

Job Hunting

To be an effective job hunter you need to choose the methods that are most appropriate for your target career area. Searching for vacancies using Google is not always the best way to find the job you want. The best job hunters do not wait for the jobs to appear; they are proactive in tracking down the best opportunities.

BEFORE YOU START JOB HUNTING

Know what you are looking for

It is hard to find the right opportunities if you are not sure what you want to do. If you are confused about your career direction it may help to discuss your decision with a careers adviser. See the leaflet *Getting Career Inspiration* for some more thoughts on how to identify possible options and complete a self-analysis at www.careers.lon.ac.uk/sortit.

If you are considering more than one career option, it may be a good idea initially to focus on just one of them thoroughly for a certain period then consider the others.

Find out more information

Intelligent job hunting involves gathering a lot of information about your target sector. Do the employers advertise and, if so, where? Do they use recruitment agencies? Which ones? What selection methods do they use? What things do they look for in applications?

In addition, the more you know about a particular job and its sector, the easier it is to convince a recruiter that you have the right qualities, qualifications or experience. The internet holds a wealth of information to increase your knowledge of your chosen field or job role. For example, the following websites are dedicated to providing careers information to graduates:

- Prospects www.prospects.ac.uk
- GTI TARGET Jobs www.targetjobs.co.uk
- Inside Careers www.insidecareers.co.uk
- Hobsons www.get.hobsons.co.uk
- AGCAS occupational profiles - as well as giving brief summaries of over 400 occupations, these sheets also identify specific places to look for relevant vacancies (www.prospects.ac.uk/links/occupations)
- www.careerstagged.co.uk to gather together a range of useful links to different employers, job boards, trade associations and so on. This service works using a 'tagging' system and has links to websites from across the world.
- Occupational files in your careers service contain further information on a wide range of careers.

Many professional and trade association websites contain useful career information and sometimes lists of members. For example, a visit to the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising website will provide access to a list of member agencies which is an ideal starting point to gain further information. If you are unsure whether there is a professional body for your chosen career area, try using Google to search for words like 'association' or 'institute' plus the relevant sector.

Researching employers

Employers' websites are often useful for finding out more about the work they are involved in, their values, the company's background, their structure and their contact details. Google has an advanced search facility where you can search for 'similar sites'. If you know the web address of a company you would like to work for, go to 'advanced search' on the Google homepage, then 'similar pages' and type in the web address. Clicking on 'search' should then bring up other organisations involved in similar work.

Web directories are a good tool for finding employers by searching for specific fields of interest and can also be useful for locating specific employers. These include:

- Yahoo <http://dir.yahoo.com>
- Yellow Pages www.yell.com

REACTIVE JOB HUNTING

The internet can be a valuable tool for finding job vacancies as there are a whole host of sources of vacancies online.

If you do not have everything they ask for in an advert, it is often worth applying anyway. The ideal candidate may not exist and you may be the best person available. Even if an appealing vacancy asks for more experience than you possess, it could provide a clue about where to look for similar jobs. You could use this advert as a way of making a useful contact with an employer. It may also give you something to aim for. Perhaps by getting more information you could find out how to get the experience you need to be able to apply for such jobs in the future.

Online job vacancies

The Careers Group, University of London website has vacancy pages www.careers.lon.ac.uk/jobonline which list full-time graduate vacancies, part-time work, internships and work experience. You can subscribe to an RSS feed to get all new vacancies into your inbox and information from Careers Tagged is linked into this site too. Graduate positions are listed on graduate careers websites (eg Prospects, Hobsons) and these websites usually enable you to search current vacancies by sector, employer and location. You will find sector-specific jobs boards online through Careers Tagged using the 'job sites' tag.

A huge range of vacancies are to be found on job websites, such as:

- Monster www.monster.co.uk
- Fish4Jobs www.fish4jobs.co.uk
- topjobs www.topjobs.co.uk
- www.milkround.com
- www.targetjobs.co.uk
- www.justjobs4students.co.uk

These sites often feature a more advanced search screen where you can, for example, search for key words in the job title or search within a salary range. You can also often apply to jobs online by completing an online form or submitting a CV. In addition to job websites, some recruitment agencies have databases of jobs which you can browse online.

