



careers advice pack

4. Your job search: the big picture



The big picture

There is no single 'right' way to look for a job. You'll decide on your own strategy based on what will give you the greatest chance of success, and using approaches that you feel confident in. Most people find that a combination of some or all of the approaches in the list below leads to positive results.

You may be tempted to stick to advertised vacancies and perhaps recruitment agencies for your search because these seem easier. In fact, for most people, it's harder work to get a job through advertised vacancies alone. One reason for this is that there is so much competition for each advertised vacancy (one source estimates that for every advert there will be around 1,500 CVs in circulation); another is that more than half of jobs never get advertised (in fact many believe that as few as one in five jobs is advertised).

Networking and speculative approaches can bring great results as they will help you access the large number of jobs that are 'hidden' from view since they are not advertised. This is particularly true for part time opportunities. Networking can also help you discover new career areas and job ideas. Remember that research is a very important part of your job search.

Ways to job search

- **Advertised vacancies**

Jobs can be advertised online on specialist jobsites, recruitment agencies' websites, or on a company's own website. There are also other sources of advertised jobs such as local notice boards, local online forums and newspapers and magazines.

- **Recruitment agencies**

There are far fewer 'high street' agencies than there used to be, but many more online agencies. Many agencies specialise in particular sectors such as charities, or types of work e.g. part time.



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- **Networking**

Contacting people you know, either through previous work or from elsewhere (e.g. the school gates) to gather information and find opportunities.

- **Speculative approaches**

Contacting organisations which you are interested in working for, but which have not (or not yet) advertised a job.

Part time job opportunities

If you're seeking part time work, remember this is only one aspect of how you will work. Employers advertising a full time vacancy may be willing to consider part time or flexible arrangements. In fact, research by Women Like Us found that 16% of employers have recruited part time candidates into roles that were originally advertised as full time.

So, if you see an ad for a full time job that's a really good fit for your skills and experience, don't be put off. You could call and ask before applying, or apply for the job and then ask for flexibility when you get an offer. Which approach works best will depend on how well qualified you are for the job, and how achievable the job would be if worked on a part time basis.

When negotiating, remember to emphasise the strength of your skills and experience first, and talk about the hours you are available to work second.

Being effective

Getting the job you want takes time and energy. You will have good days and bad days. Many people find that having an action plan and some sort of timetable helps them to focus and achieve their aims. You can also use this as a way of keeping a record of what you have achieved along the way.



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You can download our template for a Jobsearch Action Plan, but here are some ideas to think about now:

- Plan how to use the above job search methods - the percentage of time you will use on each etc.
- Have a timetable.
- Set aside time each week for your job search (arranging childcare if necessary).
- Identify objectives for each week.
- Have a date to achieve objectives.
- Keep a record of your job search activities and monitor progress.
- Assess which methods are working best / producing results.
- Adjust time spent on different methods and give priority to the most effective methods.
- Share your action plan with someone who will support you. Could you speak with them each week to review progress?
- Celebrate successes (e.g. arranging a networking meeting) along the way.
- Review your skills and strengths regularly, as a reminder of the value you bring to a potential employer.
- Check you are keeping up with your plan and doing what you said you would.



Pitfalls to avoid

- Internet recruitment sites and applying online can 'eat' time and be demoralising. If using internet recruitment sites, identify a small number of useful sites and use them as just one part of your job search activities.
- No one gets a positive response to all of their applications or contacts, so being told 'no' is an inevitable part of job searching. Don't let a rejection get you down. Keep any rejections in perspective and remember - it's not personal.
- Job searching takes time and opportunities have a way of coming up when you least expect them. Don't get fed up if you don't get instant results.
- Think twice before you apply for a job. Do you want the job? Is it worth the time and effort of applying or could you better use that time elsewhere in your job search?

Jobs are often filled by someone who doesn't offer everything on the advert, so if you meet most of the main criteria for the role, at least call to find out more. For example, the computer package they want experience of might be something they'll be happy to train you in. Don't be put off by advertisements that seem to be looking for 'superwoman'.