How Competitive Are You In the Job Market?

**NOT COMPETITIVE**
- Not using career services
- No prepared résumé or cover letter, or one that’s poorly prepared
- No references, or using them without permission
- Not attending career fairs or networking events
- Not reviewing the position description
- Not researching the company
- Not practicing interview skills or preparing answers to interview questions
- Arriving at the interview poorly groomed
- Wearing excessive jewelry, makeup, or scent
- Dressing casually, which includes:
  - Jeans, tee shirts, tank tops, sneakers, flip flops, skirts or dresses above the knee, cleavage, exposed tattoos and facial piercings
- Arriving late to the interview
- Using cellular or other electronic devices when interacting with employers one-on-one
- Poor eye contact and a weak handshake
- Asking about salary or benefits at the initial interview / meeting
- Providing exaggerated or untrue answers to interview questions
- Showing a lack of enthusiasm for the position
- Not following up after the interview

**COMPETITIVE**
- Join LinkedIn and other professional social media networking sites to expand your network pool to a more targeted audience
- Review position description
- All written communication should be well-formatted, concise, and free of errors
- Identify at least 3 good references and ask their permission to use them
- View Career Services website’s job search section
- Have your resume and cover letter critiqued by Career Services
- Attend Career Fair/Networking events
- Conduct informational interviews or job shadowing once you’ve identified your career goals
- Review and practice 20 possible interview questions
- Arrive 10 minutes early for the interview
- Arrive with well-kept hair and excellent grooming
- Wear minimal scent, makeup, and jewelry
- Arrive in coordinated business suit:
  - Men: Matching, clean, pressed slacks, jacket, tie, with button-down shirt
  - Women: Matching skirt/slacks and jacket with conservative blouse (skirts should be slightly below knees and wear hose)
- Shoes should be close-toed.
- Respond to interview questions clearly and concisely and maintain eye contact

**MORE COMPETITIVE**
- Do everything in previous column. In addition:
  - Select references who closely match your career goals
  - Ask permission to use
  - Keep references posted on your progress
  - Become a member of at least one professional organization
  - Carefully review the position description and tailor your skills and experiences with those described
  - Research the company and industry
  - Review your resume to be sure it highlights the knowledge, skills, and abilities you possess that closely match the position description
  - Demonstrate enthusiastic attitude for the position/company
  - Become more active on LinkedIn and other Social Media websites by following companies of interest, networking with professionals
- Practice responding to situational / behavioral interview questions
- Practice and provide a firm handshake, excellent eye contact, straight posture, and good smile
- Attend Career Center Prepare-for-the-Fair events
- Follow-up with a thank you which addresses a few concise reasons why the interview confirmed your interest / fit for the job

**MOST COMPETITIVE**
- Do everything in previous two columns. In addition:
  - Practice your interview virtually or in person and have it reviewed by a career counselor
  - Answer questions with specific examples from your work or leadership experiences
  - Send concise, error-free follow-up correspondence
  - Track your progress
  - Conduct informational interviews with individuals in the company/occupation
  - Thoroughly research the company and where it ranks in its industry; latest news reports, etc.
  - Identify any USF alumni that work in the company. Have you looked at LinkedIn?
  - Be proactive in LinkedIn through group posts
  - Familiarize yourself with various interview formats
  - Become known / take a leadership role within professional organizations
  - Brand your unique story...STAND OUT!