Job hunting strategies

To maximize your chances of finding work, we recommend using a combination of job hunting strategies – both advertised and in the ‘hidden’ job market.

When embarking on your job search it is important to have an understanding of what you want, what skills you have and how you can contribute. Other career activities and tools can assist in gaining this direction. See www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers

The advertised job market

The Internet

Many companies and organisations, both nationally and internationally, use the Internet to recruit staff. A few key websites are listed below to help you in your job search:

UC CareerHub
www.careerhub.canterbury.ac.nz – employment web-based information portal providing an electronic communication hub between students, recent graduates, employers and Careers, Internships & Employment. Log on regularly for information on job vacancies, Employer Recruitment Presentations, Careers Fairs & events, Seminars and Student & Graduate Recruitment.

Careers, Internships & Employment
www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers – the job hunting section contains a range of job vacancy links including UC CareerHub, New Zealand and international jobs, volunteer, relief and international development, academic positions, teaching English as a second language, and teacher, sport and recreation vacancies.

General job vacancy websites
https://nzindeed.com – searches all job search sites.
www.trademe.co.nz/jobs – browse job vacancies. Search for jobs in New Zealand by key words, type, location, category, pay.
www.seek.co.nz – browse jobs in NZ and internationally. Searches can be done by key words, classification, location, salary.
www.sjs.co.nz – brings employers and students together for all types of jobs around New Zealand. Searches can be done by keywords, category, location, term of employment and hourly rate.

New Zealand Government Jobs
https://jobs.govt.nz – lists job vacancies in the government sector. We also advise you visit websites of individual government departments and organisations. See: www.govt.nz/organisations
http://lgcareers.co.nz/ – lists local government jobs. LGCareers assist those who are starting out in their career, as well as those looking to advance. Searches can be done by location, classification and job type.

Careers New Zealand
www.careers.govt.nz – contains comprehensive information on jobs and industries within New Zealand, including job vacancy websites. Job vacancies are also included in the job summaries.

Industry Specific Job Vacancy Websites
Use key words/phrases when searching online to connect with industry specific job vacancy websites. Key words/phrases typically include the name of the industry which you would like to search, the word ‘job’, and the name of the country you wish to work. Using other combinations of key words/phrases such as ‘graduate jobs New Zealand’ and the name of the industry coupled with ‘recruitment agency’ can also provide links to industry specific platforms connecting you to relevant opportunities.

Going Global
Going Global provides career information and resources to you from countries around the world. Gain inside career knowledge helpful in preparing for work overseas. https://online.goinglobal.com/

Employer Websites
Employers can advertise opportunities through their own websites. Often you can sign up to their job mail to be notified of any new vacancies.

Professional Associations
Professional associations uphold the professionalism and seek to further a particular profession or industry. Becoming a member of an industry specific body allows you an opportunity to engage, participate and to stay up to date with industry knowledge and relevant job vacancies.

Publications
Job vacancies, often in specialist areas can be advertised in publications such as professional magazines, academic journals and newsletters of professional associations. Also try related publications from other industries.

Recruitment agencies
See the handout: Top 10 tips for approaching Recruitment Companies available in the Careers Resource Area.

Work and Income
New Zealand (WINZ)
http://job-bank.workandincome.govt.nz/find-a-job/search.aspx – lists job vacancies. You may need to register first with Work and Income as a Job Seeker to be considered for specific roles.

Social Media
LinkedIn – a professional networking service used to build connections and facilitate the sharing of job vacancies, news, updates and insights. Search for jobs by keywords, company name, location, experience, industry, and size of company. www.linkedin.com
Facebook – like and follow pages of organisations and companies you would like to work for. Often job vacancies can be shared online to notify potential candidates of opportunities. www.facebook.com
Twitter – follow organisations/companies, professional associations and influential individuals who may share information about potential employment opportunities of interest. Ensure tweet comments are professional. Create and save keyword/hash tag combination searchers.

Social Media and Privacy
Be careful about what you share online and who can view your posts - check your privacy settings. There are many stories of individuals not getting a job because of the information they have shared online - once you share a post it may never go away.

Google yourself to see what public information is readily available so you are aware of the information an employer may see.

Manage your social media connections as information that is shared with a connection can be captured and shared with others, including potential employers.
Finding a job through social networking

You can borrow the DVD ‘E-Networking for Jobs’ or the book ‘Find a Job Through Social Networking’ from Careers, Internships & Employment. Both of these resources offer an introduction on how to effectively use social networking as part of your job search.

