

INTRODUCTION TO SEARCHING FOR JOBS

There is no single fool-proof way to find the next perfect job for you. The following information has been drawn together to provide starting points. No particular recommendation is being made, but we believe these are good starting points for you to consider.

Print

Advertising in newspapers, whether local or national, is now only one method of advertising vacancies for large companies or organisations. If a large resource of suitable candidates is likely to already be living in the local area it will be a useful method, regardless of company size.

Local newspapers

Checking the Situations Vacant in the local newspaper should not be overlooked, whether you're planning to stay local or considering moving to find a new post.

National newspapers

The national newspapers all have databases of jobs available which can be searched by sector, type, salary, location, sector, eg <http://jobs.guardian.co.uk/jobs/>; <http://jobs.telegraph.co.uk/>; <http://jobs.thetimes.co.uk/etc>

Professional publications

If you are a member of an Institute or other professional organisation you should find out what job opportunities they might advertise. Eg The Institute of Chemical Engineers does not advertise jobs, but has links to major employers in the sector in their careers section: <http://www.whynotchemeng.com/>

Online

Job search, applications and often initial candidate selection are done on-line by many employers. Clearly, if you have a target organisation or profession you would like to work for, you need to check their website for vacancies on a regular basis. It is useful to have prepared your education, skills and experience, and personal statement to be able to use immediately should you see a job available. Some recruiters, eg the NHS, withdraw jobs once they reach a target number of applications, sometimes within hours of the job going on-line.

Whether you look for a job through a newspaper or institute's website, use the Government's Jobseeker (www.jobseekers.direct.gov.uk) website or use one of the dozens of recruiters out there, here are some key points:

- Allow plenty of time if you want to do a good trawl of the websites.
- Get to know the websites that offer the types of jobs or sectors that interest you. Eventually, you will develop a strategy of focusing on the websites that are most useful to you.
- Do not be afraid to test the on-line systems and work out an average time for a job

application. This way when you see a job you really want, you will be familiar with how the systems work.

- Job searching on-line takes time. Treat it as a job in itself.

Below is a brief sample of UK job search websites. You may also find locally based job sites online as well.

www.fish4jobs.co.uk

www.monster.co.uk

www.totaljobs.com

www.indeed.co.uk

www.jobs1.co.uk

www.jobserve.com

Marketing yourself

Agencies

Recruitment for many of the jobs you will see advertised on-line or in the press is handled by agencies. Agencies charge the employer a fee for handling the recruitment. Some agencies have been around for years, eg www.reed.co.uk, and www.manpower.co.uk, others are sector specific, eg <http://jobs.theengineer.co.uk/>

A phone or initial e-mail enquiry should help you find out if a particular agency can help you in your search for work. You should have your CV ready and be prepared to travel to attend an interview and maybe undertake assessments either on-line or at the agency's office.

Researching the agencies and finding out who are their current clients is essential in order not to waste your time. Talking to satisfied 'customers' could be useful too, eg to find out if they were only contacted about jobs that were appropriate. Looking cynically, recruitment agencies have targets to meet and one of these targets might be the number of candidates sent for interview.

Remember that your relationship with your preferred agency is one that requires effort, just like any other good quality relationship. You will need to make sure you get the balance right about keeping in touch with them (it is not just about waiting for them to contact you).

The recruitment and employment confederation contains a directory of professional recruitment companies and searching is possible by sector and geographical location.

<http://www.rec.uk.com/member-directory/details-rec-members>

Headhunters

Headhunters, executive search and talent acquisition can all be situations where someone comes looking for you. The function can be performed by smaller, specific agencies and largely work at senior management level. Getting your CV around companies, agencies and letting contacts know you are available (but not desperate!) is essential.

See the exercise sheet "Knowing your networks" for further ideas.

Social Networking

The main social network site for promoting yourself as a professional in your field is through www.linkedin.com. It is the online equivalent of you putting a card in the local newsagent saying you are looking for work. The website offers you the chance to put your CV, skills, experience, career and personal information on-line. Recruiters look and search online for suitable candidates, so the idea is to make sure you have a good, professional presence. Indeed, some recruiters may even think you are out of date technically if you do not have a profile online.

Using your 'keywords', you can join 'Groups' of people working in the same field. You can ask ex-colleagues to recommend you and you can reciprocate on their behalf. There are sector-based Groups or you can make links through previous employers or your education. You can increase your presence by getting involved with discussions in many of these Groups. Further information can be researched online from professional social media marketers such as <http://www.linkedinfluence.com/?hop=market4529>

You can also consider setting up a twitter account at www.twitter.com as another way of raising your profile and visibility in your target field of employment. As with all online postings, make sure your tweets or commentary are business appropriate such as interesting activities you are involved with, conferences you have attended, thoughts about new research in your sector etc.

Attending networking events

Attending networking events is a great way of mixing with people who may be making hiring decisions. People can find work, particularly in private sector organisations, without an organisation even advertising, and maybe before they have even realised they had a vacancy, through networking and recruiters knowing the person they want to hire.

Your local Chamber of Commerce often provide fairly low budget events to network with local people and organisations (www.britishchambers.org.uk). You can also try the local branch of any professional body you may belong to. Joining local groups on LinkedIn will provide information on local activities and events.

There are many networking events for women (search for women & networking and many are listed).

It is almost essential to have a business card when attending networking events in order for people to remember who you are. These can be produced fairly easily and cheaply by searching for providers on the internet. Alternatively, take other people's cards/details and Link In with them after the event.

Try to prepare an "elevator speech" for when people ask you that dreaded question "so, what do you do". This should be a short summary of you that could be said to someone in the period of time it takes them to transfer floors in an elevator. It should engage someone with who you are and what you are looking for from the event. Do not use "only", "but", "just" or other belittling words that drain your confidence and hence other people's interest in you. You will need to practice your speech so that you are sure what you say, and do not start waffling. These are examples, by no means perfect, but they give you the idea of an approach:

“I am electrical engineer from a heavy industry background and I am here to meet some new colleagues and associates”

“I have expertise in designing websites and looking to meet likeminded people for networking and potential collaboration”

“I have recently been made redundant and am trying to build up some local contacts in a wider range of industries”

As on all occasions meeting someone for the first time, look them in the eye, smile and have a confident and firm handshake.

Building your own network of contacts

You may already know someone who may be able to help in your job search. Someone who knows someone else who knows someone else; we all know the type of thing. It may be someone who can make enquiries for you, or pass on your CV, or someone who has contacts in a different industry or network, or has associates they can link you with.

Use the exercise sheet “Knowing your networks” to help create and realise your own network of contacts and do not be afraid to use it. You are as likely to find your next role through informal networks as you are through formal applications to vacancies.