

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES GUIDE



**STUDENT, GRADUATE & CO-OP
EMPLOYMENT CENTRE**



JOB SEARCH GUIDE

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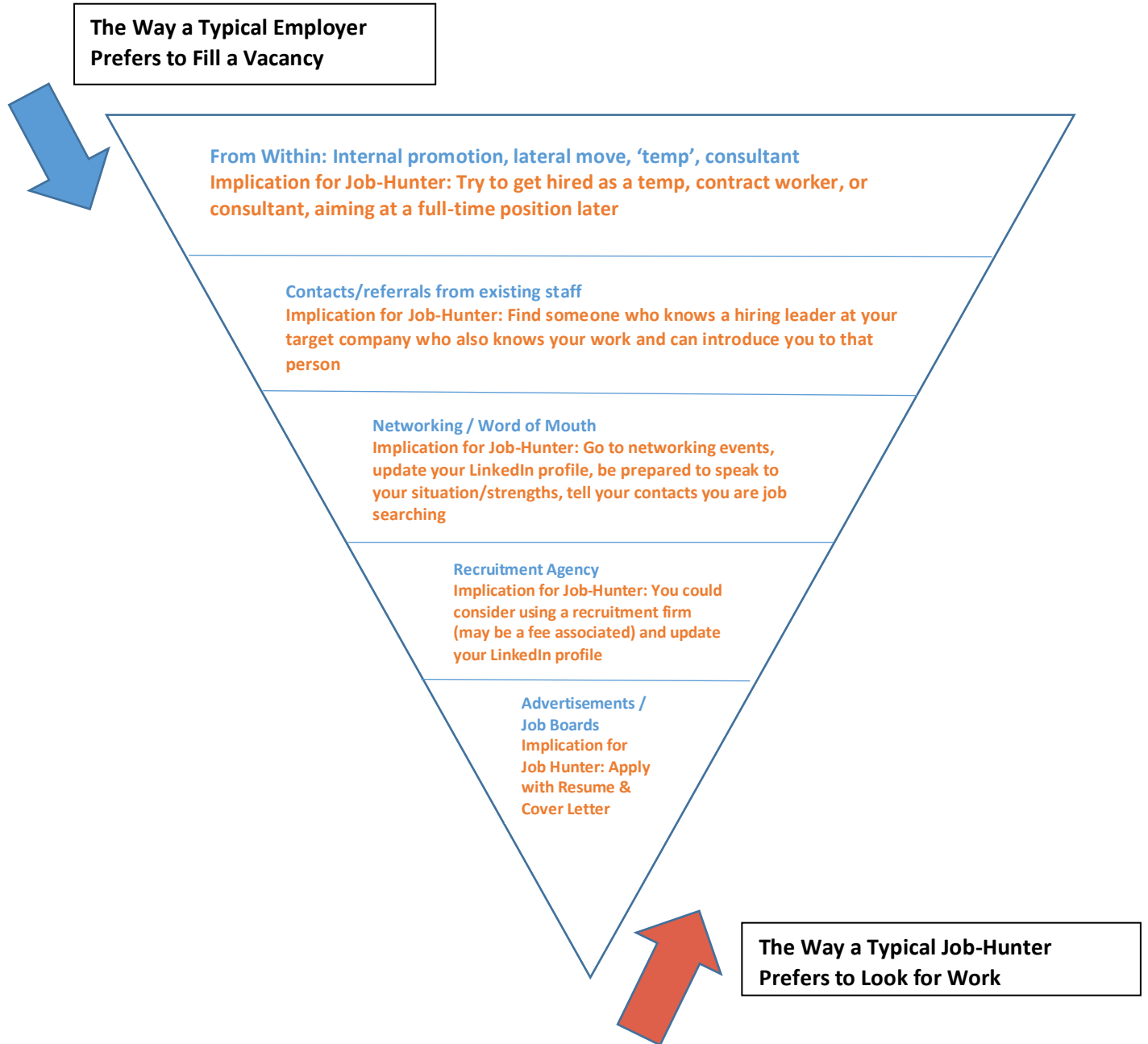
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Job Search Strategy

Looking for a job isn't easy. In fact, it takes a lot of effort to find something you love. Searching for a job is a full-time job in itself! Most job seekers search for jobs in the exact opposite way to how employers hunt for job-seekers. See the below image for an explanation. Rather than solely focusing on applying to advertised positions, use this Job Search Guide for tips on diversifying your job-hunting strategy!



