

# Creative Job Hunting

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For recent graduates, hunting for jobs can be a thankless and frustrating task. This note is intended to provide some guidance on a speculative approach to job hunting.

The main aim of creative or speculative job hunting is to find the hidden opportunities that are not advertised. These can often be in organisations which are expanding or where a position may be becoming vacant very shortly. On first appearance this may seem to not be an effective use of time but many are pleasantly surprised with the results they get. From survey conducted by the UNC statistics alone 35% of graduates gained employment through speculative methods. When compared to more traditional methods of job hunting, for example using the internet, newspapers and agencies, this method was the most productive.

## Sources of information on hidden vacancies

- **Personal contacts:** Often people you know, or even people they know, have some information about jobs or areas/companies which may be expanding and will be recruiting. These contacts could be friends, relatives, tutors or lecturers, even current job or volunteering contacts can be used.
- **Alumni** (graduate office) information and careers office.
- Local business **news**, **newspapers** and trade/business directories.
- Attending **meetings**, **lectures** and even open **conferences** allows you to make valuable contacts.
- **Agencies** may also have information on organisations that may be looking to employ soon.

## Making and nurturing contacts

Everyone has contacts. No matter how irrelevant you may think some of them are, they all have friends and contacts of their own which could soon become yours.

### *Some tips on doing this are below:*

- Cultivate existing and new contacts by researching who they could know.
- Write letters, but always make a follow-up call.
- Keep good records of who you have contacted and when.
- Arrange visits and/or work shadowing opportunities. For this you must prepare relevant questions.
- Always write a letter of thanks.

### *Questions you may want to ask:*

- How did you get where you are now?
- What is your educational background?
- What skills do you need in your position?
- What talents/training/skills do you look for when employing?
- What is your company structure?
- Can I leave my CV?

## Tips for job-hunting success

- Spend more time job hunting and researching. Employers can always tell if you are sending a generic letter.
- Use and increase your contacts.
- Research companies and organisations.
- Try to arrange face-to-face visits where possible and attend careers fairs/conferences to get yourself noticed.
- Use pleasant persistence.
- Get a support group to help you. If your peers are interested in what you are doing this can be a good tool to cut down the amount of research you do personally as all your information collected can be pooled.