

Tip Sheet No 3 – Job Search Strategies

Once you've identified the type of job you're interested in pursuing, and confirmed that you have the appropriate skills and qualifications, it's time to start searching for appropriate opportunities.

Four Key Search Strategies

There are a number of ways to go about searching for a job; some of which are more obvious than others. Research shows that the most obvious ways are not always the most successful. The more avenues you use, the better your chances of success!

Four key ways to source job opportunities are:

1. Applying for advertised positions. This may be via online job sites, newspapers, or company websites showing current vacancies. While this is probably the most commonly used strategy by job seekers, it is not necessarily the most effective, with only about 1 in 10 job seekers finding positions this way.
2. Using contacts and networking. Research shows that the majority of people find jobs using this method, so it's worth focussing your energy on it.
3. Targeting specific organisations via referrals or cold calling. About a quarter of job seekers find roles using this method.
4. Recruitment or search agencies. This includes both private and government agencies and job search firms.

You should devote your time and energy to each strategy relative to the likely benefit of each.

Applying for Advertised Positions

- Regularly check online job sites and set up alerts to receive notification of new roles. Consider whether there are any print based sources such as local newspapers. Also make a regular check of websites of organisations on your target list for their current vacancies.
- If appropriate for your role, set yourself up on the LinkedIn Jobs app and receive notifications of suitable roles.
- If the role is advertised by an agency, call them to find out who the organisation is so you can do some research and tailor your application accordingly.
- Write a tailored cover letter for each role, making sure to address the requirements outlined in the advertisement. Tailor your resume to highlight relevant details.
- Make contact with the nominated contact person to find out more about the role, what they are looking for, and their selection process.
- Prepare your cover letter and resume in advance and get someone to check it for you, before submitting electronically.
- Follow-up if you haven't heard anything within 2 weeks but be prepared for the fact that most employers do not contact unsuccessful candidates.

Using Contacts and Networking

- Some people are reluctant about asking others for help, but research shows that the majority of people find jobs through their contacts and networks.
- Make a list of all the people you know – this includes family and friends, current and previous work colleagues, people you've met through professional associations or conferences, and anyone else you can think of. Then let them know you're looking for work and the type of role you are interested in. Ask them to keep an ear out for any opportunities. LinkedIn is a fantastic tool for staying in touch with your network and letting people know what you're looking for.
- Try to gain referrals to organisations you're interested in or to others who may be able to help. Referrals make introductions and meetings easier to arrange. LinkedIn is a useful tool to see who in your network may have a contact in the organisation.
- Attend professional meetings or conferences, and try to make new contacts that you can use.
- Use your contacts to obtain information about various organisations and what is going on in the marketplace.
- Follow-up contacts on a regular basis, either via a brief online message or face to face.
- Use online networking sites, such as Linked In (www.linkedin.com) to identify potential contacts. Always be professional in your communications and your online postings.

Targeting Specific Organisations

Identify a list of organisations that you would like to work for, who offer the type of role you desire. Then do some research:

- Review company or organisation websites to find out about current projects, developments and interests. Many organisations also include a 'careers' page with useful information.
- Read the business section of the newspapers to learn more about the companies you're interested in and their current projects, issues etc.

Make contact using either a referral or by cold calling.

- If you have the name of someone within the organisation that you can call, then use it to make contact.
- Cold calling isn't everyone's cup of tea, but with some persistence it can pay off. The key is to proactively express your interest, get your name known with them, and if possible arrange a face to face meeting. Even if nothing is available now, you can leave a copy of your resume in case of future opportunities.
- Before making a cold call, decide what your opening statement will be, what you want to get out of the call, and make a note of any questions you wish to ask. Think of an appropriate message to leave on voicemail, if your call does not go through to an actual person.
- Clearly identify yourself at the start of a call, and either ask for the person if you know their name, or ask to speak to the Human Resources manager or the person responsible for recruitment. Let them know that you are interested in a role with the organisation, and provide a brief outline of your suitability.
- Ask if you could arrange a meeting, or send a copy of your resume, and check if it would be ok to make contact in the future. Obtain their phone number and email address for future contact.
- Thank them for their time.

Using Recruitment or Search Agencies

- Many agencies specialise in certain industries, functions or role levels (ie executive versus shop floor). Identify 3-5 agencies that handle the type of roles you are interested in. Friends or contacts in similar roles may be able to suggest relevant agencies. Alternatively, observe who is advertising the types of roles you are looking for.
- Make contact and ask if you can send your resume and arrange a face to face meeting. When meeting or making contact, present yourself professionally and act as you would in a normal interview situation.
- Be able to clearly articulate the type of role you are interested in, and any constraints such as location or travel, as well as an indication of your expected salary level or hourly rate.
- Ensure that agencies have an up to date copy of your resume and your current contact details on their database.
- Request that they obtain your consent before your resume is sent on to any potential employers, to give you a chance to do some research.
- Remember that agencies work for employers and therefore focus on filling their current vacancies and not on sourcing opportunities for candidates. Keep in touch from time to time, but set your expectations accordingly.
- For contract positions, note that agencies will add their fee on top of your hourly rate.

Other Job Search Methods

There may be other search methods that you can think of, which may be effective in certain circumstances. One example is Job or Careers fairs. These events allow you to find out more about potential target organisations, and talk directly with an insider. Many of these events are about public relations rather than direct recruitment, but they can be a useful, non-threatening way to approach an organisation in the right circumstances. They can be particularly useful for graduates.

Useful Links

www.jobsearch.com.au Australian government job site

www.seek.com.au

www.careerone.com.au

www.jobaccess.gov.au - Australian government page with information for job seekers

Interesting Facts

- 80% of available jobs are never advertised.
- Over 50% of employees find their jobs through networking.
- Only 5% of employees find their jobs through ads in newspapers and other publications.
- 24% of employees find their jobs through direct contact/application with employers.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)