

Job Hunters Guide to Finding Jobs

Unfortunately, as we begin a new year, many Americans are unemployed. This fact coupled with the still recovering economy has made finding a job difficult for many job hunters. This article will help you uncover the hidden job market.

Most good jobs are never posted. Not even in *The Washington Post*. Often, someone quits their job or is terminated and someone who knows someone gets an interview and the recently vacated position. This is called networking and 85% of all jobs are filled this way. It's not a social club; it is a sound business practice. Think about it. If you are a business owner and you have a current vacant position that you need to fill, do you want to interview prospective candidates that you know nothing about or do you want your current good employees to recommend someone to fill the vacancy? This is just good business.

So how does this work for job hunters? As a job hunter you need to be out in the world, shaking hands and meeting people (sounds like you're a political candidate, huh?). Going to job fairs where everyone you meet is unemployed does not count! Instead be creative. How about attending your child's school PTA meetings? What about the local Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce meetings and the Jaycees? Have you attended a local Toastmasters meeting lately? What about associations that are relevant to your industry or area of expertise? Locate who they are and attend meetings. There are even networking groups that meet in the area.

But attending meetings isn't enough. Now comes the hard part! You must actually talk to people and let them know what you do, what you can do for them (or their company) and that you are job hunting. This is called your 30-second commercial or elevator speech. Everyone needs one. This tells others your skills and the valuable contributions you can make to their company in 30 seconds or less. It describes what you have to offer. Remember, everyone has W.I.I.F.M. written on their foreheads. **What's In It For Me** is the question you must answer to all those you meet. Tell them how you can make the company money, expand and grow business, solve their most difficult problem, etc. This is marketing 101 and you are the product. Plan and prepare your 30-second elevator speech – you'll need it for all those meetings you are going to attend.

Have a business card ready to give out. Yes, especially since you don't have a job, you need a contact card. This card should contain your name, telephone number, email and street addresses. If you have a specific title you want you can add that also but be careful this can be limiting and eliminating. For example, I have recently seen human resources titles like Chief Fun Officer, Chief People Organizer, and Chief Knowledge Officer. If you are a Human Resources Executive you might miss a great job opportunity by listing your title. Instead consider a tag line after your name. This could be Proven HR expert, or Dynamic Human Resources Professional with expertise in employee development, benefits and compensation. Create something for them to remember you by.

Consider expanding your search to federal jobs. Living so close to the seat of government has its advantages. There are currently over 16,000 vacant positions listed at www.usajobs.opm.gov the official employment center for the federal government.

Next, make sure all your acquaintances, friends, relatives and former co-workers know you are job hunting. Send everyone on your list a copy of your résumé and make sure they know what you can do for a company and are ready to refer you to others.

Finally, do some cold calling. Is there a local company or business you would like to work for? Then go there with résumé in hand. Ask to see the HR Manager and get them a copy of your résumé. Prepare for this on-the-spot opportunity by doing company research first. Find out the HR Manager's name. Look at the company, what challenges are they currently facing? Can you help them solve an issue or suggest an innovative approach or idea? Prepare your cover letter with the HR Manager's name and relate any ideas you have. Then go knock on doors. Your job hunt should be aggressive and active. Do not sit behind your computer surfing the Internet and posting your résumé on job boards. Determine what you want and go after it. And remember; never, ever give up! The companies with no vacancies this week may have one next week! Happy job hunting!

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