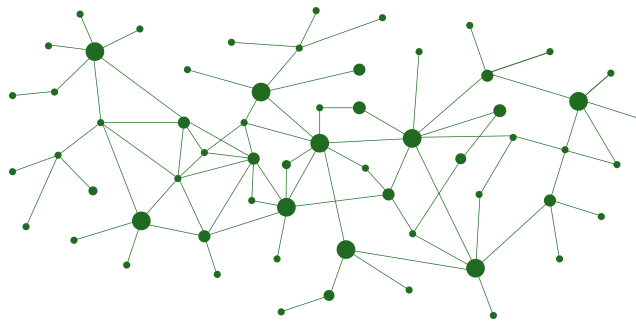


PROACTIVE JOB SEARCHING

Strategies to find your next role

Many job seekers focus on the same limited channels when searching for work. However, a significant portion of opportunities are not advertised through these traditional means, leading to increased competition for a smaller segment of the job market.

Expanding your job search by **adopting a proactive approach can open up opportunities that others may overlook**. This includes exploring lesser-known avenues, diversifying your methods, and leveraging your network effectively. In this handout, we'll guide you through practical techniques to broaden your search, build connections, and develop a personalised strategy. You'll also find space to organise your thoughts and track your progress as you go.



Speculative Approach

Taking a speculative approach means reaching out directly to companies to enquire about potential roles, even if they haven't been advertised. This can be done through a phone call, email, letter, or even an in-person visit. Whatever method you choose, it's essential to make a strong impression by presenting yourself professionally and confidently.

For written approaches, a speculative letter is particularly effective. Similar to a cover letter, it introduces you and outlines the skills and experience you can bring to the organisation. To make your approach more personal and impactful, try to address the letter or email to a specific individual within the company whenever possible.

Before reaching out, take some time to think carefully about the companies you want to approach. Consider factors such as their reputation, values, culture, size, and the opportunities they might offer. This preparation will help ensure your efforts are targeted and aligned with your career goals.

What type of company would you like to work for?

- Think about reputation, values, potential, culture, opportunities, etc.
- Do you prefer older more established companies, with traditional core values and practices? OR A modern, forward-thinking company with flexible practices and a developing culture?
- What size company appeals more to you? Small and close-knit, a large corporation or something in-between.

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What industry would you like to work in?

- Are you specific? i.e., wanting to work as a Transport Planner OR Are you more generic? i.e., wanting to work within the logistics industry.

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Where would you like to work?

- Are you prepared to work away from home?
- How far would you be wanting to commute?
- Would you be travelling by your own vehicle or public transport?
- Is there a particular area that you would like to work? i.e., local big city, rural, country, etc.

Notes:**Are there any companies that you are already keen to work for?**

- Think about companies that you have heard are particularly good employers?
- Also consider the companies that you would not like to work for and why.

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Are there any other factors to consider?

- What companies are moving into your local area or are looking to expand their existing operation?

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Your Network

Networking is a key part of job searching and responsible for a lot of vacancies being filled. This is especially true in certain industries and higher management roles. It follows the old saying of, “it’s not what you know, but who you know”.

A great idea is to tap into your existing contacts, there may well be some gems in there that you did not know about. These people can rarely do anything for you if they do not know that you are looking for work.

It would also be a good idea to increase your network, getting out and about meeting new people can have a lot of benefits, and work is one of them.

Have a think about how you can explore your own network and how you could build this up further.

Who do you interact with on a regular basis? And where?

- Friends and family
- Sports/hobby clubs
- Associations
- Course mates
- Tutors/mentors
- Pubs
- Volunteering
- Social media
- Online groups/forums
- Present/former colleagues

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How can you increase your network?

- Think about some of the options above, do they interest you?
- Careers fairs
- Breakfast clubs
- Networking events
- Training courses
- LinkedIn

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How can you let your network know that you are looking for work?

- Social media
- Phone calls
- Text messages
- Face-to-face chat
- CV handout
- Short video

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Being Proactive

Being proactive can open opportunities that you might not find in your usual job searching. It is about searching in new places and trying different things. Below are a few ideas to get you started.

- **Going direct to company websites:** You will have already started to think about some of the companies that you would like to work for. They often have a vacancy section on their own website, try looking at the bottom of the page. You can keep a regular check on any vacancies that are posted or even sign up for job alerts if they have the option.
- **Google:** This is a great tool, especially when combined with the method above. Do a Google Map search on the area that you would like to work, focusing on your chosen industry. This will highlight all the companies that are in existence and allow you to visit their websites directly.
- **Portfolio:** A portfolio of your work shows that you are organised and serious about what you do. This should be informative and illustrative, with all your contact details included.

Paper copies are great to take along to places like careers fairs and networking events but can be costly. Another idea may be to have an online portfolio that you can share on social/professional media and put a link to on your CV.

- **Keep up to date with the news:** By knowing what is going on in your local area you can stay ahead of others when job searching. A large new housing development will bring employment in the short, medium, and long term. The initial phase will bring construction, project management and the support staff that they require. Medium term you could be looking at sales positions, hosting services or co-ordinating roles. In the longer term there could well be a school, doctors' surgery, shops, eateries, or other businesses to provide for the few thousand new residents.
- **Own business or self-employment:** This is a brave option for a lot of people and although there is a greater element of risk, there are plenty of people who do well out of going on their own. It would always be a good idea to seek advice from people with both good and bad experiences in this field. There is plenty of support available for those who need help with a business plan, whilst you will need to register as a limited company or sole trader.
- **Careers fairs:** These can vary in both quality and focus, but by conducting some research you can avoid a wasted journey. Are you looking for employment or training providers? Are you focusing on specific industries or have you got an open mind? By carrying out a thorough check of the organisations who will be represented you will get a better idea of whether they are what you are looking for. It is always a good idea to take an up-to-date generic copy of your CV when you go and if possible, some business cards with your contact details and skills highlighted. There has also been a recent surge in the number of online careers fairs, which allow you to attend from the comfort of your own home but still access company literature and personnel.
- **Work experience/volunteering:** This is a great option if you are looking to change career direction and have the flexibility to offer your time for free. You can build up your skills and experience, whilst also showing others what you can do. www.do-it.life has a great range of volunteer roles, or you could approach employers directly around gaining some work experience. At the very least they bring your CV up to date in your new profession.
- **LinkedIn:** Very similar to Facebook, but this is professional networking site and not social. You can build up your profile to reflect the same skills and experience that you highlight on your CV, but you can also have people endorse these skills or leave a testimonial.

Adverting your skills/availability: This is especially good for certain roles including bookkeeping, gardening, web design, building trades, cleaning, etc. Some small shops or community notice boards allow you to place an advert for free or a small fee. Leaflet drops around a community or business estate would cost a few pounds to print and the time it takes to deliver them.

- **Newspapers:** Although these do not contain the number of roles that they previously did, they often still have a small number and should not be discounted. The roles advertised will reflect the people who typically read them. The Guardian has a job section that is aimed towards teaching, whereas the Mirror will tend to advertise civil engineering or construction roles.
- **Registering with CV holding sites:** Although the proactive job searching is designed to get people thinking away from the usual job searching places, it is still a good idea to spend time on the likes of Indeed, CV Library, Monster, etc. Have a up to date copy of your CV loaded onto the site as you will get emails/contacts based on the contents of this.

These are just a few ideas to get you going and although they might not all be of interest to you, it is designed to help you broaden your job searching.

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