foreigners who are considering Denmark as a possible place to go and work.

- The Danish Society of Engineers – IDA - http://ida.dk/Sites/English/Sider/IDA.aspx
  Besides offering similar options as DM and DJØF, IDA has a specific initiative for foreigners. The initiative is formulated as an invitation – *Come work and live in Denmark* – rather than just information and introduces to a range of relevant questions a foreigner is expected to ask before deciding and arriving.

Danish Unemployment Insurance Funds

Of relevance to the L@JOST project is the Danish Unemployment Insurance Fund for Academics, named AAK which have a two-fold objective. One is of course the provision of economical support for members who become unemployed or perhaps economical support in the case of pregnancy etc (and in Denmark this economic support is compared to many southern European systems relatively high, though the monthly insurance paid is also high). Secondly, AAK offers a wide range of services connected to aiding in getting a new job. Another insurance fund of relevance to the L@JOST project is The Danish Unemployment Insurance Fund for Masters and PhDs, MA (www.ma-kasse.dk – see figure 6). Like AAK, MA also offers services connected to getting a job, besides the economic support for unemployed members.

Public employment service and job seeking

The job centres are the public employment service for jobseekers and employers in Denmark. The active employment policy aims at ensuring a well-functioning flexicurity system. The active labour market policy has four overall objectives:

- to assist jobseekers in finding a job,
- to offer services to private and public employers who are looking for labour or wish to retain their workforce,
- to help persons who are receiving social assistance or start help to find a job quickly so that they will be able to support themselves and their families,
- to help persons who due to reduced working capacity have a special need for assistance in finding a job.

The employment measures apply to all unemployed persons irrespective of whether they are receiving unemployment benefits, social assistance, start help or sickness benefits. All unemployed persons have a right and duty to receive an activation offer. In every municipality there are information centres and 'help yourself offices' for unemployed person to use. These jobcentres also hosts general information for jobseekers on the job seeking process. Online the jobcentres host two official database services; a Job-bank with job offers and a CV-bank with online CVs of job seekers. Every unemployed person is obliged to maintain an electronic CV in the official job seeking portal (www.jobnet.dk) in order to be an active jobseeker. Another official job seeking website is www.workindenmark.dk, a website for connecting international job seekers and Danish companies, which is hosted by The Danish Labour Market Directorate ("Arbejdsmarkedsstyrelse") in collaboration with EURES (the European Employment Services).

Your personal approach

Your personal approach

Your personal approach is about finding out: What do I want to do? What do I want most? What am I good at? What can I do to get better? Should I change my preconditions? How do I evaluate my qualifications? How do I Keep the spirit? What do I do about being nervous –anxious –how do I regain my tranquillity? Ect.

It is about finding your own way to learn from your experiences and maybe change your premises, fx. use your education for other purposes and go in other directions, and How do I promote myself?

An ePortfolio is an excellent tool for developing your personal approach

Dr. Barbara Lorieri took some hard decisions. She left university and went against her parents' advice. For some years she struggled with feelings of disappointment and lack of self-confidence, but found her way into her current profession through among others meetings with people who guided her to educations and job offers, which turned out right for her. Read her ull story at http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.catalin.martin:13

What do I want to do

"So for me what I'm doing right now is not only a job (NGO) it is a life style, it is a process of self development and of being on the right path... I'm just simple myself and very happy with it :-)" See the digital story at: http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.catalin.martin:5

How do I evaluate

"…I would like to suggest you not to waste any "work" opportunity because you want to go on a small vacation, or because you are afraid. Try to establish at least three things you would like to learn in the following 12 months and perhaps why …" Digital story is found at http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.catalin.martin:6

Keeping up the spirit

Keeping up the spirit is about learning to control your patience, hope, self confidence, handle disappointments etc.

Keeping the current job

"During my working years at the company I also attended a course for trainers (and became a certified trainer – Formator cod COR: 241205). I also attended courses for improving my training and coaching skills (a course for trainers and coaches about using REBT techniques in „the field")" See the digital story http://latjost.mixxt.com/networks/blog/post.catalin.martin:6

Literature

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