Career Research
It is very important that you thoroughly investigate your career options, gathering as much information about the industry, the market and individual employers/schools as possible. Self-assessment is the first step in gathering information. Other sources of viable information are printed materials, internet-based information, people in the field and your own personal experience. The more information you gather, the better prepared you will be to build a career story. Information will also help you do the following:

- Uncover new career areas not previously considered
- Gain insight into current and future trends in your field
- Learn the jargon and important issues
- Obtain advice on where you might fit in
- Broaden your own network of contacts

Quicktips on “Informational Interviewing” and “Networking” will help you gather information from professionals in the field.

After gathering research on career fields of interest, you will be better equipped to make a solid career choice with targeted companies/schools to contact see “Target List Guidelines”.

Market Research
Effective market research consists of five vital elements:

1. Identify job titles related to the career area
2. Research job descriptions for each title
3. Identify your industry
4. Identify the companies/schools within your industry
5. Identify your desired location

After you decide the career area you want, look for job titles related to the area. Pull job descriptions for each title to understand tasks and responsibilities. Identify the industries where these professionals typically work and the major companies in your desired location. This will allow you to target your search and know where to focus your search efforts.

Sources of Information
Whether you are trying to sell a product or trying to sell yourself to employers, it is vitally important to develop a target list on which to focus. Some helpful resources to use in compiling this target list are:

1. ReferenceUSA (database of 14 million U.S. businesses searchable by industry, geography, company name, etc.); access online at www.bham.lib.al.us/virtual/databases/
2. GOINGLOBAL (35 Country Career Guide & 44 U.S. City Career Guides with H-1B info)
3. CareerShift (company and job lists by industry and geography)
4. LinkedIn Groups
5. Chamber of Commerce Directories
6. Professional Association Directories
7. Civic Organization Membership Lists
8. Alumni Directories
9. Industry Guides and Journals
10. Newspapers and Business Journals(check the special sections about prominent people, new businesses, and community events)
11. Telephone Directory (Yellow Pages)