A job search for a young engineer is difficult since often their list of skills, experiences and qualifications make it difficult to convince potential employers of their value. Couple this to the competition in the workforce which often leads to situations where hundreds of applications may be submitted for only a few openings. For example while in the private sector I assisted in the hiring process, and in a given year we received over 900 applications for approximately 10 positions, a ratio of 90:1. During the interview process we selected 40 people for interviews for those 10 positions, a ratio of 4:1. Given that this is typical in today’s environment, students need to focus a tremendous amount of energy not only in the search, but in the months and years approaching that search. Often this attention is “too little too late” and their application ends up in the pile of resumes discarded.

This presentation is therefore titled “How to get into the small pile” of applications that are considered for interviews, and into the even smaller pile of people selected for offers. We will review the basic elements of the job search: how a resume should be constructed, the cover letter, and interview preparation, but also some intangible aspects such addressing a lack of experience, importance of networking, keeping doors open, and attitude. The goal of the presentation is to assist students in developing a “to-do” list which can increase their chances of success in the job search.