

Job Search

They say that only 30% of job vacancies in the UK are openly advertised to the public. This leaves an amazing 70% of jobs that are left to be found in the "hidden job market"! Question is, with the limited time you've got, where do you look for a job? Is there a best method / strategy for job search?

If your strategy is not working you know that it wasn't necessarily you, but you need to review the way you're looking for that job

Experts say that 1:3 job hunters become unsuccessful because they abandoned their job hunt prematurely. Asked why, many would say: "I never thought this would take so long and I ran out of energy"

It's wise to invest what energy you have into a job-hunting strategy where the odds are more favourable!

Picture of an iceberg

Which strategy should you adopt for job hunting? Answer: A varied approach

The 30% Visible Job Market

1) The Internet is now an essential method to consider when making job searches and applications. Applications Forms and CVs can be submitted via www. and e-mail. However, it is worth remembering that no standards exist to guarantee information content or levels of service on www. You may need to satisfy yourself that the company is bona fide before sending your personal details through to a website.

Many employers are now advertising their vacancies online, and ask you to apply online. They will often tell you whether or not you have been successful by e-mail. In some cases, this is now the only way that some employers fill their vacancies.

- 78% of recruitment companies advertise job vacancies online.
- There are currently around 1000 online Job Boards in the UK.
- To make sure you keep up with the latest vacancies, you will need to:
- Find ways of having access to the internet
- Have your own e-mail address, and
- Know how to find vacancies and fill in applications online.

Using the internet to find Job Boards

Once you've found your internet access, your next step is to find the types of jobs you're looking for. Jobs are usually advertised on Job Boards which are like electronic newspapers. Generally, there are 3 types of Job Boards.

- 'Niche' Job Boards are dedicated to particular professions or industries.
- General Job Boards advertise all types of vacancies.
- Local Job Boards advertise all types of jobs in the area they cover.

You can search for the right Job Boards by using a search engine (for example Google or Yahoo). Try putting in 'Job Boards' or 'jobs in retail' and so on, until you find the Job Boards that are most suitable for you. If you are using your own computer, you can save the Job Boards as favourites.

Applying online

There are 2 main ways to apply online.

- By filling in an application form online. Fill in the details in the same way as you would with a normal application form. Make sure you check you have filled in all the information the form asks for and that the information is correct before you select 'send' to send the form to the employer.
- By e-mailing your CV. Some employers will ask you to send your CV by e-mail. You will need to have saved your CV so you can attach it to the e-mail. You may also want to include a covering letter.

Finding internet access

If you have access to the internet at home, then it's easy. If not, here are a few suggestions.

You can use UK online centres which are based in your community. They could be in an internet café on the high street, in a public library, in a college, in a community centre or in a village hall. Some even move around from place to place to give more people the chance to go online. You can find your nearest UK online centre in England by phoning 0800 77 1234*

Your local library may have computers that are connected to the internet.

You may have friends or relatives who are happy to let you use their computer to go online.

2) Jobcentre Plus advertise job vacancies on public display boards. If you identify a job that you are interested in, Jobcentre Plus adviser who can provide more details and they can make appointments for interview. Visit www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk for more details

3) Newspapers - Local and National. These are a good source of vacancies. It's a good idea to find out what day your local paper comes out and on which days it advertises jobs. For larger newspapers find out which days they advertise certain jobs. For example The Guardian advertises IT jobs on Mondays.

Newspapers also keep you up-to-date on which companies are moving into your area and creating new jobs.

4) Professional and Trade Journals. Journals and magazines relating to particular areas of work generally advertise vacancies, e.g. for jobs in advertising look in Campaign; for nursing look in 'The

Nursing Times'. Some popular journals, magazines will be available in your local library and also newsagents e.g.. W.H. Smith.

5) Recruitment Agencies. The advantage of signing on with a recruitment agent is that they work closely with employers. Anyone can register with a recruitment agency to look for work but they will only match you to a job if you have what an employer is looking for. Agencies offer both full time, part time work and temporary work. Some agencies deal with specific vacancies such as catering whilst other agencies cover a variety of different occupations, from unskilled to managerial.

Agencies will require information from you relating to your past experience, qualifications, skills and possibly references. This is where a good CV will come in useful. Details about these agencies can be found in the Yellow pages or other local directories. Your local library may hold local directories. If you are looking for senior management and executive level vacancies, there are fee paying agencies which provide advice and counselling as well as possible job vacancies. They are often advertised in the national newspapers i.e. The Sunday Times, The Sunday Telegraph.

How do I get the most out of a recruitment agency?

To get the most out of a recruitment agency, it is important that you think about how you can best work with them. Remember, you are telling them about your skills and they will help you find a job. You are working together.

To make the most out of your recruitment agency, make sure you:

- Keep in regular contact with them
- Give them all the information they need (including all your contact details and references)
- Are honest
- Keep your CV accurate and up to date
- Tell them if there is a particular type of job you don't want (be up-front and save time)
- Listen to any advice from your consultant about improving your CV (remember they are professionals and they want to help you get a job), and
- Talk to your agency if they are not finding you work. It may be because there is not enough of the type of work you want and you might want to think about other types of work you are willing to do. Or, you could register with another agency that offers the type of work you are looking for.

6) Job and Careers Fairs can provide information about recruiting trends, career options and current openings in specific organisations. They will also give you the opportunity to develop your network of career contacts. Remember to take a copy of your CV, dress as you would for an interview and collect as many business cards as you can so that you can follow them up at a later date.

The 70% Hidden Job Market

1) Networking/Using your contacts. Many vacancies are never actually advertised but rely on staff already working in the organisation to spread the word. Ask your friends and relatives to keep a look out for you in their companies.

