

Employability & Careers Centre

T: 01483 689001

E: [careers@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:careers@surrey.ac.uk)

W: [www.surrey.ac.uk/careers](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/careers)



# Job Seeking: The Hidden Job Market

## Why are some jobs hidden?

It is estimated that 80% of people find jobs through people they know. For various reasons many jobs are never advertised. Advertising is expensive and employers may get far more applications than they can cope with. Some employers such as advertising agencies, publishing houses, charities, recording studios and radio stations to name but a few, are so popular that they don't need to advertise because they receive enough speculative applications anyway, or recruit people who have completed work placements/internships with them.

## Creative job search

To unearth hidden jobs requires a creative proactive approach to job-seeking rather than waiting for job adverts to appear. It involves building your own network of useful people who can give you advice and information about the career which interests you. Networking is not about asking someone directly for a job, but about asking for a short meeting in order to benefit from their experience of how they succeeded in finding a job in the sector that interests you. This may then lead to doing some relevant work shadowing or work experience.

## How to network

- Start by collecting a list of people who you know. List family, friends, colleagues, other contacts who might be able to offer you advice or information about the job or sector which is of interest.
- Before you contact any of the people on your list be clear in your own mind what you want to achieve for example: a short meeting to discuss career paths into the sector, an opportunity for work shadowing or work experience.
- Contact people individually with a personalised email or phone call.
- Ask them if they have any further contacts that you could follow up.
- Always send an email to thank them for their time after you have met them.
- Always keep a record of your meetings in case you need to contact them again.

*Did you know? You can access our full leaflet series online: [www.surrey.ac.uk/careers/current/leaflets/](http://www.surrey.ac.uk/careers/current/leaflets/)*

## Using social media and networking sites

Engaging with social media as part of your job search and professional development is vital. The use of social media and networking sites for job seeking has greatly increased over the last few years and you can build your network much quicker than you can face-to-face. There are different sites for professional networking and for social networking.

- **LinkedIn:** [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com). The world's largest professional online network provides opportunities to network online with professionals from all sorts of different employment sectors. Joining groups can be a really useful way to find out industry news and find interesting people to correspond with. You can even search for Surrey Alumni who are working in jobs that interest you. You will need to construct a profile, which is a bit like an enhanced online CV. You will find advice for UK students on getting started with LinkedIn <https://students.linkedin.com/uk> plus a dedicated job hunting portal for students and graduates [www.linkedin.com/students](http://www.linkedin.com/students) and there is also a LinkedIn Jobs App. For more information on getting started see our leaflet on [Introduction to LinkedIn](#).
- **Facebook:** [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), is a Social networking site, which can also be a useful way to make new contacts in your chosen career sector and to showcase your creative work. You can also use it to follow organisations, but may want to distinguish between your personal and professional image.
- **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/>, can be used to follow organisations, you can re-tweet to support a company of interest and you can also access job vacancies.
- **Blogs:** More and more companies are including Blogs on their recruitment pages, this can be a good way to get more of an idea of what working for the company is like. You may wish to write your own blog and include a link to it on your CV and LinkedIn profile. Some employers are also using YouTube [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) to host company recruitment films etc.
- **Online Chats:** Along similar lines, online chats are another good way to interact with employers. The Guardian hosts regular chats with graduate recruiters, recruiters, study providers and professional bodies at [www.careers.guardian.co.uk](http://www.careers.guardian.co.uk).
- Formal networking opportunities - some professional organisations have their own formal networking groups, which you can join, although they often charge a membership fee.

## Making speculative applications

This means sending your CV and covering letter to employers who you would like to work for, without being sure that they have a vacancy. You can do this by email or post. Examples of what to write can be found in our [Writing Your CV](#) leaflet.

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It is essential that the covering letter includes evidence of your suitability for the position(s) in which you are interested. Particular skills, work experience, your degree and details about your Professional Training, leisure interests etc. are all worth mentioning if they are relevant to your application. Research the employer as much as you can to help you decide what is most important to them and choose your best examples. Explain why this particular role and company appeal to you.

You will need to indicate the sort of work you would like to do, so you should have a department or role in mind. However, you can be quite general to keep your options open, e.g. “an initial post in marketing.” It is also a good idea to mention if you would be interested in any part-time or temporary vacancies in the absence of full-time posts. They are a good method of getting started and building your experience and contacts, before moving on to a more secure or desirable position.

## How do I find out contact details of employers?

If you know the kind of work you'd like to do, you can obtain a list of employers who typically recruit in that area by looking in a careers directory such as Prospects or TargetJobs (free from the Employability and Careers Centre) or online at [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) and <http://targetjobs.co.uk>. There are lots of other more specialist directories which you may find helpful and you will find suggestions of these in the **Job Profiles** at <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles>. Kompass, [www.kompass.co.uk](http://www.kompass.co.uk), gives basic address information on thousands of companies. If you have a specific company in mind, use a search engine like [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk). Alternatively, use <https://uk.yahoo.com/> which lists companies by type. Yellow Pages is also useful on-line at <https://www.yell.com/>.

If you want a specialist list of employers for example advertising agencies, then it is worth looking at the website for the professional association e.g. The Institute for Practitioners in Advertising (IPA), as it may well contain a list of members. Alternatively Yearbooks such as the 'Writers and Artists Yearbook' are a useful source of names and addresses of companies in specific sectors.

If you want to find work in another country, take a look at the Goingglobal portal on our website: <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/careers/current/work/abroad/index.htm> this lists worldwide jobs and internships, more than 450,000 corporate profiles and 42 country profiles, including information on how to write a CV for each country.

## Who exactly should I contact?

Always try to find out the name of the person you need to contact, by phoning the company or checking the web site, then address your letter/email directly to them. If you are unable to do so you can address your letter/email to 'Dear Sir/Madam'.

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## Will I get a reply?

Don't be surprised if some of your letters aren't even acknowledged. If there are no vacancies at the time you write, the employer might prefer to save time and money by ignoring your letter altogether. Please try not to take this personally. It happens to a lot of people. You could always add a sentence at the end of your letter/email in which you say something like, "I hope you don't mind if I ring in a few days' time in order to talk over my application with you," then make sure you call.

Fortunately, some employers do respond, usually within a week or two, even if it is only to say they will keep your letter on file. This kind of response is usually genuine and you should add the company to your follow-up list.

## How many applications should I make?

You need to focus on quality rather than quantity! A small number of carefully targeted, well-researched approaches are likely to give you a better result than sending out hundreds of photocopies of your CV and a vague covering letter.

## Keeping track of contacts

Make sure that you keep records of all the approaches you make, either by saving a copy of all your letters or perhaps by keeping a log. You can even make a note in your Outlook calendar or set a reminder when it's time to follow up. When you are successful in getting an interview, you will want to know exactly what you wrote in your application and who you have dealt with in the organisation, so save copies.

## Any final tips?

Creative job search can seem like hard work and has its frustrations, especially when it does not always bring results. The important thing is to keep going and maintain a professional, methodical attitude. This more creative approach has worked for many - there is every reason to believe it will work for you too.