Networking

As seen above, when an employer has identified the need to hire for a specific position, they will start by either promoting an existing employee or by obtaining referrals from existing staff. This is why it's so important to continuously network when you're looking for a job (and even when you're not!).

What is Networking?

Networking is simply the action of interacting with others to exchange information and develop professional (or even social) contacts. It can take place anywhere with anyone. You can meet a new contact at the grocery store, waiting for a dentist appointment, chatting with an opponent in a sports league you are part of, in an elevator, at a party, etc. You never know where you are going to meet someone that might be a potential employer, lead to a potential employer, or be able to provide you with valuable information, or vice versa.



**ALWAYS GIVE
WITHOUT REMEMBERING
AND ALWAYS RECEIVE
WITHOUT FORGETTING**

Networking is a reciprocal process. It is about both getting and giving information, resources, job leads, and referrals. It is foolish to forget about your network once you have reached your goals so be sure to network throughout your life and think about filling the needs of other people.

Why Should You Network?

**80% of positions
are never posted!**

The most effective job-hunting approach is networking. This is because 80% of open positions are never posted. If an employer has identified a position that needs to be filled, they will ask their current employees if they know of someone who might be a good fit. Posting the position only occurs if there are no referrals from current employees or if those referrals end up not being a fit. The more contacts we have, the more people who will know about our current situation and what qualifications we have to offer; therefore, the more opportunities we will hear about. For some, networking comes naturally. For others, networking is a learned skill and one that needs practice.

Preparation

Positive Attitude!

Ensure you have the right attitude! It is much easier to connect with people who are friendly and approachable. Smile and enjoy the opportunity to meet new people. If networking doesn't come naturally to you, try to think of it as a way for you to help others rather than on what you will gain from it.



Business Cards



Have professional business cards ready to hand out/swap with someone when needed. You never know when you will meet a new contact and having a business card with your contact information can go a long way to making a good first impression.

When meeting someone new, write down something specific about that person or what you discussed on their business card so you can refer to it later (it will help you remember that individual). The next time you meet that person, they will be flattered you remembered something about them. Carry your business cards in a professional case so they don't get stained or bent.

LinkedIn Profile

Ensure you have created a professional and up-to-date LinkedIn profile. Recruiters use LinkedIn to search for potential candidates and you can use LinkedIn to find potential contacts at companies of interest or to follow up with someone you have met. If you are requesting to connect with someone, **be sure to state the reason you wish to connect.**



Put in the time to make your profile complete. Recruiters and/or potential employers want to know what your skills are, where you worked, and what you have accomplished. Choose a clear and professional image (no selfies allowed!) as a photo makes a lasting impression.

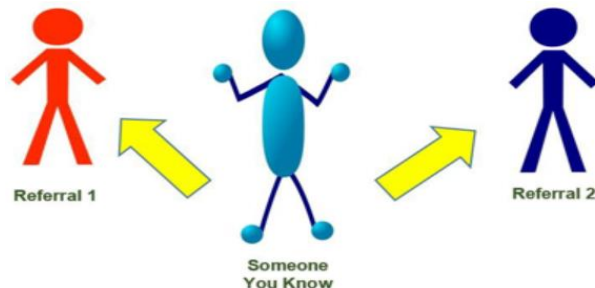
For tips on creating your LinkedIn profile, please see the following tips published by The Muse: <https://www.themuse.com/advice/the-31-best-linkedin-profile-tips-for-job-seekers>

Once you have completed your profile, create a custom URL (ideally linkedin.com/yourname) by clicking on the Edit Profile page in LinkedIn and then Clicking 'Edit' next to the URL and specifying what you'd like your address to be. Include a link to your profile within the Header field of application documents.