Tapping into the hidden job market

The ‘hidden’ job market refers to jobs which are not advertised. Activating the ‘hidden’ job market is particularly important if you are seeking work in an environment where many organisations are relatively small or in highly competitive sectors. You may be familiar with the ‘hidden’ job market, having successfully gained holiday or part-time work through networking and/or directly approaching an employer.

The following job hunting strategies and activities can assist you in accessing the ‘hidden’ job market.

Networking

Networking involves identifying the people and organisations that could be helpful to you in your job search and developing mutually beneficial relationships with them. Your aim in networking is to:

• Obtain more information about sectors and employers that interest you.
• Decide where best to concentrate your efforts.
• Uncover job leads and key contacts.

When networking it is important to see yourself as embarking on a marketing exercise. The ‘product’ you are marketing is yourself and your chances of success in this venture will depend on:

• Identifying the appropriate market for your skills.
• Understanding the specifications and preferences of the employer or industry.
• Presenting positive qualities of your ‘product’ – your qualifications, skills, abilities and experience – and how these will benefit the employer.
• Your communication and interpersonal skills.
• Being committed to convincing the employer and ‘closing the sale’.

You are:

• Finding out about areas of interest, advising people of your range of skills and letting people know that you are looking for work.
• Asking to be part of their network of contacts, to use their knowledge and information.
• Using the ‘multiplier’ principle – that is, the more people who know you are looking for work, the greater the chance of opportunities arising.
• Asking the people in your network to help you in your job search, NOT asking them to hire you.
• Eliciting feedback and assistance so that you can continually modify your skills and techniques of job search.

It is important to use your drive and initiative, mobilise your energy and enthusiasm, and get talking to people! Being connected is a valuable 21st century skill.

‘10 Powerful Networking Skills’ and ‘E-Networking for Jobs’ are excellent DVD’s available for borrowing at Careers, Internships and Employment, which will provide you with some very useful and practical tips. The better prepared you are before you start networking, the more you will get out of it.

So, how do you get started with Networking?

Build your job information database

The first step is to start building your contact list. You want names, contact details and possible openings or positions.

Create a Job Search Diary

Write down:

• Every contact you find, how you heard of that person and what you could talk to them about.
• Communications you have with that person, by phone, fax, email, in person etc.
• Actions you will take as a result of your communication with that person, e.g. other people to ring, ring back in a month’s time, send in CV etc.
• Actions that person is going to take on your behalf e.g. going to pass on your CV to their superior.

Diary all important dates. Check your diary every day to see what has happened and what your next step is.
Contact sources

People:
• Everyone is a potential contact – just start asking!
• Large numbers of graduates are successful in obtaining work through friends, family, colleagues, past graduates and other contacts, including local business people and community members.

Information resources:
Look in the Careers Resource Area for information including:
• Print media, employer publications and newsletters.
• Business Directories and the New Zealand Yellow Pages.
• Visit the “Job Hunting” section of www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers to research company directories online.

Other sources:
• Build up contacts in your field of interest through part-time, voluntary, vacation work and work experience.
• Join relevant professional associations and societies and attend professional gatherings.
• Attend relevant seminars, forums, talks, exhibitions and conferences.
• Use social media, such as LinkedIn.
• Speak with Academic staff who may have industry contacts and information about previous employers of graduates.
• Build connections through your leisure interests and further study.

Informational interviews

The purpose of an “Informational Interview” is to research a field of work of interest to you – not to ask for a job. It is a way to gain information on employment trends, skills required by employers, as well as confirm whether it is an area of work you are interested in pursuing or not. Informational interviewing increases your knowledge about your fields of interest, helps you clarify and refine your career goals and establish a network of contacts which could lead to employment opportunities, useful mentoring or invitations to relevant industry events.

Prior to the interview
• Identify businesses to approach by looking at company directories online via: www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers. Business and situations vacant pages of community and major daily newspapers and trade/industry magazines are other sources to identify businesses to approach.
• Ask family, friends, clubs and associations you belong to for contacts.
• Research companies/organisations via their websites and publications so you are familiar with what they do prior to visiting them.
• Contact the appropriate person (via email, telephone or in writing). Contact the receptionist first and ask them to put you through to the most appropriate person if you are unsure who the best person is for you to speak to. Remember to get that person’s name and job title.
• Introduce yourself, let them know who referred you (if applicable), what you would like to discuss and ask if you could arrange a brief meeting (15 minutes or so) at a mutually suitable time.
• Be prepared that the employer potentially might want to speak with you then and there.
• Be clear about your skills, interests and goals and how this information will assist you in your job search.
• Prepare and rehearse your questions in advance – you may like to email them to the contact person in advance.
• Dress professionally and appropriately to make a good impression.

