



How to Build Your Target List

Building a target list is a key step one in developing your job search plan and provides focus for your networking.

People involved in sales use prospect lists. These lists contain company names and contact information for people who **MAY** be interested in the product or service they are promoting. We'll call these target companies. In your case, these target companies would potentially need your skills or expertise.

Answer these questions to help you determine who your target companies are and then you can fine-tune your options.

- What companies would you like to work for?
- What industry do you want to work in?
- What size company is the best fit for you?
- Geographically, where would you be willing to work?

In his book, "The Two-Hour Job Search" Steve Dalton covers, step by step, how to efficiently build your target list. Steve created a video summarizing his method which you should watch:

<https://vimeo.com/180223057>

Follow these steps to create your target list so you can go directly to the source of opportunities, increase the odds of getting to the opportunity ahead of the competition, feel like you have control over your job search, and most importantly, make the best use of time.

1. Top Company Lists

Every year, Forbes, Glassdoor, Vault and other publications release top company and best employer lists. These lists are a goldmine and provide you with top ranked companies to add to your target list. Typically these are large, well-known companies where everyone wants to work. You'll want to diversify your list of target employers to include small to medium sized companies as well.

2. Your B-School's Employers List

Your b-school likely has a list of employers that regularly recruit on campus or where alumni have landed. Check with your career center and see what is available.

3. Industry Lists

Nearly every industry recognizes top companies with awards or recognition. Conduct a Google search for "best companies" and add the industry you are interested in. Your school's librarian may also be able to provide access to industry lists or directories.

4. LinkedIn's Alumni Function

Even if your B-School has an alumni database, you should still check out LinkedIn's "See Alumni" feature. This allows you to easily filter alumni by city, company and function. Take note of the employers alumni work for, especially alumni in roles that interest you. ►



5. Indeed.com

Indeed is the top job aggregator and job board. Not only does it search thousands of job boards, companies also post jobs directly to the site. This makes it a prime resource for researching companies with jobs you are interested in. Use search terms such as functional skills, your degree, and geographic preference, to search for jobs that most closely match your criteria. Look through the list of companies that are posting these jobs and add new companies to your list to research later.

5. The Business Librarian

Your school has a business librarian who is formally educated in research tools and how to best use them. Tap into this resource.

Broaden Your List

In order to expand your list to 25-40 companies, you will want include your target company's competitors and smaller companies within the same line of business. For example, if you have Amazon on your target list, you could add online retail competitors such as Walmart, eBay, Alibaba and The Home Depot.

Don't overlook small to medium businesses that are or will be in growth mode. In fact, growth within small to medium companies is happening faster than at large companies. Smaller Amazon competitors could include Duluth Trading Company, FreshDirect, At Home or any number of up-and-coming online retailers.

Put Your List on Paper

Create an Excel spreadsheet so you can easily keep track of your target companies. You'll also want to prioritize which companies you'll reach out to first. This is where Steve Dalton's video comes in handy. Using his LAMP method, you'll organize a much more effective job search.

Your list should be large enough to ensure you have enough job opportunities. If you have too few target companies, you may not land an interview or a job at any. Anywhere from 25 – 40 companies is a good number to maintain on your list.

Over time, you're list may change and that's to be expected. As you research companies, some will drop from your list because you don't see a fit. You will also discover new companies either through networking or research. The key is to stay focused and use consistent criteria, not just the fact the company has B-School level jobs.

There's another benefit to creating a list. It helps you keep those target companies on your radar and if you choose, you can share your list of company names with people you network with. It makes it easier for them to introduce you to people they may know within your target companies.

Start Your Research

With your list developed and prioritized, you can begin conducting research to acquire basic knowledge about the company before you begin networking. There is a checklist with information you will want to gather prior to a networking meeting.

You're much more likely to want to put the effort into networking if you are sincerely interested in working for a company and this will help you stay motivated.

Research Resources

Company website: see press releases, products and services, awards, testimonials, and 'about us' page.

Employer's social media accounts: review profiles of the company/people who work there to see what they are sharing and discussing. ►



Glassdoor: gather insight and information based on anonymous company reviews.

Professional associations, online newsletters, magazines and newspapers: regularly read these resources to discover current news and trends.

Target List Template

Company Name	Alumni	Motivation	Postings From Indeed.com
	Yes or No	5 – Dream employer 4 – Second tier 3 – Third tier 2 – Not interested 1 – More research	Yes or No

Once you have your list of target companies, identify companies with alumni and prioritize the people you will reach out to first. Begin with the person you know best or have the closest ties to. And once you’ve spoken with them, keep track of any referrals or action items and schedule your next follow-up.

Company Name	Alumni	Motivation	Postings From Indeed.com	Contact	Date	Action
	Yes or No	5 – Dream employer 4 – Second tier 3 – Third tier 2 – Not interested 1 – More research	Yes or No			





Checklist for Research on Target Employers

Company Information	
What is its history?	
What are its stated values, mission and culture?	
Who are the key players?	
What services or products does it provide?	
Who are the primary clients or customers?	
What are the benefits for users or customers?	
What significant successes has the company had?	
What current news is being shared about the company?	
Who are the main competitors?	
What are the main challenges in this industry?	
What do other people (customers, competitors, employees) say about the company?	