

The Hidden Job Market

The hidden job market contains jobs vacancies that are available but haven't been advertised.

Because advertising for jobs can be an expensive and time consuming process, employers often contact their networks first and rely on referrals to find the right person.

If a job hasn't been advertised then less people know about it, which means that you are competing against fewer people.

So, how do you find out about these unadvertised jobs? There are a variety of ways to tap into the hidden job market, including networking and cold calling.

Networking

A network is simply a group of people that you know, and the people that they know, and the people that they know and so on. Have you heard the expression "I heard about it from a friend". That is an example of networking.

Your family and friends and their extended networks might know about jobs that are currently available or about to become available.

If you are looking for a particular kind of job, let all the people in your network know. They might be able to refer you to an employer who's looking for someone just like you.

Cold Calling

Cold calling means contacting companies directly to find a job, by phone, mail or calling into their company with your resume.

Do some research into the company; know the position you are going for and direct your resume to this position.

Phone – Research who you should ask to speak to and plan what you are going to say.

Mail – It is better to send out 5 or 10 researched, targeted and personalised contacts than hundreds of generic letters. It takes time to research and personalise each cover letter, but is worth the effort.

In person – Dress to impress, show you understand the position requirements, including what clothing is suitable. Let them see how well you would fit into their company. Ask to leave your targeted resume with them.

Most employers want positive & pro active workers. Making the effort to cold call shows you are prepared to do what ever it takes and put yourself out there.

Informational Interviewing

Informational Interviewing is a subtle way of getting an employer to get to know you. Although the aim is to gather information and explore the job role, you are also expanding your networks and are more likely to gain access to the elusive hidden job market.

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Networking

Cold Calling

Informational Interviewing



Career Development Centre

Goals for Informational Interviewing

- To learn about a position.
- To build a network of contacts.
- To determine if a job would be suitable for you.
- To discover methods for getting the job.
- To expand networks within your field of interest.
- To get a job before it is advertised.
- To find out what key characteristics employers look for when hiring in this industry so that you can focus on these.

Who to contact

- People who are employed in a job that you would like to have.
- Ring someone in an industry that you are interested in and ask to make an appointment time to speak with them (be persistent, this may take several calls until someone agrees to speak to you).

Organising the interview

- Approach people in your immediate network (friends and family), who may be able to provide you with some useful contacts.
- Use the yellow pages and other industry directories (internet) to find companies in your area of interest.
- Keep an eye out for opportunity and approach people who you interact with regularly, in shops, community centres to ask for leads.
- Just ask for 10 to 15 minutes of their time.
- Remember you may have to make up to 10 cold contacts before someone agrees to give you an interview.

Questions to ask

Remember you have come to hear them talk, not vice versa, be knowledgeable but allow them to dominate the conversation. Research the company or industry to determine appropriate questions.

- How did they get into their job?
- What sort of training did they need?
- Who provides the best training in their field?
- What sort of experience was required?
- What do managers look for when they hire for these positions?
- What is the best part of the job?
- What is the most challenging aspect of the job?

Closure

- Can you give me the names of anyone else you think I could talk to?

Take along your resume (don't give this to them until the end of the informational interview), ask if you could leave it with them and suggest that if a suitable position did ever come up that you would be very interested.

Follow Up

Call them within a couple of days to thank them for their time or alternatively send a thank you note expressing your gratitude. Call all contacts that you have received. Call periodically to look out for opportunities and maintain networks. Keep good records of your contacts.

These strategies can work very successfully and the team at the Career Development Centre can help you put them into action.

Informational Interviewing information adapted from – Beyond Education Project ©2005 University of Southern Queensland