

Hidden jobs market

Many jobs are never advertised – some estimate as high as 70%. So it is vital to be pro-active in your job search. Three effective ways of seeking these hidden opportunities are: networking, making speculative applications and gaining work experience.

STRATEGIES

Networking

Many graduates find opportunities through contacts they have made themselves - e.g. through friends, relatives, tutors, past students, or people they have met through their leisure interests, voluntary work, casual part-time jobs or work placements. Not all of these contacts will be able to help you, but they may be able to put you in touch with those who can. Developing an industry network list is also very important. Talk to people who work in your chosen career area, they will be able to assist you with your future job search by giving you advice on the best ways to get into the profession. Attend formal networking functions run by professional bodies and local Chambers of Commerce such as speaker events and conferences. Create and maintain your own professional profile on www.linkedin.com and connect with professionals and college alumni working in your chosen field. This website is a specific networking site for professionals and can help you connect with people who can be a fantastic source of information and help. Set up informational interviews with contacts in your industry. For further information, see the networking handout.

Speculative Applications

For some employers speculative applications are their principle method of recruitment. Follow companies of interest on LinkedIn, and consider subscribing to news alerts (such as Google Alerts) for companies you'd like to work for. You will need to identify employers who you are particularly interested in, conduct thorough research on their business and make direct contact with them highlighting your suitability and interest in working for them. By making contact with them before you send in your letter and CV, you can tailor it towards their needs and address it to the correct person. For further information, see the cold calling handout.

Work Experience (paid or unpaid)

Work experience gives you the opportunity to explore possible career options, establish a network of contacts and learn how to apply both your personal and academic skills to the workplace. Demonstrated work experience is highly valued by a potential employer who sees your skills, interest in / knowledge of a career field as indicators of your ability to contribute and succeed. Work experience opportunities can turn into graduate job offers as an employer can hire you with confidence, having observed the quality of your work.

OTHER STRATEGIES

Find a Mentor

Develop a relationship with someone that you can discuss your concerns and worries with and who can give you advice and support on aspects of the job search.

Voluntary Work

Undertaking voluntary work can help your chances of breaking into your chosen career. E.g.: graduates wanting to work in the media may volunteer for a student publication, community radio or local newspaper.

Follow developments

Keep an eye on developments within your chosen field, to see growth / development in organisations e.g.: who has won tenders, awards, be aware of new legislation which will impact on sectors.

Foot in the Door

You may need to take some temporary positions to gain entry into the right position. E.g.: media student who starts by answering telephone job in radio station.

Shadowing

Seek out opportunities to shadow someone for a day, which will give you an insight into their role and create more networking opportunities.

Join professional bodies and organisations

By joining professional organisations and attending appropriate events / exhibitions / conferences / trade fairs, you will have increased opportunities to meet new people in your chosen field.

Word of mouth

Tell everyone that you are looking for work – the more people that are looking on your behalf the better.

Join Alumni

Join your alumni. Try tracking down past alumni who are working in sectors you want to join. They will be able to answer many of your questions, give you advice and may be able to point you in the right direction for more help and support.

Information Interviewing

By talking to people who work in your chosen field you can gain new contacts and find out about opportunities that may be available. For more information – see information interviewing handout.

Your Unique Selling Point

Consider contacting organisations with ideas to improve and develop their business, for example ways to reduce costs and increase their profit. Clarify what way you can add value to their business.