



## Unit 3

## Approaches for Job Searching

### Learning Outcomes

**By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:**

- ✓ Apply different approaches to job searching, such as networking and tapping into the hidden job market.

## Unit 3

### Approaches for Job Searching

#### The Job Market

##### Job Searching Means Action!

Job searching has changed over the years to reflect an actively moving labor market. That means that job seekers experiment with a range of approaches in order to find what works best with their targeted industry and employers.

One of the key elements to remember is that looking for work is an activity. This means that people who actively seek work find jobs. People who rely on passive approaches often spend a much longer time looking, and may never find what they really want.

Have you ever heard the phrase “pounding the pavement?” This refers to walking up and down the street (your feet literally pounding the pavement) to find a job. Although we have many more tools at our disposal today to conduct a job search, the essence of this phrase remains the same; in order to find a job, you must actively look. Finding a new job is a job in itself.

Around the world, many jobs are not advertised. Companies rely on word of mouth, look back over resumes submitted on previous jobs or unsolicited, they use headhunters and recruiting agencies, but they do not necessarily advertise in the papers or the Internet. These unadvertised jobs usually exist in much greater numbers than advertised positions, and make up what we call the hidden job market.

Unfortunately, this is the order of effort that most people dedicate to their job search:

- Help wanted ads
- Employment agencies
- Placement agencies
- Word of mouth
- Direct employer contact

On the other hand, this is the order of priority that employers use to look for candidates:

- Internal networks
- Job postings (detailed listings on their own websites or external sites)
- External networks
- Placement agencies
- Want ads

## Networking

When you are ready to look for work, tell a friend and ask that friend to help you spread the word. That first friend tells two friends, who each tell two friends, and suddenly the network takes off. This ripple effect is why it is so important that you know what you want and what you offer. Already, you have seven people who know that you are looking for work, and what you want.

Leads are more likely to come to you from a friend of a friend, rather than through the first friend that you told. For example, a truck driver wants to drive for a new company, and mentions this to his friend. The friend knows the safety officer at a well-respected company, and mentions that he knows a driver looking for a new opportunity. The safety manager mentions it to the hiring manager, and away you go.

While you are networking, it is very important to stay positive. Use phrases like, “I am actively seeking a new opportunity,” to remind yourself that you are looking for something new and interesting. Do not get caught in a negativity trap and grumble or complain about your previous employers. No one wants to hire a negative or toxic person. Remember that you are relying on a network, so keep your contributions to the network upbeat and positive.

Knowing who your network is will help you to get started. The ideas here will help you to develop your personal networking list.

## Your Contacts

### People you know:

- Family, relatives, friends
- Neighbors
- Teachers, instructors, professors
- Friends you haven't seen in a while, like former classmates
- Parents of your children's friends

### People in the community:

- Shop owners, postal workers

- Doctors, lawyers, accountants
- Dentists, bankers, brokers, mechanics, hairstylists
- Children's teachers or coaches
- Workshop participants, speakers, guests at special occasions

**People in the target business area:**

- Employers
- Past employers, past co-workers, and colleagues
- Company employees
- Past customers, clients
- Competitors

**Other organizations:**

- Professional or job related associations
- Job clubs and support groups
- Church and community groups
- Volunteer coordinators, recreation groups
- Unions



**The Hidden Pieces**

When you are actively looking for work, everyone you meet is a potential lead. That may seem daunting if you do not have a large social network, but it is a key element of networking. Even if you have a small group of friends, practice will help you get comfortable talking to people that you don't know very well, just as this workshop will.

**Manage Your Reputation**

Since you are relying on friends and acquaintances to help you locate work, make sure that you handle yourself well. This means that you develop and maintain a reputation as someone that does excellent work, is reliable, trustworthy, punctual, etc. Your friends will have a hard time recommending or asking questions on your behalf if you are not someone worthy of working with.

**Volunteer**

Many organizations rely on volunteers, and this can be an excellent way for you to become known in the community and to expand your skills at the same time. The added benefit is that you get to give back to your community.

## Do Your Research

Read the news, investigate companies, and do your homework to learn about companies that interest you or are in your area. Check their websites (and their career postings on those sites) while you develop an idea of what they are like, who their clients are, or why you would want to work for them.