Networking is one of the most successful ways of finding employment. Networking does not necessarily involve asking your friends for a job. It could form part of your job research – who works where, who knows who, who can tell you what it is like to work for a particular company, who can give you advice about your career path etc.

You will be surprised at how many people you really do know. You can either make contact by picking up the telephone or by writing a personal letter. When telephoning choose a time of day when people are usually less busy – for example, immediately after lunch. Ask if it is convenient to talk – be prepared to call back if necessary. Do NOT ask for a job. Do NOT send your CV unless asked. Just ask for advice, say what you are interested in and that you are looking for information and would they be prepared to spend half an hour with you?

You may be surprised at how helpful most people are when asked for advice (it's often quite flattering). They may suggest you speak to someone else and your contact list will grow.

Prepare what you are going to ask them. Research the area you are interested in:

- What types of jobs do people do?
- What does the job involve?
- What sort of career structure does the job have?
- Are there any professional organisations you could contact?
- What about qualifications and training?
- Who are the potential employers?
- What are their specialities?
- Which ones are you going to target?
- Who are you going to contact there?The trick with developing an effective job search strategy is do some of each of the above. Don't spend too much time and effort with those job search strategies where the odds are less favourable! And, good luck! Here are some further ideas of how to track down a job

If you have a clear objective of what you would like to get from the conversation or meeting you will give a good impression and show that you are taking a business-like approach. Keep a record of the company, the name of the person you spoke to and the outcome.

Always write or telephone afterwards to thank them for their time and help and if they have been supportive, let them know about any successful outcomes.

2) Speculative Approaches. This is an excellent way of approaching companies of particular interest to you. You could send them your CV together with a well thought out covering letter to ask if they have any vacancies at present or in the near future. It may be worth finding out where they advertise and how often vacancies, for which you are suited occur. Yellow Pages Directory, www.yell.co.uk and www.thomson-directories.co.uk will identify potential employers.

3) Voluntary Work. Make a contribution to the local community maybe in the evenings or weekends e.g. working in a caring environment or manning a telephone nightline or a hospital radio station. Voluntary work is good for your self-esteem, it will impress any potential employer and, of course, it will help other people.

How do I find voluntary work?

- Contact local Volunteer Centre or visit: www.do-it.org.uk
- Contact organisations directly
- Do a Google search for voluntary opportunities

Here are some further ideas on how to track down a job

nextstep – face-to-face careers advice

nextstep is the England-wide name for the adult careers Service for face-to-face appointments. Adults have the opportunity to meet a qualified careers adviser and discuss your career plans. nextstep operates within a network of education and training organisations, so it can advise on the best ways of how to get qualified for a specific job.

nextstep can also help you with your job search, including updating your CV, reviewing your job strategy and developing your job interview techniques.

For a face-to-face appointment with a nextstep London adviser call: 08000 641 481 or email:

info@nextsteplondon.org

Careers Advice Service – Telephone careers advice

Careers Advice helpline is the free and confidential telephone helpline and website for adults looking for impartial information and advice on courses and careers. Their qualified advisers can give information on around one million courses, plus advice on funding, planning your career, apprenticeships or writing your CV. They will also advise on:

- Updating your skills
- Choosing a course
- Childcare options
- Paying for your learning

- You can call free on 0800 100 900 seven days a week between 7am and 11pm.
Their website is: www.careersadvice.direct.gov.uk

Work Experience/Work Shadowing – visit www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk and view information on work experience schemes such as Work Prep

Work experience provides you with an opportunity to:

- Apply your skills and knowledge whilst working 'on the job'
- Explore different career options
- Develop new skills i.e. communication, organisation, flexibility, time management, team working
- Gain evidence of your abilities and achievements (try and get a letter of reference before you leave)
- Increase your self-confidence
- Make contacts - network
- Make a real contribution – hopefully, you will find the experience both rewarding and challenging
- Discover by first hand experience whether a particular career option is for you

Look at small companies as well as "blue chip" organisations (global/multinationals). They could have the following benefits:

- Local contribution – Working in a community based small business can be more rewarding than working for a multi-national – more opportunity to make an impression!
- Variety – you get involved in all sorts of things, from presenting to clients to making the tea!
- New job opportunities – if you do well and show initiative you can easily become indispensable in a small business and be able to create your own job
- Opportunity to show initiative and self-reliance skills – you've got to get on with the work, nobody else is going to do it!
- Impact – it's far easier to see the direct impact of your efforts in a small business as opposed to a large bureaucratic organisation
- Positive role models – owner-managers of small businesses have normally broken the mould and played the employment game on their own terms
- Early responsibility – "I was thrown in at the deep end from day one. There were only five in the business."
- Walk about your local community and look for potential employers

Self Employment

Use your initiative to sell your skills, a product or service e.g. IT Consultancy, Childminding. Check out Internet sites for information on small businesses

e.g. www.startups.co.uk or www.fsb.org.uk (Federation of Small Businesses). Your local Business Link will also advise on all aspects of starting up a business i.e. grants, business planning, finding premises etc. They may run training programmes to assist you. Visit: www.businesslink.gov.uk

You can also get information and advice from the small business adviser at most high street banks. If you need legal advice on how to set up a business, the Law Society provides an initiative "Lawyers in Business". Telephone 020 7405 9075 for a list of lawyers operating the scheme in your area who will give you a half hour free consultation.

Working Abroad

Before looking at the various opportunities on offer, it would be helpful to consider the following:

What sort of work do you want to do?

- Which area of the world do you want to go to?
- How long a placement are you looking for?
- What will the costs be to you?
- What level of support is offered once you are on a placement – this could be important when working in rural areas of developing countries.