Hello this is Heather Sprandel and my career cast partner is Tommi Featherston of the Walton College Career Development Center. Welcome to another addition of career cast. Today’s topic includes eight steps for first time job hunters and Tommi is going to tell you about the first step.

Step one is pinpoint your direction. After four, five, maybe six years of college, you are completely certain about what you want to do, right? If not, now is the time to determine what your strengths are and identify what kind of career suits you. Are you someone who likes to be around people? Or are you happier crunching numbers or creating computer programs? If so this might be a time to take our personality assessment called type focus. And you will find this on our website which we will give to you at the end of the broadcast. Consider all of your strengths, weaknesses, likes, dislikes and interests when thinking about your career plan. Read about fields that interest you and talk to others who are doing jobs that you find interesting. Focus your direction on positions and fields that match your interest and talents.

Step two is to do some research. It is vital to learn as much as you can about the companies that interest you and to consider all of your options, says Pam Webster, a recruiting manager for Enterprise Rent-A-Car. She says that you should know that Enterprise is the nation’s largest recruiter of college graduates. And as you do your search you should be open-minded about opportunities in companies and industries you might not have thought of before. Once you have identified companies that you want to target, Webster suggests looking at their websites, reading news articles and talking to current employees to learn as much as you can. “You also need to look at a company’s stability,” she says. “Is the company going to be there for long term?”

Step three: assemble your tool kit. It is important to have the right tools for any task. The tools needed for a job search are a résumé, cover letter and a portfolio of your work. Take the time to develop a résumé and cover letter that clearly convey your strengths and experience. Here are a few tips to remember:

- Think about the type of résumé you need. A functional résumé, which highlights your abilities rather than your work history, is a good choice for first-time job seekers.
- Focus on accomplishments and results you have achieved, rather than simple descriptions of experiences.
- Use action words in your résumé and cover letter to describe your experiences, such as "initiated," "produced" and "managed."
- If you are low on practical work experience, look to your part-time work, school activities or volunteer positions. Evaluate all of your experience and translate how it applies to any job you might apply to.

Have your resume reviewed by someone in the Career Center before handing them out just to make sure.

Step four is to Network. One of the most important tasks in any job search is networking. Taking advantage of any resources you have, including your school's career center, friends who graduated before you and are already working, friends of your parents, professors, and neighbors. Send e-mails to ask if your contacts know someone who can help you. Pass your résumé around and ask others to do the same. Call your contacts to see if they know someone who works for a firm that you are interested in joining.
Step five is play the part. If you want to join the professional world, you need to act, and look, the part. Buy a business suit and wear it to all of your interviews. Make sure your e-mail address and your voice mail greeting are appropriate. That means if your e-mail user name is "crazygirl2005," you might want to get a new account. Webster says you should also remember to be professional at home. Be prepared for a phone call or a phone interview at any time. The more you play the part of a well-trained professional, the more people will see you as a professional.

Step six is to visit the career center. You have a career center dedicated to business majors in the Walton College of Business in room 117. You can see an advisor, a career advisor and make an appointment to talk with them one on one about your interests, about your job search. Or if you’re completely lost they can help you find the right direction. Also visit the career Center to find out about eRecruiting. Erecruiting is an online database system of every job opportunity that comes through the University of Arkansas. If you are interested in applying for any of these positions posted in eRecruiting, you have to be registered in eRecruiting. It is a free service to you and it is a free service to you for life as a graduate of the Walton College. Visit the Career Center at your earliest convenience or check out our website.

Step seven is to start the job search process now. If you are a senior there is no reason why you should be waiting until two weeks before you graduate to start looking for a position. If in fact you are graduating within the next year you should already have started looking for a position or refining your job search. You are perhaps in the best time of your college program where you are able to actually gather knowledge and information about available positions and careers. So don’t wait until the end. Start early so you can give yourself options.

Step 8 is not to give up. Don’t give up. The real world can be a challenge. Set realistic expectations and recognize that you will probably have to start at the bottom and work your way up. You will likely face rejection as you start looking for your first job. This can be difficult for some people but a career person in the Career Center can help you. But everyone gets through that. Rejection is a part of the job search but you will get over it. Just remember to be proactive, be persistent and remain confident that there is a great job waiting for you.

Thanks for listening to career cast. Make sure you check out the Career Center’s website at waltoncollege.uark.edu/careerdevelopment. On our site you will find a lot of information including the type focus personality assessment that was mentioned earlier in the broadcast. You will also find the weekly update our online newsletter that gives you information every week about up coming positions that are available in eRecruiting as well as events on campus. And there is a link on the weekly update for you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor. So on behalf of Tommi and myself, thanks for listening.