Sources of job leads can include these ideas, in addition to the ones we covered earlier:

- Phone book (Yellow Pages) for listings, even if you don't use them much otherwise.
- Business directories (public libraries and online).
- Chamber of commerce, service clubs, organizations specific to your occupation or industry.
- Employers (you can apply directly without suggestions or referrals).
- Private employment agencies.
- Newspapers, but not just the want ads, of course. Read the financial pages, business news, and articles about projects, business growth, government announcements, etc. Check local papers and national ones.
- Governments and associations – registering for and arranging public service exams.
- Union halls.
- School, college, and university placement offices for recent graduates.
- Professional and trade journals.
- The Internet.

And by asking a key question: “Can you suggest other places that I should call/check?”

Staff Training Solutions

## Self-Promotion

When you are working the hidden job market, you are promoting yourself. Do it happily and shamelessly to get the job you want. Take advantage of computers and desktop publishing software to create a business card or postcard (because you won't be carrying your resume everywhere you go, but you could manage a postcard). Imagine a postcard that advertises who you are and what you can do. Make sure you aren't shrinking your entire resume onto the card; leave plenty of empty space or even superimpose the text over a picture of a project you completed (or in this case, perhaps a favorite classic vehicle). Here is an example:

## **Michael Rimbey**

Certified automotive technician

Eight years of industry experience, Red Seal qualified

Up-to-date first aid, safety leadership, and computer training

Punctual, professional, with attention to detail and keen sense of humor

Seeking interesting opportunity in my field, within 30 minutes of the Anytown metro area.

**Create your own postcard here:**



### **Why Does the Market Hide?**

The hidden job market is simply made up of job vacancies that are not conventionally advertised. Employees retire, resign, go on medical leave, have children, and so on. Employers don't always advertise because doing so can be very expensive. They may receive large volumes of unsuitable applications, and so they are willing to miss out on some candidates in order to let the hidden market work for them.

The advantages of the hidden job market for the job seeker include:

- Learning about openings before they are well known or advertised.
- Less competition since you will be one of the few people aware of an opening.

## Invite Your Network

### Identifying Your Network

Using your network to tap into the hidden job market takes a bit of practice. If you know which job or company you want, don't call them first. Make a couple of practice calls to work through any nervousness or to improve the questions that you ask. Know what you want to say before you say it.

### Getting Started

To get started, identify at least three names and phone numbers for each column. You can add to the list as you continue to network. If you do not know many people for the third column (for example, people in the target business area), ask your friends for suggestions. You can also look up companies in a library copy of the local business directory, use online information, or visit your local labor market (job club) office to conduct some research.

| People I Know | People in the Community | People in the Target Business Area | Other Organizations |
|---------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
|               |                         |                                    |                     |
|               |                         |                                    |                     |
|               |                         |                                    |                     |
|               |                         |                                    |                     |

In order to keep the momentum going and not slip back into old habits, you will need to start using this networking list within the next few days.

## Asking Questions

### Helpful Tips

Be specific and polite about what you are asking your contacts to do, and don't drive them crazy with your requests, or you will not find them very helpful. Select one or two of the following that are the best for them to help you. For example:

- Pass on any job leads that they hear about.
- Let you know if they hear that someone is quitting or taking an extended leave of absence.
- Pass on business cards or postcards for you.
- Provide you with helpful information, such as the name of a department head.
- Talk to their supervisor about you.
- Tell other people that you are looking.
- Suggest other places to apply.
- Introduce you to additional contacts.
- Help you to practice your networking calls.

### Developing a Script

When you make networking calls, having a script ready will help you to include everything that you need. Practice your script several times before calling and be sure to be open to feedback from your colleagues or friends about what you are saying. (Do you need a glass of water? Would it help to speak more slowly, more softly, more firmly, etc.?)

#### Step One

Introduce yourself using your first and last name.

#### Step Two

Provide your connection to the person you are speaking to, like the name of your mutual friend or colleague who provided their name, or where you met this person in the past.

#### Step Three

Let them know you are looking for a new opportunity or a new position in the field. Try not to sound desperate or needy. You could mention why you are looking (end of contract, seasonal work, laid off), but keep the tone pleasant and positive. For example:

- “I am looking for a new opportunity in the computer programming field.”
- “I am an experienced baker currently working in a bread line; however, I specialize in pastries and cakes and would love to get back into that area again.”

