



Entering the Job Market

Mark began his job search. He looked over the Sunday paper and saw three ads for part-time physical therapists. They were all in outpatient clinics that seemed to be run by large corporations. He worried, "Which one will be the best for me?" He planned to call each of them on Monday morning. Is this a good strategy?

Let's start with a different mindset.

New graduates are *beginning their careers in the profession of physical therapy*. Although it is possible to "find a job" in the field of physical therapy, graduates who are more creative and initiate their career path with a strategy in mind are likely to be far more satisfied with the results.

Let's approach this important decision by first asking a few questions.

Looking for a Job

Employer needs have changed rapidly with health care policy shifts, despite growing societal needs for physical therapy services. In contrast to the situation that existed in the early and mid-1990s, new graduate physical therapists may have to compete with each other for available positions.

Exceptional skills and experiences acquired during the professional education experience may provide an advantage to some graduates. In addition, as new graduate physical therapists take on evolving roles and responsibilities (see Chapter 3), they may also be well suited for positions that use their advanced skills in program development, outcomes evaluation, education, collaboration, or use of technology.

The classified ads are *not* the place to start a job search. Employers who frequently hire physical therapists advertise in professional publications or draw applicant pools from files of therapists who have initiated previous contact with the employer.

Create a Picture of Your Ideal Life

Consider the following:

- What is most important to you in your personal life?
- What is most important to you in your career?
- What are your personal goals? Your professional goals?
- How long do you envision yourself staying in one position or one location?

Envision the Ideal Organization

What are the things you consider to be most important in an organization in which you will work?

Consider the following:

- What goals or mission of an organization would be most attractive?
- What would this organization contribute to society?