



 PART 4 OF 9

STRATEGIC JOB SEARCH TECHNIQUES

— Navigating the Hidden Job Market with AI Tools —

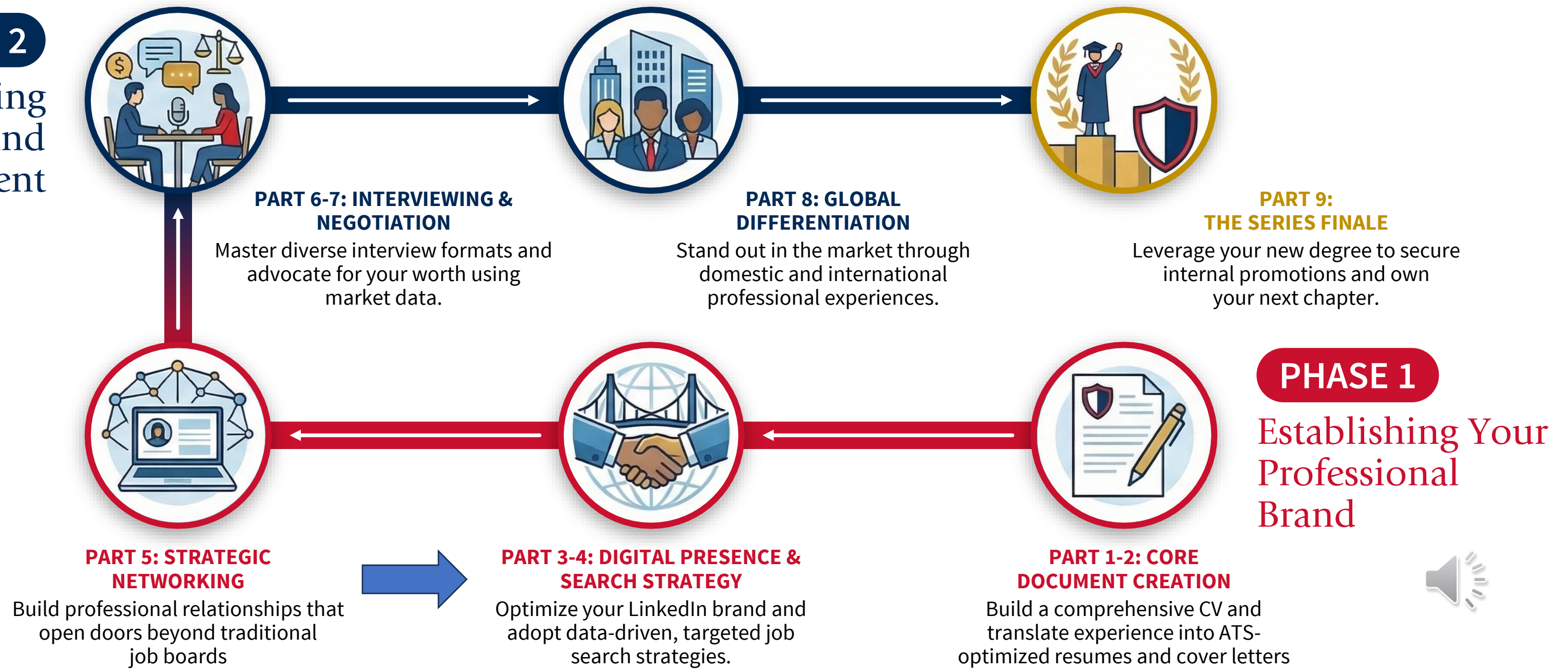
Presented by USI Career Success Center

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ROADMAP TO EXCELLENCE: THE USI GRADUATE STUDENT CAREER WEBINAR SERIES

PHASE 2
Mastering
The Market and
Advancement



THE JOB SEARCH REALITY CHECK

250+
Applications

Average applications needed to receive 4-6 interviews

70%

of jobs are filled through the “hidden job market”

4-5_x
More Likely

Referred candidates are to be hired than cold applicants

40%
Faster

Referred candidates are hired compared to job board applicants



The Hidden Job Market

Yes- this is REAL! Jobs filled through networking, referrals, and internal promotions **BEFORE** they're ever posted publicly.

