Introduction
This guide provides one perspective on the career search process in the technology field and is a good starting point for defining your own career search strategy. Change is a given in the technology industry and this is just as true with some of the information in this guide. Therefore, it is imperative that you do your own due diligence, in addition to using the information provided in this guide, rather than relying exclusively on the handout.

Your peers are almost always going to be the most current resource during your technology search. Twenty sets of eyes and ears keeping a watch on the technology industry are always more effective than just one set, so get to know your peers well, especially those who have similar aspirations as you do. In addition, your classmates may have contacts from previous jobs that could be very helpful to you in your own career search. Contact second year MBAs to discuss their internship experiences.

For these reasons, the technology career search process is very dynamic. As you learn more about the industry, or as things change within the industry, your career search strategy may also change resulting in you having to go and rework your resume, target a different set of companies or focus on a different functional area than you originally intended. All of this is quite normal. Furthermore, these types of changes should be expected, unlike in brand management at a consumer goods company, or consulting, these types of changes should be expected as you go about your search. To some extent, this is more accurate for off-campus recruiting and is less true for larger, established technology firms that have a fairly defined recruiting process and specific career tracks for MBAs.

A couple of caveats before we go further: This guide generally covers the entire technology field (not just the large, established firms) and is oriented exclusively to the technology industry; it does not cover Information Technology/Technology consulting careers. Several consulting firms focus exclusively on the technology world, and almost all the Big Five and other well-known firms have e-commerce and IT consulting practices. These organizations can also be great options for MBAs seeking experience in the technology industry. Examples of such firms include PRTM, Diamond Cluster Technology Partners, and Deloitte Consulting. However, information on these career fields is outside the scope of this guide. Please refer to the Consulting Career Path handout for more information regarding that sector. Another area that this guide does not address is the field of venture capital.

Finally, there is no such thing as “average” or “standard” in the technology field. There are no standard job descriptions, standard compensation packages, average starting salaries, etc. in this business. It is important to do your own due diligence when it comes to your personal career search process. The smaller the technology firms you may be interested in, the more important and challenging the information search becomes. Again, contacts working within these types of firms will always be your best source of information in these cases.

What is Technology?
Open any magazine or any newspaper from USA Today to the Wall Street Journal, and you would be hard pressed not to find a story about the technology industry. However, everyone has his or her own concept of what exactly the technology industry is; the table below is one potential categorization. There are certainly other ways to categorize this space, so the objective here is not so much to be
comprehensive, but to set the context for this guide and to give you an idea of the opportunities ahead of you. There will also be plenty of overlap across the categories described below, and there is a good chance that by the time you read this guide, several new categories will have been created. The depth and breadth of this industry, as demonstrated below, also reflects the need for you to focus your career search in order to do the best job of matching your skills and goals with the right firm.

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<th>Industry sub-segments</th>
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Steps for Developing a Technology Career

Career Search Step #1: Self-Assessment
Technology companies look for a wide variety of backgrounds in potential hires. As with all other things in the technology industry, there is no “standard” profile for recruits. These backgrounds could include experience in consumer marketing, technical marketing, technical product development, and consulting, sales and general management. If there are specific qualifications that a firm is looking for to fill a specific position, they usually make it clear in the job posting itself. As far as MBA candidates go, technology companies usually look for the following qualities:

- Leadership skills
- Communication skills
- Comfort with understanding technical concepts
- Logical and structured thinking
- Analytical skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Ability to work in pressure environments
- Ability to adapt rapidly to changing conditions/goals/priorities
- Ability to make decisions effectively in ambiguous environments
- Negotiation skills

Assess for yourself your current skill set, what areas you need to work on, and most important of all, what you would enjoy doing. RCS offers a number of workshops and tools that can help you through this stage of the career search process.

