

10 ways to find a job

There's more than one way to find a job. Planning your job search and using a variety of methods will increase your chances of success.

Make your job search effective by identifying how, where and when you can find the jobs that really interest you. Different industries recruit in different ways, so focus on the methods and deadlines common in the sectors you are applying to. For example, does recruitment normally take place throughout the year via networking, in response to an annual job advert placed every autumn or following a work experience placement in the spring? Find this by researching online and by talking to people working in the industry.

Combining different job search methods to find the right role for you will increase your chances of success. Here's a variety of job hunting tactics to try out.

1. Job boards and online vacancy sources

For lists of vacancies, there are general graduate recruitment sites such as www.prospects.ac.uk and www.targetjobs.co.uk that provide job listings and advice. Browse job adverts to discover new roles or potential companies you could apply to. Bookmark job sites you like and check them regularly for updates. If you see an interesting advert but the role is not quite right for you, check the company's own jobs page regularly or contact them speculatively.

Don't miss opportunities by thinking too narrowly about job titles as organisations often describe the same type of role differently. Look beyond the job title and explore the person specification and job description to see what the job actually involves.

2. Employer websites

There may be specific companies that you are interested in working for. If so check their websites regularly for suitable vacancies. Advertising on online job boards can be expensive for employers, so they might only advertise on their own website. Find out more about the organisation by following them on social media and follow up with a speculative application.

3. Making the most of your contacts

Approximately a third of university leavers secure graduate employment in an organisation they have previously worked for, through internships, volunteering or part time work for example. Make the most of your contacts by asking current or past employers for advice on how and where they recruit, as well as what they look for.

Use this information to focus your job search. Your contacts may be able to provide additional practical work experience. If you have had a part time retail job, you could investigate whether there are work shadowing opportunities in their head office for example. Think about what type of experiences will be useful for you and why.

4. Events, talks and workshops

Attending events is a great way to increase your contacts and gain insight that will help your job search. Gather valuable information and build your commercial awareness by asking about what is happening in their organisation and industry, plus find out where and how they recruit.

Make a good impression by researching who is attending. Preparing questions beforehand, and making sure the answers aren't obvious on their website, can be a good way to stand out from the crowd. Check your careers website and relevant professional bodies for details of talks and fairs.

5. Social media

Creating a strong online presence using online networking sites like LinkedIn and Twitter will help expand your range of contacts, enable you to follow industry developments and trends, and hear about events where you can network in person. Join relevant industry, alumni, and interest groups, and follow companies you are interested in.

6. Industry news

Discover employers who you can potentially apply to and develop your commercial awareness by reading articles in sector specific blogs or magazines, such as New Scientist or The Economist.

Search www.careerstagged.co.uk for your industry (e.g. marketing or pharmaceuticals) to find additional news sources. Use this knowledge to demonstrate your motivation and enthusiasm for both the company and industry on your application and at interview.

7. Unadvertised jobs and speculative applications

A large number of jobs are never advertised. Once you have found potential employers you would like to work for, send them your CV and a speculative covering letter explaining your interest and how your skills and experience would fit that particular organisation.

8. Employment and recruitment agencies

Before using an agency, look at the jobs on their website to see if they are applicable to you. Be open to both temporary and longer term jobs, as temping can be an excellent way to build your experience, gain contacts, and if you impress can be a way in to a company. Find agencies at www.agencycentral.co.uk.

9. Professional bodies and associations

These organisations often publish a list of their members online which you can use to identify potential employers. Many also provide industry news, careers advice, information on training, events, and job listings. Search www.totalprofessions.com to find a professional body relevant to the kind of work you're interested in.

10. Business directories

Online business directories provide lists and details of organisations you can search by sector. This is a particularly useful way to find small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Search directories to find potential employers you can research further and apply to speculatively.

Using specific criteria in a search engine such as "marketing assistant jobs London" or "environmental start-ups London" can uncover particularly useful results.

See:

- www.uksmallbusinessdirectory.co.uk
- www.londondirectory.co.uk
- www.yell.com

Think

Think broadly

Don't limit your search by only looking at certain industries or employers. For example, accountants don't just work for finance companies, but organisations ranging from engineering firms to fashion houses. It is likely there are a huge number of roles and companies with exciting opportunities that you have never even heard of before.

Think flexibly

Few graduates walk straight into their dream job. Be open to other roles and types of organisation where you can build the skills you need.

For example, you may want to work in a finance role, but data entry or admin roles in a finance department could be an excellent and common way in.

Think methodically

Looking for work is time consuming. Setting goals (e.g. to research 10 employer websites in one afternoon) can help you to keep your motivation and momentum. Make a note of every role you apply for and keep copies of every application that you send.

Think positively

It can be frustrating and disheartening if you don't hear back from an employer you've applied to or are not shortlisted for a role you really wanted. This happens to everyone at some point. It's important not to give up but to use the experience to improve your future applications. Always ask for feedback and find ways of learning from it.

Checklist

- Keep a note of the jobs and organisations you have applied to.
- Keep copies of your applications to help you prepare for interview and in case you apply for something similar.
- Get friends or family to proofread your application. Employer feedback reveals many are immediately rejected due to grammar mistakes and typos.
- Keep track of deadlines. You might use a calendar or a spreadsheet for this.

If you find that you are not getting shortlisted it might be time to take a step back. Are you applying for the right type of roles appropriate to your level of skills and experience? Is your CV or application effective?

Make an appointment with a careers consultant to discuss your options and to get feedback on your CVs and applications.