#### **Step Four**

Give a brief description of your skills and experience. This is your marketing pitch, so again, keep it pleasant and positive.

#### **Step Five**

Explain why you have called them for help. Perhaps they are active in the community and have lots of contacts, or they work in your field and might be able to suggest helpful leads, or they work at a company that you are interested in.

Ask for their help in just one or two areas from the list at the beginning of this section. Be specific about what it is that you want.

#### **Step Six**

Ask them if there is a good time for you to call them back and follow up, if it's appropriate. Here are two phrases you can use:

- “Can I call you back next week to follow up?”
- “When would be a good time for me to call you back?”

Make sure that you call them back; write it in your planner to ensure you remember your commitment.

#### **Step Eight**

After the call, or after you receive a lead from someone, it is always a good idea to send them a quick note. Depending on your relationship with them, this could be a quick e-mail, but keep in mind that in this day and age, people appreciate a personal touch. A handwritten note saying something like, “Thank you for your time in my job search efforts,” can mean a lot.

#### **Tracking Form**

Here is a form you can use to practice and brush up on your script. If you find that some statements don't work very well, make sure that you change them to reflect your personal circumstances and style.

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|--|--|--|
| <b>Name of person called</b>   | P. Lewis, VP Sales<br>902.212.1111<br>September 5 @ 2 PM |  |
| <b>Introduction (name your connection)</b>   | X  |  |
| <b>Looking for a new job (and maybe why)</b>   | X  |  |
| <b>Your experience and skills</b>  | X  |  |
| <b>Why you are calling them for help</b>   | X  |  |
| <b>Ask for their help in one or two areas:</b>   |  |  |
| Pass on any job leads that they hear about.  |  |  |
| Let you know if they hear that someone is quitting or taking an extended leave of absence. |  |  |
| Pass on business cards or postcards for you.   |  |  |
| Provide you with helpful information, such as the name of a department head.               | X  |  |
| Talk to their supervisor about you.  |  |  |
| Tell other people that you are looking.  |  |  |
| Suggest other places to apply.   | X  |  |
| Introduce you to additional contacts.  |  |  |
| Help you to practice your networking calls.  |  |  |
| <b>Arrange follow-up call</b>  | Sept. 12   |  |
| <b>Send a note</b>   | X  |  |

## Ready, Set, Goal!

### Setting Work Goals

Knowing exactly what your goals are is very important – not just so that you reach your goals, but also so that you know what you are supposed to be focusing on! At the moment, you may only have a vague idea of what jobs you want to target. Working on some goal setting can help you to narrow down your options or help you find more information.

Goal setting can be a huge task, but it can be made manageable through a strategic approach. Setting goals is also about follow through, and setting priorities is an important component in goal setting.

There are lots of studies available that will show you the importance of goal setting. We also know that people who set goals achieve more and are happier than people who don't. We have also learned that you cannot simply state a goal and wait for it to come true. Achievable goals have certain characteristics, and for you to be truly satisfied with the results, you have to be the CEO of your goals.

When you are setting your goals, you need a tool that work for you. We love the one below, which you can adapt easily to your job search.

### SPIRIT

Any large goal should be written with SPIRIT, and broken into several small, achievable goals that will help you get where you want to go. Good goals should have SPIRIT!

#### Specific

Be specific about what you want or don't want to achieve. The result should be tangible and measurable. "Find a job" is pretty ambiguous; "Identify 10 potential employers in my target market" is specific.

#### Prizes

Reward yourself at different points in the goal, particularly if it's long term. If your goal is to reach out and personally call ten people in your network and let them know what kind of work you are looking for, then you might download a new song by your favorite band as soon as you are finished.

#### Individual

The goal must be something that you want to do. If your spouse wants you to get a new job because you seem unhappy with the present one, and you're actually okay with it, you're not going to want to work towards the goal.

**Review**

Review your progress periodically. Does the goal make sense? Are you stuck? Do you need to adjust certain parts of it?

**Inspiring**

Frame the goal positively. Make it fun to accomplish. You could make a poster of the end result, frame it, and post it on the wall.

**Time-Bound**

Give yourself a deadline for achieving the goal. Even better, split the goal into small parts and give yourself a deadline for each item.

