

Job Search Strategies

How to access the Hidden Job Market...identify job targets and prospective employers.

*Your job search success will be greatly enhanced if you learn how to tap into the **Hidden Job Market**. The hidden job market refers to the 80-85% of jobs that are available on any given day but are not advertised. Clearly, you will be at an advantage if you uncover job opportunities before they become public knowledge! Career and Employment Services (CES) has compiled the following steps to help you tap into and utilize the Hidden Job Market.*

1. IDENTIFY JOB TARGETS

Job targeting is a process that involves identifying your personal work values, skills and goals and then choosing specific work areas that will satisfy them. By clearly identifying job targets, you will expand your ability to locate prospective employers and make necessary contacts. In addition, job targets will give your job search the focus and sense of purpose necessary for sustained energy.

A thorough self-assessment is a crucial component of job targeting. Talk to a counselor to learn about self-assessment tools such as the Strong Interest Inventory, and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Additional resources include books in the CES Career Resources Library (Howarth 101) and the self-directed interest inventory and occupational information on Career Cruising (available in the CES Cascade resources).

2. IDENTIFY EMPLOYER PROSPECTS

An employer prospect is a person within an organization who, you suspect, normally has someone on staff doing the kind of work you are looking for as a job target. You can create a great advantage for yourself in your job target fields if you identify prospective employers not on the basis of employment ads, but by contacting enough of the right people in the right firms and uncovering opportunities.

This is where your research skills come in. By identifying specific sources of information that are applicable to your job targets, you will find names of potential employers. Below are some sources to use to locate employer prospects:

Niche Job Boards

Many industries have job boards that specialize in their topics and can be a great resource for identifying employers that typically hire in that field. Don't rely solely on these because many employers, particularly smaller organizations will only post on their own website. Use the niche boards (example: winejobs.com) to get an idea of the types of roles that exist and to gain better insight into how to target an employer that doesn't have job postings widely published.

Social Media

The amount of information you can glean from social media tools is astounding, particularly if you use professional networking sites like LinkedIn.com. Once you've established a profile you can search for companies, identify contacts at those organizations who attended Puget Sound, and contact recruiters directly through the website. Many employers are now using LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook to post available positions and to engage with potential candidates.

General Reading

Newspapers and magazines frequently publish articles related to a particular growing industry or business or an area of technological change. From these stories, make a list of names of people to contact in the future. The Puget Sound Business Journal is a local, weekly publication that highlights business trends. The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal are national in scope and are particularly strong in career-related topics.

Trade Publications

Just about every profession, skill area, or occupation has a magazine or newsletter. These trade publications are a valuable source for finding out what's going on in a career field. From trade journals and other related publications, you will glean the names of more personal contacts in addition to learning about key organizations in the field, and new products. Trade journals frequently also contain online job postings. The Chronicle of Higher Education and Washington CEO are two examples of trade publications.

Membership Associations

As with trade publications, there are professional associations related to nearly every interest area or career field. Those associations related to your job targets can be a major source of information and personal contacts. Associations usually publish membership directories, which contain names of people who may be helpful to you with your job search. In addition, attending an association meeting is a great opportunity to meet people in your field. (Collect phone numbers and ask people if you could contact them to schedule a 30-minute appointment.) Most associations offer discounted membership rates for students. Check the Encyclopedia of Associations for associations related to your job targets.

Directories

Directories are another good source for identifying potential employers. They usually contain the name and address of the business, a brief description of the business and the name of a contact person. Some helpful directories include Standard & Poor's Register of Corporations, Dun & Bradstreet Million Dollar Directory, Media Inc., and Puget Sound Business Journal Book of Lists.

Networking

When searching for employer prospects, don't forget about one very important source: your personal network. Your network includes all the people you know who might be able to help you to find out about job targets and make personal contacts with prospective employers. One excellent source for networking is the Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK) Network located in the CES Cascade resources. The ASK Network is a group of Puget Sound graduates who have volunteered to assist students in their search for information about specific careers. For a more detailed discussion of this strategy, refer to the CES Networking guide.

3. CONTACT EMPLOYER PROSPECTS

From all the research sources described above, you have gathered names of prospective employers in your job target fields. You are now ready to contact these prospects for an informational interview. You will want to set up your informational interviews with a person who has influence in hiring decisions. Often this is the manager or supervisor in charge of the function you wish to perform.

Your purpose in conducting the interviews is to gather information, make contacts and position yourself for future opportunities. You will also want to ask for the names of additional people who may be able to help you in your job search. For guidance on how to conduct informational interviews, see the Networking handout. Based on the knowledge you've gained from your research, be sure develop targeted questions that go beyond the basic suggestions.

By following the steps above, you are on your way to uncovering hidden job opportunities. As your job search progresses and you identify job openings, you will want to prepare for the job interview. See our Interviewing tips (available as a handout and online) for suggestions on conducting a successful interview.

Additional job search tips and other career advice can be found at www.pugetsound.edu/ces and in CESblog posts at <http://blogs.ups.edu/cesblogs>. Or scan the code below to reach CESblogs related to job searching.



For individualized assistance devising job search strategies, please make an appointment with a CES career advisor. We can help. Just ask!