3.1 Three Elements of a Well-Defined Target

The Importance of the Three-Element Structure for Defining Job Targets

If you glance at a **job board** or classified ad section, you will see hundreds, if not thousands, of job possibilities. Even similar ads, such as job postings for accountants, can list very different descriptions for the job responsibilities, as well as qualifications to get the job. If you don't have a structure to categorize this very broad job market, you will dilute your efforts wading through too many jobs that are of no interest to you or for which you are not qualified.

Instead, you need a structure that cuts across all of the jobs and is representative of how the employer thinks of the job (since the employer is the one advertising the job). This way, you know what job postings to research. For the searchable online job databases, you can filter specifically with the structure in mind. As you move through the six steps of the job search process, you can tailor each step to the target structure to ensure that you are always keeping the employer's point of view at the heart of your search.

Three Elements of a Well-Defined Job Target

A well-defined job target includes three elements:

1. Industry
2. Function

3. Geography

Continuing the example of accounting from the first section, accounting is a function. It is what the person in the job is doing. However, this accountant can be working for a government agency, for a hospital, for an insurance company, for a toy manufacturer, or for a host of other types of companies and organizations. Therefore, accounting is not specific enough—we also need to know the industry (whether government, health care, insurance, etc.). Finally, because people might relocate for a job, we also need to know the geography of our job targets. Are you looking at a specific city only, surrounding suburbs, surrounding cities, multiple states, or even multiple countries?

Industry

The **industry** you target is the type of business in which you want to work. Industries include the following examples:

- Arts
- Education
- Energy
- Food
- Fashion
- Health care, pharmaceuticals, and biotech
- Hospitality and leisure
- Financial services
- Government
- Legal

- Luxury goods
- Management consulting
- Manufacturing
- Media and entertainment
- Nonprofit causes
- Retail
- Sports
- Technology
- Telecommunications
- Transportation, aerospace, and automotive

These are just some examples, and they are of very broad industry categories. You can specify even further into subcategories. You will want to subcategorize because if you pick too broad an industry, you will have the same dilution-of-efforts problem as if you haven't specified an industry at all.

If you look at the arts, subcategories include the following examples:

- Type of art—visual, performing
- Type of organization—venues for exhibiting and performing, arts education, artist support, art supplies
- Sector—nonprofit (e.g., Lincoln Center, a venue for performing arts), private sector (e.g., Warner Music Group, a record label), government (e.g., National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency supporting artists and arts organizations)

It is not enough to say, "I want a job in the arts." Do you mean visual arts, as in painting or sculpting? Do you mean you'd like to work in a venue, such as a museum or a theater? Do you want to work for educational programs that focus on the arts? Do you want to work in support of artists—at a foundation that gives grants for creative projects, or at an artists' union? Do you want to be in and around artists, selling or manufacturing art supplies? Finally, you can be in the arts and work for a nonprofit, a private company, or a government agency. Each of these sectors is very different.

In a later section of this chapter, we will give ideas for how to explore different industries and the different subcategories of your industry choices to see what might be right for you. In Chapter 6 on *research*, we will talk about how to research industries for specific organizations and company names and other information that will help you find the jobs you want. You can see already how useful it can be to focus on being specific. Being specific in describing the jobs you want is necessary to find where those jobs are.

Let's take another example from the list so you can get more ideas on how to break an industry down. If you look at energy, the following subcategories are included:

- Types of energy—oil, gas, coal, nuclear, alternative
- Types of organizations—exploration companies, utilities, research firms, regulatory agencies, equipment and support, capital raising
- Sector—nonprofit (the US Energy Association, a nonprofit professional association), private sector (e.g., Exxon Mobil, an oil and gas company), government (e.g., the Environmental Protection Agency)

If you are interested in energy, you could work for a private company that is involved in many types of energy and at many stages, from exploration to delivery. You could research energy-related issues for a nonprofit. You could be focused on regulations for a government agency. There are multiple, different possibilities for that single energy industry choice.

Finally, let's look at sports as a possible interest. Perhaps you have been a longtime athlete or a diehard fan. Can you take a personal interest and make it into a career?

- Types of sports—a specific sport (e.g., football) or sports in general
- Types of organizations—sports team (e.g., New York Giants), sports league (e.g., NFL), sports venue (e.g., Madison Square Garden, Meadowlands), sports program (e.g., an after-school program dedicated to foster competitive skills among youth), sports product (e.g., Under Armour), sports retailer (e.g., FootLocker), sports business (e.g., agencies who represent athletes, marketing and advertising firms who help companies with sports-related campaigns)
- Sector—nonprofit (e.g., Turn 2 Foundation, which supports sports programs and is funded by Derek Jeter, a professional baseball player), private sector (e.g., Under Armour, FootLocker), government (local departments of parks and recreation)

If you are interested in sports, you might focus on a specific team or sport and look at different organizations involved with that team. Or you might focus on sports in general —perhaps take on the mission of expanding the spectator base, increasing participation among youth, or determining the impact of sports on culture.