**Your Goals**

Using the six characteristics of achievable goals and your career goals and life purpose as you know it to be, write at least five goals for yourself. Be sure to check each goal against the criteria listed.

Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- What would you like to accomplish in the next 90 days related to your work?
- What would you like to accomplish in the next year related to your work?

**Goal One**

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**Goal Two**

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**Goal Three**

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**Goal Four**

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**Goal Five**

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**Fine-Tuning Goals**

In order to achieve our goals, we need to focus on them. Some people do this by creating an affirmation that they repeat each day; others carry their list of goals in their wallet or day timer. Still others create a visualization board with pictures of their goals and hang it near their computer or on their fridge.

**What ideas do you have to help you stay on track with your own goals?**

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**Take it Away!**

Setting goals can be overwhelming, especially if they are particularly big ones. For each of the five goals you listed in the previous section, consider the particular steps that are involved in each goal, and then list them as action steps below. If you have more than five action steps for one goal, you may need to look at your goals again and make them smaller and more manageable in order to keep them in focus.

If all of your goals are equally important, or you start them or plan to finish them all on the same day, they can quickly become unrealistic. Do your best to be practical as you go through this next exercise. You may find it helpful to use a blank piece of paper to do your thinking and then transfer your plans to this template.

| Goal (in brief) | Action Steps (no more than five) | Time to Start/Finish |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
|                 |                                  |                      |
|                 |                                  |                      |
|                 |                                  |                      |
|                 |                                  |                      |
|                 |                                  |                      |

## Thinking Unconventionally to Get What You Want

### Without Convention

There are many ways that you can think about work. The important thing to keep in mind is that in order to do the work that we love, we have to also consider the environment we live in, the realities of the job market, and the things we want to do most.

You may be used to thinking that people in artistic careers may work more than one job to make ends meet; it may surprise you to know that many people work more than one job in order to do the things that they love to do, not simply to make a living. For example, you may not think it is unusual for an actor or writer to work in a restaurant or as a teacher to pay the bills, and then pursue acting and writing on the side. In this way, they make a living and also live their dreams.

If your dream job cannot pay you the salary you need, it's okay to combine it with other options. If you love working in the service industry, for example, but find it hard to stand on your feet for long periods, you might be able to manage part-time service industry work with a part-time administrative or driving job that lets you get off your feet.

Is your perfect job within your reach, or do you need some additional skills? We briefly mentioned volunteering earlier, but you may also consider taking short courses and workshops, or returning to

school either part or full time. If you need training before undertaking your dream job, what will that look like and what is your plan to get where you want to be?

Approximately one in ten people currently looking for work would like to start their own business. Are you that one in ten? If so, you'll need to gather information or attend a course on business plan writing, licensing, etc. If you have a good idea, excellent skills, and are a risk-taker, self-employment or entrepreneurship could be just the thing.

**Brainstorm ways that you could approach your work unconventionally.**

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### **Working to Get What We Want**

If we expect to find a job, we have to control our own job search and go out and get after the job we want. Thinking about it, planning it, and doing all the necessary research and networking will contribute to finding the job that we want. Of course there are other factors as well (such as economics, geography, family circumstances, or health) that can affect our job search.

**Brainstorm a list of the keys to finding work.**

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## **Getting Things Moving**

### **My Next Steps**

\_\_\_\_\_ 's Plan for a Successful Job Search

(Participant's name)

**Define your target job or position.**

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**List your five strongest skills for the job search process.**

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**What kind of help do you need? Who will you ask? Where will you go?**

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**Write down three skills that you would like to develop further in order to be ready to pound the pavement. These may include developing a resume/portfolio, answering questions about your employment history, mastering the interview, finding out more about training/education, or practicing networking skills.**

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**Outline three steps you will take in the next three months to help you reach your target job.**

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**Identify your own mentor or coach – someone you will share your goals with that will help keep you on track. This could be a friend, partner, colleague, or career development professional. Write their phone number down too, so that you can easily call them and let them know about your action plan.**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Sign here as your commitment to your plan

\_\_\_\_\_  
Today's Date

Your first review date of this plan \_\_\_\_\_ (30 days from now)

Your second review date of this plan \_\_\_\_\_ (60 days from now)

Completion date \_\_\_\_\_ (90 days from now)