Potential List of Contacts

Networking can occur at any time; however, to start, write out a list of potential contacts. These can include fellow students, current or former employers/colleagues, friends, acquaintances, relatives, volunteer contacts, teachers, coaches, team members, dentist, doctor, pharmacist, etc. These contacts can also refer you to additional contacts.

Even if you start with three individuals you know. If each of those individuals provided you with the names of two additional contacts, and those contacts did the same, and those contacts did the same, that would already be a list of 45 people who could potentially help you.



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Prepare a Memorable Introduction

You need to be prepared with a memorable introduction (your 10 to 20-second elevator pitch). This introduction should include:

- a brief statement about who you are
- what you do/have done
- and (potentially) what you would like to do in the future

This introduction could be used at networking events, on phone calls or in emails to potential contacts, or in information interviews. You can shorten, lengthen, or change this introduction to fit the situation you are in.

Practice your introduction with a friend and critique each other's statement. Record yourself or practice in a mirror.

DO NOT say anything about looking for a job initially as this has the potential of coming across as being desperate to find work. Just provide information about yourself for now. Depending on how the conversation flows, this information may come up later.

Sample Introduction:

Good morning! I'm Rebecca Green and I'm currently pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration at Okanagan College. I'm specializing in Marketing and will be graduating in April 2020.

Conduct Company Research

It's extremely important to research companies of interest for a number of reasons.

- 1.** If you have a good understanding of what the company does, what products/services it offers, who its competitors are, and what the mission or values of the company are, you will be prepared for speaking with individuals at the company of interest (either at networking events, during information interviews, or even in chance encounters), writing an application, and for a potential interview.
- 2.** On your cover letter, you can include something you learned about the company based on your research and how you might add value with respect to that, and you will be prepared to speak about what you know about the company should that question be asked in an interview.
- 3.** Many companies/organizations post their job openings directly on their own websites (usually under an Employment or Career Opportunities link).





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Let the Networking Begin!

Start going through your list of contacts and make them aware of your situation and what you are potentially looking for in terms of the type of position or company of interest. Even though these contacts may not have anything specific to offer, they may have valuable leads for you to pursue.

Another option is to conduct an information interview.

Information Interviews

One of the best ways to get a feel for a company/job/industry without an actual interview is by conducting an information interview (**a research interview**) with an individual in a position or company of interest. An information interview is a conversation between you and someone who holds a job similar to what you are searching for. It's about gathering career information. It's **not** about asking for a job!

An information interview could be by phone or skype but ideally it's face to face at the company of interest. Do your research on the company in preparation (so that you can ask questions that can't be answered by simply looking at the company website or the individual's LinkedIn profile) and prepare good questions as you will be leading the conversation. The more research you have done about the career field, the company, and the individual, the easier it will be to create a list of questions. You will also appear more confident.



Follow interview protocol in terms of dressing professionally, arriving on time, introducing yourself clearly, and thanking the individual. For more information on interview etiquette, please refer to the Interview Guide on our website.

To request an information interview, contact the employer of interest by phone or email and ask if they would be willing to meet with you for 15 minutes for an information interview. (Make sure you do not take more than 15 minutes of their time once you're conducting the information interview unless they initiate an extension to their time).

Sample Telephone Script:

"Hello Mr. Woodward, my name is John Smith. I am currently pursuing my Civil Engineering Technology Diploma at Okanagan College and will be graduating in May of 2020. At the present time, I am exploring various career options in the field, and as your company (is currently working on.../is a leader in the area of.....), I would greatly appreciate meeting with you to learn more about the types of projects your company completes. Would you be willing to meet with me for about 15 minutes at some point next week or the week after?"





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If you do not have the contact information for the individual you wish to speak with, an email or LinkedIn message are alternative approaches. In your email request or LinkedIn message, be sure to include a brief introduction of who you are and why you are writing, a statement about why you are interested in that field or company, and why you wish to speak with that person (i.e. for advice or for information). You should end the email with either a statement about contacting them on a certain date/week to see if you could arrange a time to meet with them OR you could write the request within the email itself.