Here is a list of possible subcategories for common industries:

Table 3.1 List of Industry with Examples of Subcategories for Each

Overall Industry	Subcategories
Arts	- Visual or performing arts - Venues - Education - Artist support and marketing - Arts-related products
Education	- Early, elementary, middle school, secondary school, higher education, adult, corporate, and executive - Independent, alternative and charter, public - Regulation and advocacy - Research - Pedagogy
Energy	- Oil, gas, coal, nuclear, alternative - Exploration - Utilities - Research - Regulation and safety - Equipment - Capital raising
Food	- Catering - Restaurants - Corporate services - Media and journalism - Nutrition science - Regulation and safety - Human rights and food access
Fashion	- Retail - Design - Manufacturing - Buying - Media and journalism
Health care, pharmaceuticals, biotech	- Hospitals, clinics - Pharmacies - Medical equipment - Research - Regulation and safety - Human rights, medical care access, patient advocacy, privacy - Insurance
Hospitality and leisure	- Hotels, resorts, spas - Leisure versus commercial - Booking and sales - Event planning

	- Equipment and operations
Financial services	- Accounting and audit - Commercial banking - Private banking and asset management - Investment banking - Retail banking - Insurance - Regulation - Consumer advocacy and protection
Government	- Federal, state, municipal - Constituents represented (e.g., artists, children, elderly, small business) - Industries represented (e.g., arts, education, health care, banking)
Legal	- Professional services, in-house - Criminal, civil - Family, immigration, litigation - Research - Operations and document processing - Regulation - Public defender
Luxury goods	- Retail - Design - Manufacturing - Media and journalism
Management consulting	- Functional specialists: HR, economics, sales, general strategy, technology - Industry specialists: financial services, pharmaceutical, nonprofits
Manufacturing	- Equipment - Regulation and safety - Union relations - Capital financing
Media and entertainment	- Film, TV, publishing, digital - Content production - Distribution - Marketing - Advertising - Research - Regulation and monitoring
	- Mission based (e.g., ending poverty, eradicating polio)

Nonprofit causes	- Constituent based (e.g., advocating for the homeless, protecting consumers) - Programs - Foundations
Retail	- Product based (e.g., clothing, office equipment) - Customer based (e.g., children's, women's)
Sports	- Specific sport or sports in general - Sports team - Sports league - Sports venue - Sports-related education - Sports products and equipment - Sports retailers - Sports agencies, marketing, or advertising
Technology	- Hardware - Software - Services - Regulation - Advocacy (e.g., privacy, net neutrality)
Telecommunications	- Engineering and design - Manufacturing - Utilities - Regulation - Advocacy
Transportation, aerospace, and automotive	- Motor, marine, rail, aerospace - Leisure versus commercial use - Engineering and design - Manufacturing - Logistics - Regulation and safety - Consumer protection and access

Function

The **function** of a job refers to your overall responsibility and what you are doing day to day. Examples of job functions follow:

- Management
- Sales
- Marketing and public relations
- Finance and accounting
- Human resources
- Operations
- Technology

In both of the industry examples for arts and energy, you could be doing many different things within any of the subcategories. If your industry choice leads you to an art museum as a possibility, you might do several things:

- Manage a program or exhibit (management).
- Handle membership or ticket sales (sales).
- Raise money (at a nonprofit, this is referred to as *development*).
- Create brochures and advertising (marketing).
- Analyze and report on the finances of the museum (finance and accounting).
- Act as the point person for employees on questions about pay, benefits, advancement, and other career-related issues (human resources).
- Organize the open and close, facilities, and maintenance or other daily operations (operations).
- Run the customer database (technology).

In a later section of this chapter, we will give ideas for how to explore different functional areas to see what might be right for you. In Chapter 6 on *research*, we will talk about how to research functions for information that will help you position yourself appropriately for these jobs. Function and industry build on each other. Knowing one but the not the other is incomplete.

Geography

Finally, even if you know what you are doing (function) and who you are doing it for (industry), you need to know where you'll physically be. Geography is the third element of a well-defined target. How many potential art museums are located in your desired area? If your desired location has few or no art museums, then your search is unrealistic, and you have to expand your industry (to include other types of museums or other types of art-related organizations) or change your geography. If there are art museums in your desired location, but they are all small and do not need the fundraising skills you have, then you need to expand your function (do something else within the art museums) or change your geography. Geography gives you another critical point of focus for your job search.

Aside from physical location, some jobs have another type of geography consideration. You might be targeting a job whose customers, research subjects, or constituents are of a specific geography:

- Chicago-based (geography 1) curator (function) for an art museum (industry) specializing in East Asian Art (geography 2)
- New York City–based (geography 1) equity research analyst (function) specializing in transportation projects (industry) in sub-Saharan Africa (geography 2)
- Washington, DC–based (geography 1) lobbyist (function) specializing in raising awareness for energy alternatives (industry) in the Mississippi Delta (geography 2)
- Austin-based (geography 1) marketing manager (function) for a computer manufacturer (industry) is charged with opening up the China market (geography 2)

Your job interest may be related to a specific geography, and this definitely should factor in your search. You also must then factor in your physical location.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- You cannot consider every job available, so you need a structure to filter through the possibilities and narrow your job search targets.
- Three elements of a well-defined job search target are industry, function, and geography.
- Each element can be further specified and may need to be, depending on how broad it is.

EXERCISES

1. Can you see how industry, function, and geography characterize the jobs around you? Look at friends and family members who are working, and practice categorizing their jobs.
2. Do you have an idea for jobs that you want to do? How would you categorize jobs you are interested in by industry, function, and geography?
3. Take a specific industry of interest, such as arts, energy, or sports, in the previous examples. Write out all the different subsectors you can think of.