Today's Strategy

Stop competing with 250+ applicants. Learn to find opportunities **BEFORE** they're posted and get referred by insiders.



THE 4-STEP STRATEGIC JOB SEARCH

1



Define Target

Identify 3-5 target job titles using AI to discover variations you might miss

Use Copilot to find related job titles

2



Build List

Create a list of 20-30 target companies aligned with your values and goals

Research industry leaders + hidden gems

3



Research

Deep dive into each company's culture, challenges, and growth areas

Find insiders on LinkedIn to connect

4



Apply Smart

Tailor applications, time submissions strategically, seek referrals first

Quality over quantity approach



Key Mindset Shift

You're not looking for ANY job — you're targeting specific opportunities at specific companies where you can add value and grow.



AI-POWERED COMPANY DISCOVERY

Why This Matters

Most job seekers only apply to companies they already know. AI can uncover dozens of employer matches you've never considered.

Copilot Prompt 1: Find Target Companies

"I'm interested in [target role] in [city/industry]. What types of companies or organizations hire for this role? Give me 10–15 specific employers in this area."

Copilot Prompt 2: Dig Deeper

"Which companies in [location/industry] hire [target role]? Which are growing or hiring now?"



Example: HR Professional in Evansville, IN

You Might Search: "HR Manager Evansville Indiana"

AI-Identified Employers: Toyota Manufacturing Indiana, Old National Bank, Deaconess Health System, GAGE Marketing Group, USI, SWIRCA & More, Alcoa Warrick Operations



Action

Build a list of 15–20 target companies using AI. Follow each one on LinkedIn and set up company-specific job alerts on LinkedIn and Indeed. Then follow each company on LinkedIn for instant job alert coverage.



AI-POWERED JOB TITLE DISCOVERY

Why This Matters

The same role can have 10+ different titles across companies. If you only search for one title, you're missing opportunities.

Copilot Prompt 1: Title Variations

"I'm interested in [target role]. What are all the different job titles companies might use for similar positions? Include variations across industries."

Copilot Prompt 2: Career Paths

"What entry-level and mid-level positions lead to [target role]? What adjacent roles might also be a good fit for someone with my background in [field]?"



Example: Healthcare Administration Titles

You Might Search: "Healthcare Administrator"

Also Search These Variations: Health Services Manager, Clinical Operations Manager, Practice Manager, Medical Office Administrator, Healthcare Operations Coordinator, Patient Services Director



Action

Create a list of 5-10 job title variations for your target role. Set up job alerts for ALL of them on LinkedIn, Indeed, and Career Launch.



BUILDING YOUR TARGET COMPANY LIST

Where to Find Target Companies



Industry Leaders

“Best Places to Work” lists, Fortune 500, industry publications



Growing Companies

Inc. 5000, local business journals, LinkedIn news



Hidden Gems

LinkedIn company pages, Glassdoor, alumni network employers



Local/Regional

Chamber of Commerce, economic development sites, USI employer partners

Copilot Research Prompt

“What are the top companies in *[industry]* in *[location]*? Include both large employers and growing mid-size companies. What are their recent news, growth areas, and company culture highlights?”



Company Selection Criteria

- ✓ Mission/values alignment
- ✓ Growth trajectory
- ✓ Development opportunities
- ✓ Culture fit (Glassdoor reviews)
- ✓ Location/remote options



Goal: 20-30 Companies

Track in spreadsheet: Company, Website, Key contacts, Job alerts set, Notes



OPTIMAL APPLICATION TIMING

8x Higher Response Rate
When you apply within 24-48 hours of a job posting

Best Days of Apply

Mon - Wed

Hiring managers review applications early in the week. Thursday/Friday applications often sit until Monday.