In addition to a core set of transferable skills, technology companies often look for industry experience and/or a passion for technology. If you are not coming from a technology background, it is imperative that you utilize business school resources and opportunities outside of the classroom to the best of your ability. Many opportunities are available including technology related clubs, case competitions, venture capital activities, Zell Lurie Institute, and networking with local technology companies and venture capital firms.

Career Search Step #2: Investigate possible career opportunities
Job descriptions are often some of the hardest things to understand in the technology field. Although traditional functional areas do exist in larger technology organizations, the actual content of the job could vary significantly. For smaller technology companies, this is even more important. For instance, a Product Manager at one company may be responsible for determining the features and characteristics of a product, while at another company the Product Manager may be responsible for developing and executing the marketing strategy for a product. At a very small start-up, a Product Manager may be responsible for both the activities described above in addition to others. Therefore do not rely solely on the job title to understand what the job actually entails. Listed below are some of the roles that MBAs are hired for in technology companies:

- Product Management
- Business Development
- Marketing Manager
- Campaign Management
- Public Relations
- Product Planning/Development
- Strategy Development
- Finance

Career Search Step #3: Research employers
Once you have identified potential functional areas that would be of interest to you, as well as a segment of the technology industry that you would like to learn more about, spend some time identifying employers that you intend to target. As mentioned earlier, the technology industry
encompasses many different types of organizations, so focusing your career strategy will be important to make the most of your time and resources. The Appendix to this guide lists some good resources that can be used to learn more about certain industries and organizations. In addition, Kresge Library also offers access to many online databases that have a wealth of up-to-date information on the technology world. Finally, Ross alumni can be an invaluable resource in learning the idiosyncrasies of different companies, divisions and technology job opportunities.

**Career Search Step #4: Develop a Career Search Strategy**

Just as in business, having a strategy in place is crucial to making the most of your career search process. Below is a list of issues you may want to consider in developing your strategy.

- **Understand the timeframe of a technology search:** Unlike on-campus and self-directed searches for careers in consulting, brand management, and investment banking, the technology recruiting calendar can often stretch through the entire academic year. Larger technology firms that recruit on-campus will typically conduct their presentations and interviews at the same time as other on-campus recruiters (in the fall for full-time positions and in January-February for summer positions). However, many companies cannot forecast their staffing needs so far in advance, and often do the bulk of their recruiting for summer and full-time positions closer to graduation or even at the beginning of the summer. In addition, firms who do not fall into either of the two categories described above sometimes solicit Ross resumes or arrive for on-campus interviews during the winter semester, and RCS periodically sends messages out to alert students to these opportunities.

- **Career fairs:** RCS, as well as other schools or technology organizations, organize recruiting events in major technology areas around the country and the world to bring candidates and organizations together. Investigate which such events fit with your career goals. RCS’s and the Ross Technology Club’s West Coast Forum is a Michigan-only event that has been growing in size over the last few years and is a great opportunity to network and interview with technology organizations on the West Coast.

- **Club affiliations:** If you are interested in a career in technology, consider joining clubs like the Ross Technology Club and Entrepreneurship and Venture Capital (EVC) Club not only to raise your awareness of the industry, but also to stay informed about national and regional career fairs, case competitions, business plan competitions, job postings sent directly to the clubs by alumni, and so on. These are all opportunities for you to build your technology profile and position yourself better for a technology career.

- **Online presence:** Do you need an online presence? It is certainly not a requirement but something to consider if you do not have a technical background and are looking to convince recruiters or your interest. This could include something as simple as having your resume available on the Internet for anyone to access or developing a website that recruiters can visit to learn more about you. One note here, make sure that anything you put up on the web for recruiters to view is professional in nature. Skip the photos from your last vacation, wedding pictures, or your thoughts on the differences between Sirvananda and Bikram Yoga.