At the informational interview
• Remember this is career research, not a job interview.
• You ask the questions.
• Show interest in them – ask about their background, qualifications and relevant experience.
• Take notes and collect any literature or relevant web addresses.
• Ask for further contacts and ask permission to use their name as your referral source.
• Inquire whether it would be possible to spend a short period work-shadowing someone in a role of interest to you.
• Take along your CV.
• Keep to the time you negotiated.

After the interview
• Immediately take notes of all the information you have gathered.
• Write a thank you note.
• Keep a comprehensive record of all contacts made.
• Follow up all referrals.
• Keep in contact with the person.
• When you get a job, let people know. They may become part of your network.

The direct approach

This means approaching employers directly for work, whether in person, by telephone or by sending a cover letter with a CV (by post, email or via websites). This type of activity is used as a legitimate method of finding work in most areas of the labour market.

Accurate targeting is crucial in this approach, so the amount of time you spend researching the company and who to target within it, will be much greater than the amount of time you spend making the contact. As with networking, clarity about what you have to offer, plus a businesslike approach, are essential to making a good first impression.

When you make contact
• Be explicit about why the job, organisation or industry appeals. In a cold call exercise have your CV prepared, and be able to indicate to the employer your interest in the organisation and the type of position you want, or type of enterprise you are considering starting.
• Use positive language.
• Get the name of a contact rather than just their title e.g. if you are writing to, or emailing, the Human Resources Manager phone the Receptionist to find out their name.
• Follow the principles of writing an effective cover letter and CV.
• Be professional in your approach to the employer.

Sending a CV and letter expressing your interest in working for a particular organisation is a popular job hunting technique. As a result employers may be receiving these kinds of approaches daily. Therefore it is important to do some research on the organisation and consider where you might fit into it. Indicating at the end of your letter that you will follow up with a phone call will generally ensure that the letter is read and considered. This also provides you with another avenue for making contact. Aim to build rapport and maintain contact moving forward to keep informed as to whether any job vacancies have emerged that you might be suited to.

Creating your own job
• In your research you may find an employer who could use your skills even though they haven’t realised this yet.
• You need to research the company/organisation’s markets, outputs etc and be able to illustrate succinctly how your skills will complement what they do.
Informational Interviews

As you are not interviewing for a job, it is up to you to ask the questions. Therefore, always go to an informational interview well prepared with questions. Even if the informational interview is very informal or spontaneous, you will get much more out of it if you put time into thinking about what you want to know.

The following questions are a guide. Ask questions that are going to give you relevant information to assist you to make an informed decision. Remember: use open ended questions that elicit more than a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer.

• How did you get into this type of work/industry?
• What kind of background (education, skills, experience and attitude) do people have who work in this field?
• What is a typical day in this job really like?
• What do you most enjoy about the work that you do? Least enjoy?
• What are the biggest challenges facing your sector? How do you think they will be tackled?
• Where do you see the opportunities for people to enter this sector now? What gaps need to be filled?
• What is the best way of finding out about vacancies in this field?
• Do you know of anyone with a similar background to mine that has entered this type of work? Could I meet them?
• Can you recommend two other people that I should speak to?
• Would you mind looking at my CV and telling me if you think it’s appropriate for the sector?
• What steps would you recommend I take at this stage?
• Are there related fields/jobs you recommend I look into if there are few jobs available in my preferred career field?

TelephoneNumber skills

Professional introduction

Quickly identify who you are and what you have to offer by developing a summary of your qualifications, skills, experience, achievements, motivations and aspirations. Practice it until it sounds natural and fluent. It should be brief, 2 minutes being the maximum time, where importance also needs to be placed upon expressing your reason for being interested in their organisation.

While on the telephone

• Allow time for the other person to think and respond.
• Smile – it makes you sound friendlier.
• Keep your head up, or stand up. This results in a more upright posture and more energy in your voice. Speak clearly.
• Don’t ramble and do take notes. The other person is likely to be busy and will value your efficiency.
• Concentrate on the needs of the company and adopt a positive tone.
• Establish your communication as a serious dialogue between equals.
• You may identify a gap in the market that you could niche in.
• Treat the call as an interview. Be prepared to speak about your skills and how they match the employer’s requirements.
• Check with the other person that you have called at an appropriate time - if not briefly outline the reason for your call and ask when a more appropriate time would be to call back.

Receiving calls

• Be prepared for calls to come at any time and prepare others in your household if using a land-line. Ensure a good reception for the caller.
• Keep a copy of your CV, your list of questions and pen and paper by the telephone, along with notes about the contacts you are expecting to hear from.

Remember Careers, Internships & Employment is here to help you. Bring some of your planning or research material to an Express Appointment for further advice.

Acknowledgements:
