

“ With our backs to the wall, the darkness will fall. We never quite thought we could lose it all.”

Okay, not as dramatic as the Imagine Dragons make it out to be on their hit song Ready! Aim! Fire!, but during a job search it can seem that way especially when your job search means randomly applying to jobs you find on job boards. When you’re in a job search, you need a focused plan— think of it as a marketing campaign where you’re the brand and your target are employers where there is a fit.

Throughout my marketing career, I worked with organizations that took a fire, aim , ready approach to marketing new products. No point in naming those brands, because they are no longer around. Don’t be one of those brands. Here’s the **Ready • Aim • Fire & Hired Job Search Plan** approach.

READY	AIM	FIRE
<p>Before you begin your job search you’ll want to zero in on a career direction, and brand yourself in a way that supports that direction. Let’s say you’re graduating with a BA in English and are aiming for a job in the film industry, you want to envision the job you want and ask yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are my short- and long-term goals? ▪ What is important to me in a job and in the workplace? What kind of people do I want to work with/for? ▪ What will my ideal job title and description be? ▪ How will this ideal job help me gain skills and grow to achieve my goals? <p>With an idea of what you want in a job, you want to brand yourself to show prospective employers in the career industry you’ve chosen that you have the skills they value. Those skills that make you a qualified candidate. When you can clearly paint a picture of why you’re the best fit for a specific job within a specific company—you will get noticed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify your unique character and enhance your own understanding of your natural strengths, motivations and growth areas. ▪ Translate your major/degree and experience into skills. 	<p>Your career sweet spot lies at the intersection of the things you do especially well, the things you love to do and the things employers will pay for.</p> <p>Developing a targeted Employer List is an important part of your Ready ▪ Aim ▪ Fire ▪ Hired Job Search Plan.</p> <p>Ryan, with his degree in marketing wanted to work in a NYC agency. He learned everything he could about advertising, marketing services and digital agencies. He found people in his network (former classmates) who worked at agencies, to help him understand the business and what employers valued most. Once Ryan was sure he had the information needed, he was ready to prepare his job search marketing materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resumé , cover and networking letter templates ▪ LinkedIn Profile ▪ Business card <p>(You might want to prepare other materials based on what you learned e.g. website, video portfolio.)</p> <p>While Ryan was gathering information, he was also developing his target list of employers. There’s a place for job boards, but Ryan was not going to waste time responding to every job posted, just the ones where he believed there was a good fit.</p>	<p>You are now in control of your job search. You have a plan to follow as you begin to go after the employers on your list. You also have a way to track your connections into companies, your job search activities, what your learning about each employer and your progress.</p> <p>Everyone has an organizational style; make sure you have a way to capture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who you talked to and when, their contact information, the outcome of the discussion and your follow up include dates. ▪ Company contact information, website and career section url, who you know there and how you know them, is there a job opening posted, action you took and applicable dates. <p>Let your network (friends, relatives, alumni, parents of your friends, former supervisors, career services) know you are graduating and starting your job search. People want to help. It’s up to you to tell them exactly what you need.</p> <p>This is a lot to do while you are still in school. Start early. Do the upfront work required. Work your plan and you will get hired.</p>