Sample Email Script:

Dear Ms. Jones,

I am a first year Business Administration Diploma student at Okanagan College specializing in Human Resources. I am interested in learning more about Organizational Development and I understand that ABC Company recently won an award recognizing excellence in this discipline.

I am particularly interested in Employee Engagement and I would love to learn more about the innovative approach ABC Company took with respect to this area as well as gather as much information as I can about the work, trends, and opportunities in Organizational Development as I move toward graduation.

Would you be willing to spend 15 minutes of your time to meet with me for an information interview at a time that is convenient to you either next week or the week after?

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Riya Ferro



During the interview, stick with your list of prepared questions and be sure to listen carefully to the individual's responses. You can take notes to show your keen interest in what the individual is saying and to help you remember anything specific/important you want to refer to later. The purpose of the conversation is to gather information about the job or industry so try not to dominate the conversation. Pay attention to the time and only take up the time you promised to take up (15 minutes). If you contact wants to continue the discussion, he/she will let you know.



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Potential Questions to Ask at an Information Interview:

- How have you gotten to where you are today? (*Education? Positions? = Career progression*)
- Could you describe a “day in the life of” or what the main responsibilities and accountabilities of your position are?
- If there was anything you could do/undo that would have helped in your career opportunities, what would that be? (*ie? Technology? Networking? Education?*)
- What do you enjoy most about your job? The industry?
- What have you found to be the biggest challenges in your job? The industry?
- What recommendations would you have for someone entering the industry? What are the opportunities for promotion?
- What are the most important skills/abilities required to be successful in the industry?
- What advice would you give someone who wants to get into this field?
- What do you look for in a candidate? (*if applicable*)
- *Tell them what you have found to be the starting, average and maximum wages and ask them if this would be accurate in the industry.*
- Is there anyone you would recommend I contact for an information interview?
- I see our time is nearly up; is there anything else you think would be important for me to know?

**Be sure to prioritize your questions as you don’t want to run out of time during the meeting.

You also need to be prepared to be asked questions by the interviewee/employer (refer to the Interview Guide for tips on how to prepare).

At the end of the information interview:

- Shake their hand and thank them for their time
- Send a follow-up thank you note or email within 24 to 48 hours of your meeting, thanking the individual for their time and willingness to help you
- Make sure you always follow up on referrals your contact provided to you
- Keep track of your information interviews and potential follow-up dates
- Update your contact on your progress and stay in touch with that individual.

Networking Events

Networking events are a great way to meet potential contacts face to face in an environment dedicated to that purpose. Below are some links to potential networking events that may be of interest to you:

- Kelowna Chamber of Commerce Events: <http://secure.kelownachamber.org/events>
- Junior Chamber International (JCI) Kelowna: <https://jcikelowna.com/>
- South Okanagan Chamber of Commerce Events: <https://www.sochamber.ca/>
- Vernon Chamber of Commerce Events: <https://www.vernonchamber.ca/events/calendar/>
- Revelstoke Chamber of Commerce Events: <https://www.revelstokechamber.com/events/calendar/>



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- Salmon Arm Chamber of Commerce Events: <http://sachamber.bc.ca/event-category/upcoming-events/>
- Okanagan Business Students' Association (OBSA): https://www.okanagan.bc.ca/Programs/Areas_of_Study/Business/Students/Student_Clubs_Associations/OBSA.html
- Okanagan College Accounting Club: <https://www.facebook.com/OCAccountingClub/>
- Okanagan College Human Resources Management Club (OCHRMC): <https://www.facebook.com/OSBHRMC/>
- Okanagan College Facebook Events Page: https://www.facebook.com/pg/okanagancollege.ca/events/?ref=page_internal
- Downtown Kelowna After 5: <https://www.downtownkelowna.com/after5/>
- Okanagan Young Professionals Collective: <https://www.oypcollective.com/>
- Canadian Home Builders' Association Central Okanagan (Trades Students): <https://www.chbaco.com/events/>
- Okanagan Young Health Professionals (OYHP): https://www.facebook.com/pg/OkanaganYHP/about/?ref=page_internal
- Greater Westside Board of Trade Business After Hours Events: <https://www.gwboardoftrade.com/event-calendar>
- Kelowna Now Business Events Calendar: <https://www.kelownanow.com/search/events/category:20>



