

# Hidden Job Market

## Network, Network, Network!

According to Amanda Haddaway author of *Destination Real World: Success After Graduation for New and Soon-to-Be College Graduates*, some studies show that up to 80% of job openings aren't advertised on job boards. Instead, these openings are filled by word of mouth advertising.

"It all goes back to that concept of 'six degrees to Kevin Bacon,'" Haddaway says. "We're all connected within six degrees (and some say that's decreased to three or four degrees with social media), so even if your immediate contacts don't have an opening that's a good fit for you, they may have someone in their network who is hiring."

If you're not out there talking to professionals in your network and in your field, you may be missing out on these hidden opportunities, she warns.

## Reach Out to Companies

Another reason to network? Decision makers love to have a 'known candidate:' someone who networked with them before the job was posted (it makes their job so much easier), says Laura Labovich co-author of *100 Conversations for Career Success: Learn to Tweet, Cold Call and Network Your Way to a Dream Job*.

"It may seem counterintuitive," she says, "but, if there's no job open yet, you are even better off!"

Labovich suggests compiling a list of target companies (generally 40 or so is enough for starters) then aiming to get meetings, not interviews, at your target companies. Use LinkedIn and/or Twitter to identify decision makers within your ideal department, and cold call for the department head's name and contact info. You can also draft a networking letter requesting a few minutes of their time, and then follow up with a phone call.

## Open Your Mouth

"Many job seekers are 'shy' about telling their network that they are searching for a new place to work," Kristin Johnson of ProfessionDirection.com. "Don't be; ask your contacts for help. But, don't ask your contacts for a job."

Ask them for ideas of who might be helpful for you to talk to, what companies would be a good match for you, or any tips they can offer, she advises. Make it easy for your network to help you by asking specific questions and telling them precisely what you are hoping for.

## Make Sure You've Got Clear Goals

"First, make sure you are confident, focused, and clear about what you really want to do in the marketplace and what will make you happy," says Shell Mendelson of PassiontoCareer.com. "If you are unclear, talk to a career counselor to help you develop your goal."

Mendelson also suggests talking to someone doing the work you want to do in another town. Take them out to coffee and ask them how they got into the work they are doing and what companies they would recommend you contact and organizations you can join.

Then, of course, follow up with thank-you notes to everyone you spoke with and take inspired action based on information gathered.

## Update Your LinkedIn Profile

“Ensure you have a compelling resume *and* compelling LinkedIn profile,” says Andy Robinson of [AndyRobinsonCoach.com](http://AndyRobinsonCoach.com).

Both of these should “tell the same story,” Robinson says. They should also convey your accomplishments and *how* you’ve added value.

He also suggests joining groups that target company contacts are members of so you can initiate and participate in discussions and dialogue.

Don Goodman of [GotTheJob.com](http://GotTheJob.com) also recommends utilizing your LinkedIn account.

“LinkedIn makes networking easy and you should look for a firm that has access to a database of recruiters so they can identify those who would be interested in you and get your resume in front of the right people,” Goodman says.

## Connect With Your Colleagues

Lisa Adams of [FreshAirCareers.com](http://FreshAirCareers.com) suggests connecting with your contacts that are one or two levels from you.

“Work through them for opportunities where they are or opportunities they many know about,” Adams says. “Working through your contacts into an opportunity or discussing with them what you want to accomplish (your target role and the value you can bring) is more effective than applying cold.”

Another way to approach a contact is to discuss the industry and what is happening in it, she says. Become familiar with the latest and greatest news in the industry and discuss it with them.

## Get a Little Help from Your Friends

“Talk to your friends and relatives, and ask them if there are any positions opening up that they’ve heard about,” Ben Eubanks of [UpstartHR.com](http://UpstartHR.com) says. “Honestly, that’s the easiest way to do it. Though if you are more proactive, you might have more success than just asking and being passive.”

Eubanks suggests asking for people to contact you if they hear of openings you might be a fit for if you want to get a little more involved.

“I’ve even heard stories of job seekers offering a referral bonus to friends (\$50 gift card to a restaurant, for example) if they refer them to a job and end up being hired,” he says.

## Realize There’s No Such Thing as the ‘Hidden’ Job Market

“The first career reality one needs to face and totally understand is that the ‘hidden job market’ does not exist,” says career expert Jordan Anderson. “Rather, the way to look at today’s job market is that the proverbial **‘hidden job market’** *is the job market*! It’s the skill of the [job seeker](#) to turn what used to be classified as ‘hidden’ into a ‘live and breathing opportunity.’”

## **Go for the Informational Interview**

Roshni Kumar of CareerLighthouse.net says informational interviews can help you gain perspective of the market that is not actually hidden in the real sense.

“I cannot stress more on taking the informational interview path,” says Kumar. ”This would also help to narrow down the roles you have been thinking of getting into but not getting leads (sales terminology for getting prospects).”

## **Put Yourself Out There**

Bud Bilanich, author of *Climbing The Corporate Ladder* says companies with vacancies want to fill them with strong candidates, so you need to let them know you are available.

“Don’t passively apply for jobs online,” says Bilanich. ”Go out and locate the jobs in which you can make a contribution.”