- **Resumes:** Will having only an iMpact version of your resume be sufficient for your career search? Although an iMpact version of your resume is essential for your on-campus career search process, you may want to consider having available electronic versions of your resume in multiple formats (MS Word, Adobe Acrobat, text) so that you can email these quickly when you come across an attractive job opportunity. Having a non-iMpact version of your resume may
also give you more flexibility in what you put on your resume and how you present this information.

- ASCII versions of your resume: Some companies will ask for a text-only or ASCII version of your resume since they enter these resumes into a central corporate database that can be searched by managers. An ASCII version of your resume is simply a text file, similar to what your resume would look like if you were to create it using the Notepad program on your PC. This type of file contains no formatting and will remove any bolding, underlining, etc. that other file formats allow.

- Sending out cover letters and resumes: Most, if not all, technology companies like to have your resumes in electronic format. Therefore, unless explicitly requested by the company, you should email your resume to recruiters and other potential contacts within technology organizations. This reduces paper clutter for them, makes it easier for them to circulate your resume, and makes it easier for you to follow-up via email as well. Also attach a cover letter outlining your career interests and experiences.

- Interviewing: With interviews in the technology business, as with other things, there is no cookie-cutter approach to preparing for them. Each company has its own style and technique, from purely behavioral/fit interviews to the case method. Once you have identified organizations you are interested in, contact second-years who may have worked or interviewed with that company or alumni who work there now to get an understanding of what the company’s interview culture is like. You should be familiar with the company’s product/services offerings and be prepared to discuss one or two in detail. Companies will often ask you which of their products you’d be interested in working on, why/how it is marketed, and what you would do to improve the marketing.

- Summer internships: Even after you’ve secured your dream summer job, there are many things you can continue to do ensure the success of your career search strategy upon graduation. This includes networking with contacts within the organization you will be spending your summer with, taking advantage of your location to meet with contacts and alumni at other companies in the same area, and also deciding whether technology is where you want to be longer term.

We hope that this guide has provided you with the information to get you started on your career search. RCS has many additional resources in areas such as resume writing, interviewing etc. that can help you fine-tune your strategy. In addition, a number of RCS consultants have experience in the technology industry and would be happy to meet with you to answer your questions and help develop a strategy that will work best for you.

**Commonly Asked Technology Interview Questions**

**General**

1. Walk me through your resume/Tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in Technology?
3. Why are you interested in our company?
4. Why did you select Michigan?

**Leadership/Management**

1. Give me an example of a time when you led a group.
2. How would others describe you as a leader?
3. Give me an example of an assignment you were given that was very ambiguous.
4. What is the difference between a manager and a leader?

Analytical

1. Give me an example of an analytical project you worked on and discuss your thinking in approaching the problem?

Persuasive

1. Discuss a situation when you had to persuade a person of a different point of view to agree with an issue.
2. Give me an example when you had to convince your boss about something.

Others

1. What is the most difficult decision you’ve ever had to make? How did you make that decision?
2. Give me an example of a time when you took a risk.
3. What accomplishment are you most proud of and why?
4. Describe your biggest failure.

Mini-case questions

1. Pretend you were the product manager on a notebook computer. How do you make tradeoffs between new features, costs, and the industrial design of the notebook computer?
2. Tell me about three trends in the technology market. (Interviewer might also ask your opinion on a current event in the industry.)
3. Give me an example of the best new technology product you’ve seen lately.
4. You’re the product manager of “X” product and you’re losing market share, what do you look at?

Bibliography of Information Resources

Keep up with the industry at:

Wsj.com, The Wall Street Journal
Upside.com, Upside magazine
Business2.com, Business 2.0 magazine
Wired magazine
Business Week magazine and the e.biz supplement
Fortune magazine
CNET.com
Venturewire.com
Zdnet.com
Techweb.com
Corante.com
TheDeal.com
LightReading.com
NetworkWorld.com

Career-oriented sites:

Cruelworld.com
Craigslist.org
Monster.com
Hotjobs.com
Wetfeet.com
MBA Jungle
Brassring.com
FlipDog.com