Best Time of Day

06 - 10 am

Your application appears at the top of the recruiter's inbox when they start their day.

Speed Matters

24 - 48 hrs

Many positions receive 50%+ of applications in the first 48 hours. Late applications get buried.



Pro Tip

Set up instant job alerts on LinkedIn, Indeed, and Career Launch. When you get an alert for a great match, drop everything and apply within 24 hours with a tailored resume.



SET UP LINKEDIN JOB ALERTS

Never Miss an Opportunity

Set up instant alerts so every matching role lands in your inbox the moment it posts

STEP 1: SEARCH

Jobs Tab

Click Jobs at the top of LinkedIn. Search your target role, location, and filter by job type and date posted.

STEP 2: ACTIVATE

Set Alert

Toggle “Set Alert” at top of results. Choose Daily for active searches or Weekly to stay open.

STEP 3: MAXIMIZE

20 Alerts

LinkedIn allows up to 20 active alerts. Create one per job title variation AND one per target company page for full coverage.



Pro Tip

Create a separate alert for each job title variation (e.g. “HR Manager” AND “Human Resources Manager”). You can have up to 20 active alerts — use them all. Manage alerts anytime under [Jobs > Preferences > Job Alerts](#).

 **Step-by-step video tutorial by Oliver Schinkten:** [linkedin.com/learning/linkedin-quick-tips-24566373/set-up-job-alerts](https://www.linkedin.com/learning/linkedin-quick-tips-24566373/set-up-job-alerts) (free with a LinkedIn account)



GETTING REFERRALS THAT WORK

4-5_x

More likely to be hired with a referral

55%

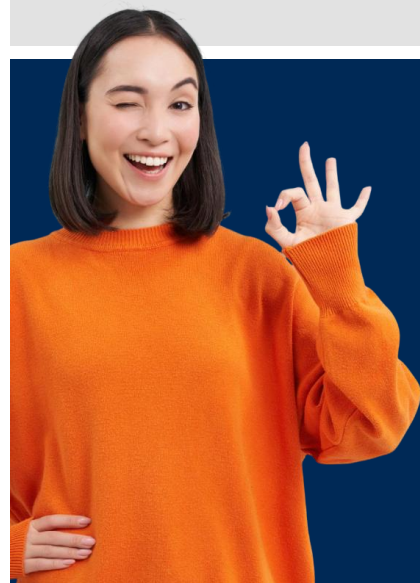
Faster hiring process for referred candidates

46%

Of hires at top companies come from referrals

Referral Request Template

“Hi [Name], I noticed you work at [Company] and I'm very interested in the [Position] role. I've researched the company extensively and believe my experience in [relevant skill] would be valuable. Would you be open to a brief call to learn about your experience there? If you feel comfortable, I'd be grateful for a referral. Either way, I appreciate any insights you can share.”



DO

- Research the person and company first
- Be specific about the role you want
- Make it easy for them to say yes
- Follow up with a thank you regardless

DON'T

- Ask strangers to refer you cold
- Send generic copy-paste messages
- Pressure or make them uncomfortable
- Forget to update them on your progress



RESOURCES & YOUR ACTION PLAN



USI CAREER SUCCESS CENTER



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Career Launch: Job postings + Alumni Network

Indiana Partners

- Ascend Indiana - Job matching for Indiana talent
- Parker Dewey - Paid micro-internships
- Indiana INTERNnet - Internship database

Job Search Tools

- LinkedIn Jobs + Company Research
- Glassdoor - Reviews + Salary data
- Apollo.io - Company + Contact research



Your 7-Day Action Plan

Day **1-2**

Use Copilot to generate 5-10 job title variations

Day **3-4**

Build target company list (20-30 companies)

Day **5-6**

Set up job alerts + identify 5 insider contacts

Day **7**

Send first referral request using template

Coming Up Next: **PART 5**

Professional Networking
Building Authentic Connections for Long-Term Career Success



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

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