Questions to Ask at Networking Events

It's important to master an opening line or question to use at a networking event. See the following for some questions that serve to act as conversation starters:

- "What brings you here?"
- "How did you hear about this event?"
- "Is this your first ... event?"
- "Are you familiar with tonight's speaker? His/her bio certainly sounds interesting."

Once you have begun the conversation with someone at a networking event, use one or some of the following questions to stimulate further conversation:

- What exactly does a _____ do – what does a typical day look like for you?
- How did you get involved in (industry/company/project)?
- What do you enjoy most about your role?



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- Ask for advice (i.e. if the person has attended the event in the past, ask what they thought was helpful about it or what other events they attend; or you can ask for unrelated advice on common interests such as restaurants or activities)
- Are you a member of any professional associations? Which ones do you feel are the most important to belong to?
- If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself?
- What skills have you found essential for success in this occupation?
- Could you tell me about one of the main challenges you face in your position?
- What advice would you have liked to hear when you were first starting out?

Communication/Tone of Voice (Verbal and Non-Verbal Cues)

At any networking event or during any chance encounter with a potential employer, your communication style is extremely important when you want to make a good first impression. Albert Mehrabian, published the relative importance of verbal and nonverbal messages and is known for his “7/38/55% Rule” which states that meaning in speech is conveyed in these proportions: words account for just 7%, tone of voice accounts for 38% of meaning, and body language accounts for 55%).

Follow the tips below to ensure your verbal AND non-verbal communication are friendly, professional, and will set you apart from the crowd:

Verbal Communication Tips

- Concentrate on your tone of voice when speaking (i.e. speak calmly, clearly and concisely, and avoid using a monotone voice; use an animated tone if you want to show genuine interest)
- Ask for clarification if you don’t understand something
- Ask open-ended questions to stimulate dialogue
- Don’t talk too much and don’t interrupt when someone is talking

Non-Verbal Communication Tips

- Smile and use good eye contact (when people fail to look others in the eye, it can seem as though they are trying to hide something; alternatively, too much eye contact can be intimidating)
- Use body language that supports what you are saying (i.e. to appear confident, stand firmly in one place with shoulders back and weight balanced on both feet and use a firm handshake; don’t fidget)
- Use appropriate hand gestures (keep your hands above your waist and below your collar bone so as not to appear frantic)
- Mirror the body language of the person you are speaking with
- Learn the art of listening (show sincere interest in what is being said)



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Professional Organizations/Associations

If there's a professional organization in your field, it might be a good idea to join and participate in its meetings/events so you can get to know individuals in your area of interest.

For a list of Canadian Professional Organizations and Colleges, please click see the following links:

http://www.pstranslations.ca/list_prof_org.html

<http://cpmdq.com/htm/org.canada2.htm>

Career/Job Fairs

Career/Job fairs are an excellent way to meet potential employers in an environment dedicated to doing just that. Some career fairs are for all disciplines, whereas others are targeted towards certain industries.



Okanagan College hosts one of the interiors longest running career fairs on an annual basis at the Kelowna Campus. This event offers the opportunity to speak with several employers from different disciplines.

To see a list of previous exhibitors, search 'Career Fair' on the Okanagan College website.

Okanagan College also hosts an annual Business Expo & Employment Fair. To see a list of previous exhibitors, search 'Business Expo' on the Okanagan College website.



Castanet will list any upcoming local career fairs on their events calendar.

Follow Up

It's important to keep a list of the individuals you meet, where and when you met them, something specific you learned about them, what you promised to do for them (i.e. send them contact information for someone they might benefit from speaking with, send them an article they might find useful) or when you plan on following up with them (i.e. to thank them for something they have done for you, or simply to tell them you enjoyed meeting them).