When submitting your CV or details online it is advisable to read the site's privacy policy to ensure you understand who will have access to your details. Also, if you are using an agency, note that reputable agencies charge the employers not the candidates. Recruitment agencies should comply with the code of practice laid down by the Recruitment and Employment Confederation www.rec.uk.com which also has a database of members searchable by sector and location.

You can also check the websites of national and regional newspapers for job vacancies, for example:

- The Guardian <http://jobs.guardian.co.uk>
- Evening Standard www.londonjobs.co.uk

The website www.wrx.zen.co.uk/britnews.htm links to all the national and regional newspapers that are published online, saving you time tracking them down individually.

Receiving vacancies by email

Many websites allow you to sign up and receive jobs that match your search criteria by email. You will then receive regular updates when jobs come up that may interest you. For example, you can register your details with The Careers Group JobAlert to get information and jobs from employers in specific sectors. See www.careers.lon.ac.uk/jobonline. Make sure you use an appropriate email address not your fun personal one!

OTHER VACANCY RESOURCES

Although the internet is an essential tool for those seeking careers information and job opportunities, it should only form part of your job-seeking strategy.

Newspapers

You can also find vacancies in:

- national, regional and local newspapers (eg *The Guardian*, *The Independent*)
- special job newspapers (eg *Jobs UK*)
- specialist 'trade' journals (eg *Computing*, *The Bookseller*)
- local Job Centres

Recruitment agencies

Many people believe that recruitment agencies are an easy option for job hunting. They can be a useful additional job hunting method but, to increase your chances of obtaining meaningful work experience, you will have to put in a lot of effort.

- You will need to be very specific about the type of work you are looking for and select agencies that deal with appropriate sectors.
- You will need to ensure that your CV is targeted clearly at particular types of jobs to increase the likelihood of being selected by the agent.
- You will need to contact the agency regularly to ensure that they keep you in mind for positions.

More information on recruitment agencies:

- The Recruitment & Employment Confederation (www.rec.uk.com) has an online directory of agencies.
- See the booklet *Recruitment Agencies and Online Job Boards*, The Careers Group, University of London. Available online only at www.careers.lon.ac.uk/files/pdf/RecruitmentAgencies1011.pdf.

PROACTIVE JOB HUNTING

This involves tracking down unadvertised vacancies or, perhaps, creating new opportunities for yourself. One of the keys to this is building a network of contacts both as a source of information about the career that you are interested in, and as a way to get yourself known by people who may be able to help you.

Generating contacts

First, try to identify people you already have some link with who may be useful, or who could lead you to someone useful. Make a list of everyone you know: friends, family, colleagues, fellow students, former employers, tutors, people on Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. Let them know the type of work you are interested in and ask if they know anyone with knowledge of that area.

Speculative letters and networking

Having identified relevant employers, you could just send off your CV in the hope they will have a position available; your application should be well-researched in order to increase your chances of success. Another approach is to email a new contact stating that you are interested in working in their field and you would like to meet them to find out more; people generally respond positively to such requests. If you would like more information about these techniques, please see our separate handouts *Application Letters* and *Networking*.

Reviewing your strategies

Job hunting requires persistence and determination but if you are not getting any results after a substantial period of time, you may want to review your strategy. This could mean:

- deciding that this career is not for you
- acquiring or developing skills by taking a course
- gaining experience by volunteering
- taking a less responsible job which would enhance your chances of getting the job you want
- following up any contacts you may have
- changing your CV and covering letter to make it more effective (based on advice from your contacts).

FURTHER INFORMATION

- www.rileyguide.com The Riley Guide to job hunting on the Internet.
- www.jobhuntersbible.com A companion site to the bestseller *What Colour is Your Parachute?* This site will assist you with networking, job hunting research, internet research, career guidance, skills testing, and using job boards.
- *Job Hunting Online*, Mark Emery Bolles & Richard Nelson Bolles, Ten Speed Press, 2008. This book shows you how to integrate the internet into an effective job-hunting strategy. (ISBN 9781580088992).

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