

Accessing the Hidden Job Market

Many job available job openings are not posted on job boards or websites. Instead, information about available work is circulated among a manager's co-workers, business associates, friends and acquaintances. With many people currently looking for work, excellent candidates apply before the job availability reaches the general public.

The result is that the work you want may not be advertised at all or not advertised in traditional ways. If this is the case, then it's time to start looking harder and deeper.

- Find local organizations within the industry you are interested in
- Contact local organizations to get on their mailing and contact lists and to get on the radar of those responsible for hiring (*see document titled Contacting Potential Employers*)
- Use your network of friends and former colleagues
- Send emails and letters of introduction to people within the industry
- Research potential employers
- Research organizations websites
- Join a job finding club
- Visit job/career fairs

Find local organizations:

- Look for index headings that might include companies or organizations in your area of interest. For example, for nurse's aide, check under "Homes-Elderly People", "Home Health Services", "Nurses", "Nursing Assistants" and "Hospitals".
- Consider each company or organization listed as a work possibility.
- Write down the name, address and phone number for each company/organization that you choose.

Contact local organizations:

- There may not be any current openings, but it is likely they will hire in the future.
- Prepare by reviewing your résumé and practicing what you're going to say.
- Write down your opening words in case you get flustered. Here is a sample "script".

"Hello, my name is _____. I understand that your company does xxx and that's my area of career interest. I was wondering if you had any current job openings."

- If the contact says no, ask if they anticipate any openings in the future or if he/she knows of anyone in the same line of business who does.
- Make sure that you get the full name and title of the person you're speaking to.

- Keep your résumé in front of you in case the manager asks you questions.
- If the manager seems interested, ask if you could meet with him/her to discuss possibilities in more detail.
- If the manager can't meet with you, ask if you can send in your résumé.
- Whatever happens, thank your contact. Send a thank-you note and re-state your interest in working for his/her organization.
- Keep the information on your contact and his/her organization. You never know when you might need it again.

Use your network:

- Call everyone you know and tell them you're looking for work.
- Current technology makes connecting with others much easier. Site such as Linked In allow you to search for people within the industry. A "friend of a friend" may work for a company that is hiring.
- Extend your network of "friends of friends" to optimize the number of contacts
- Ask each person if he/she can recommend someone else you could talk to.

Do a letter-writing campaign:

- Begin with brief introduction or reminder so the person can place you.
- Indicate that you are currently looking for work and interested in the company.
- Briefly state why you're qualified. Your contact may be able to provide more help if he/she knows a little about your background.
- Thank your contact for his/her help.

Research potential employers:

The Information Interview (see document titled *Informational Interviews*) can be a useful way to find out more about the kind of industry or company you would like to work for. This involves contacting people in the occupation you are interested in to find more information about required qualifications and how they entered the industry. While informational interviews are not to ask for a job, they will give you a better understanding of what may be required to obtain a position and may keep you in mind when hiring in the future.

Check out organizations' websites:

If you have an organization in mind, visit its home page to see if it has a job-posting section.

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