

Finding Work in the Hidden Job Market

Ryerson Career Development and Employment Centre

THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

80% of all positions are filled *without* employers advertising. These positions are filled by--or created for--candidates who come to an employer's attention through employee recommendations, referrals from trusted associates, recruiters, or direct contact with the candidate.

Successful Hidden Job Market candidates are able to connect with the employer's network. Does this mean the employer knows them? Not necessarily. But the candidate comes "pre-recommended" by someone the employer trusts. Networking, using your contacts to connect with the employer's contacts, is the key to the Hidden Job Market.

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Networking is simply "talking to people." When people say you should network, they mean you should talk to people. People are happy to help others if they can. You need to be clear about HOW you'd like their help and clear about what you're looking for.

First, make a list of all the people to whom you can talk. These people do NOT need to be friends, or even acquaintances, just any and all people with whom you have enough of a common thread to initiate a conversation. If you can pick up the phone and call them, for any reason, they are potential networking contacts. Using this loose definition, most people have hundreds, perhaps even a thousand contacts.

Make the best use of your network by giving people an EASY way to help you. Rather than saying: "I am looking for a job. Do you know of any jobs?" ask for their tips, leads and suggestions.

"I'm looking for an entry level job in events management. Do you know anyone who is working as a convention planner or events manager? Do you know anyone who works for X company or Y company? Could you please provide me with their name and telephone number? May I say that you suggested that I call?"

Sources for Networking Contacts: Remember: all you need is a connection that would allow you to call and say who you are, get a nod of recognition that there is a connection, and ask for specific leads, information and introductions.

Personal Contacts - Friends, acquaintances, neighbors, relatives, classmates, teachers, club members.

Professional Contacts - Employers, supervisors, colleagues, clients, customers, association members.

Internet Contacts - Subscribers to mailing lists you participate in, any personal or professional contact that you might communicate with via e-mail.



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All the People Your Contacts Know - Just as you have hundreds, or thousands, of people in your network, so each person you contact is connected to others. You want to be able to call a stranger and say: "Phil Wilson said you'd be the best person to talk to about a career in Broadcast Journalism in the Ottawa area"

Join a job-finding club - These clubs provide employment leads and help with resumes, cover letters and interviews.

Visit job/career fairs - At these events, organizations send representatives to talk to work searchers, providing you with a great opportunity to network with several employers at once. Consider joining a relevant industry or professional trade association on a student basis. During their meetings you can network with decision-makers and learn about leading edge trends.

One more networking tip: don't overlook smaller companies. Far more job growth overall occurs within smaller firms (85% of new jobs in Canada) and they don't necessarily have the big budgets to spend on advertising job openings.

CONTACTING POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

You have a list of potential employers, but you don't know if they have any job openings. It's time to phone Human Resources or a hiring manager. Prepare by reviewing your resume and practicing what you're going to say. Write down your opening words in case you get flustered. Here is a sample "script."

"Hello, my name is _____. I understand that your company does _____ and that's my area of career interest. I was wondering if you had any current vacancies."

- If the contact says no, ask if they anticipate any openings in the future or if he/she knows of anyone in the same line of business who does.
- Make sure that you get the full name and title of the person you're speaking to.
- Keep your resume in front of you in case the manager asks you questions.
- If the manager seems interested, ask if you could meet with him/her to discuss possibilities in more detail.
- If the manager can't meet with you, ask if you can send in your resume.
- Whatever happens, thank your contact. Send a thank-you note and re-state your interest in working for his/her organization.
- Keep the information on your contact and his/her organization. You never know when you might need it again.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WWW.RYERSON.CA/CAREER](http://www.ryerson.ca/career) (click on Job Search Strategies). Helpful publications include *Networking for Job Search and Career Success* – Michelle L Tullier, *Who's Hiring 2006* (Mediacorp Canada Inc.), *The Career Directory 2007* – Richard Yerema & Karen Chow, *You're Hired-Secrets to Job Search* - Sharon McDonnell, *The Complete Job Search Handbook* - Howard Figler, *The Canadian Hidden Job Market Directory* (Sentor Media Inc.).



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