Follow-up is your responsibility and it is important to nurture your network!

Meaningful leads and referrals will eventually come from those with whom we have developed true relationships so rather than focusing on gaining as many contacts as possible, focus on gaining quality contacts. In networking, the results are not always immediate; you have to build rapport and that requires commitment and follow through.



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Sample Follow-Up Log:

| Contact Name | Referral Source/How We Met | Date of Contact | Next Follow-up | Notes/Comments |
|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Sample Follow-Up Telephone Script:

“Good afternoon Ms. Doe, my name is Bob Brown. We met briefly at the _____ event. I am a student in _____ at _____. You may recall that we spoke briefly about _____.” Is now a convenient time for you to chat?

I had promised you some information on _____ and I have it for you. I really enjoyed our conversation and wonder if you might be willing to chat briefly so I can learn more about industry trends and opportunities to help me plan the next steps of my career.

Do you have some time now or perhaps we could arrange a time to meet in the next week or so?”

Job Board Sites

To search for posted positions, there are a number of different job board sites you can access online.

Okanagan College website:

The Student, Graduate & Co-op Employment section of the Okanagan College website contains job postings for both Co-op students and graduates. There are also on-campus jobs listed, volunteer positions listed as well as other part-time, full-time, office support, and summer positions.



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Additional job banks are listed below (some are industry specific):



Canada

<https://www.indeed.ca/>

<https://www.monster.ca/>

<https://www.workopolis.com/en/>

<http://www.canadiancareers.com>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/opportunities/government.html> (Government of Canada Jobs)

<https://www.canadajobs.com/>

<https://www.jobs.ca/>

British Columbia

<https://www.bcjobs.ca/>

<https://www.bctechnology.com/jobs/job-categories.cfm>

Okanagan

<https://www.workbc.ca>

<https://www.castanet.net/>

<https://jobs.interiorhealth.ca/search-jobs>

**If you are a current Okanagan College student, Okanagan College Co-op student, or Okanagan College graduate, and you require assistance in putting your application together, please email coop@okanagan.bc.ca

Directly Approach Companies

If you know you want to work specifically for a certain company based on your research, you can send a well-written cover letter and resume directly to that company, even if there isn't a specific position being advertised. Address the cover letter to the Human Resources department, or, even better, to the person who would likely make hiring decisions for the department that interests you. It isn't always easy to find the correct person to get in touch with. You'll have to do some digging.

Volunteering

Another great way to build connections with individuals in the industry of interest is to volunteer. While some people find networking easy and natural to do, for others it can be much more difficult. Volunteering is a way to build your network and to meet people who share your interests in a setting that allows you to get to know someone much better than speaking for a few minutes at a networking event. Volunteering can also serve to fill an employment gap and most employers find individuals who initiate some type of positive activity while unemployed more desirable than those who don't. Volunteering may provide an opportunity to use or hone particular skills that might be beneficial to a future employer. Make sure you treat volunteering like a job commitment as it can be welcomed and appreciated by the organization you wish to work for down the road.



Placement Agency or Recruiter/Headhunter



Some agencies/recruitment firms specialize in helping people find jobs and these firms typically receive their fees from employers rather than job seekers. Before you enlist the help of a recruitment firm, make sure you know whether there will be a fee associated.

Some of these recruitment firms specialize in finding temporary contracts for job seekers. By working briefly as a temporary employee ('temp') for a company, you get the chance to see the work environment of various companies, meet people in your field of interest, and provide you with an opportunity to prove yourself. This can open up possibilities for full-time or permanent opportunities at a later date.

Additional Job Search Support

As mentioned previously, 80% of positions are never posted. This is why it is extremely important to diversify your job search strategy using the information provided above and to continuously network, even when you aren't actively searching for a position.

For additional assistance on job search techniques, please contact the Student, Graduate, & Co-op Employment office at coop@okanagan.bc.ca