



Job Search Guide

Getting the job that's right for you... fast!

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Career Direction and Advancement Program

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Table of Contents

PREFACE.....	2
Benefits.....	2
INTRODUCTION TO THE JOB SEARCH	3
KEY QUESTION 1 - WHAT DO YOU WANT?	4
KEY QUESTION 2 - WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER?	7
KEY QUESTION 3 - WHAT ARE YOUR JOB TARGETS?	10
KEY QUESTION 4 - HOW CAN YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN?	12
The Seven Job Search Strategies	12
1. Direct Contact.....	14
2. Focused Direct Contact.....	17
3. Personal and Strategic Networking.....	19
4. Door Opening – short-term and volunteer work.....	21
5. Job Advertisement Response – print & online media.....	23
6. Employment agencies	25
7. Direct Mail – “Machine gun resume”	26
JOB SEARCH TIPS	27

Preface

This Complete Job Search Guide provides powerful strategies, tips, and resources to enable you to find rewarding work in a world of change.

Be aware that work does not equal a job. I almost called this a “Work Search” guide and not a “Job Search” guide. Rewarding full-time permanent jobs are expected to become increasingly rare in the future. Many will not be well paid. You should consider also developing other options such as consultancy work, contract work, and strategic alliances with profit sharing arrangements when possible.

Benefits

It is now normal to change jobs every 3 to 5 years. What this means to you is that you need to become an expert in managing your job search.

If you consistently apply the skills, attitudes and knowledge introduced by this program benefits can include:

- A change to a better job
- A more personally rewarding work life
- Reduced periods of unemployment or underemployment
- Enhanced confidence and career security from improved job search skills you can use throughout your work life
- Better long-term financial rewards



Introduction to the Job Search

The job search strategies, skills, attitudes and knowledge within this guide are vital to your success but are rarely taught at school or even university. **These skills and techniques have both broad long-term rewards and immediate practical benefits.** For example, more than 60% of jobs are never advertised. Relying only on Seek.com.au (or even worse – the local newspaper) is one of the least effective ways to get work.

To effectively expand your job search beyond advertised positions you need to know what you really want and are suited to so that you can then implement an effective multi-strategy job search plan.

In developing your job search plan you need to address four key questions:

1. What do you want?
2. What do you have to offer?
3. What are your job targets?
4. How can you make it happen?

This guide will help you find your answers to these questions.

Becoming a great job searcher will give you improved confidence in your career and ensure that you don't stay in an unsuitable or poorly rewarded position just because you think you can't find a better job.

Key Questions 1 -3 are dealt with in more depth in the *Career Direction Guide*... but if you are in a hurry to get a job this manual is sufficient.

Key Question 1 - What do you want?

Many people don't think enough about what they really want to do. It is vital for your job search that you identify what you want and why. Knowing clearly what you want is important for two reasons:

1. **Search focus** - it helps you more tightly focus your job search which is essential for some job search strategies as we will see.
2. **Self-marketing** – whether via the telephone, your resume, or an interview, employers are more impressed by applicants who know what they want and why they want to work for their organization.

The Career Direction Guide (Steps 2 and 3) goes into the process of personal stocktaking in depth. The quick process I recommend for the job seeker in a hurry is as follows:

Long-term goals

Write some sentences here describing what you want from your career in the long-term:

For example:

“To reach a senior position in an accounting firm where I can comfortably support my family while helping my clients and mentoring my less senior colleagues.” Or

“Develop my own profitable business which provides valuable services and allows me to play a positive role in my community.” Or

“A well-paid job in the tourism industry which allows me time for my family and sport.”

Yours may be completely different. These are just to get you started thinking. Think about a goal statement that includes your financial, ethical, social, health and creative needs.

Your Next Job

1. **Brainstorm** – what you want and don't want in your *next job*

Write freely and rapidly, in no particular order, in the table on the next page everything you want in your next job and everything you don't want. You can edit it later.

When writing your list of “wants” and “don’t wants” consider areas such as:

- Types of work you enjoy
- Co-workers and customers you like to work with
- Size and type of organization you prefer (eg. small business, international corporation, medium size business, and local, state, or federal government)
- Contribution you would like to make to others
- Geographic areas you would consider
- Earnings, holidays and working conditions
- Acceptable levels of responsibility, reward, stress and risk
- Opportunities for promotion, professional development, independence, change and variety and creative expression
- Lifestyle and family commitments

YOUR NEXT JOB

WHAT YOU WANT	WHAT YOU DON'T WANT

2. Select the VIPs (very important points)

Now go back and **tick (or highlight) the most important wants and don't wants**. Aim for between 5 and 10 of each.

3. Rank them in order of importance

Number them according to their importance to you and then **list them in order in the table below**.

VIP WANTS (in order of importance)	VIP DON'T WANTS
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

Congratulations! You have now clearly identified what you are looking for in your next job.

You will, of course, **need to make trade-offs when considering job options as no job is likely to meet every one of your wants completely**. However this is a useful starting point for targeting your job search. You can use it as a **job evaluation checklist** to refer to when considering options.

Key Question 2 - What do you have to offer?

The answer to this question is the **foundation of your self-marketing efforts and also helps you to target your job seeking**. There is some solid work involved in answering this question but persevere, as it will be very helpful later.

Some people may find it easier or more useful to do this exercise as it relates to a specific job target.

First we will look at your achievements and then your learnt skills, natural abilities and knowledge.

Achievements

Almost all employers will want to know your past achievements. For those with prior work experience the focus should be on **what benefits you have brought to previous employers**. If you are just completing your education then focus on academic and extra-curricular achievements.

Brainstorm and list below as many of your achievements as you can think of. Write freely. Any achievement you think of at this time should be recorded.

Brainstorm and list your achievements:	
Work related	Education related
	Other

Natural Strengths

Substantial research has shown that the more you can use your natural strengths in your work the more happy and successful you will be at it. We tend to go into a **state of “flow”** when using our strengths.

Now take some time to reflect and remember the times that you were most absorbed in your work or some project or activity. You may find that time seemed to pass quickly as you found the task so interesting.

“FLOW” EXPERIENCES

Brainstorm and list times, projects or activities you found most absorbing or fulfilling. These are productive activities that you tend to like doing and do well.

--	--

The next step is to analyse the list of flow experiences above and your list of achievements and from them identify your natural strengths.

Natural strengths are crucial in identifying future job options. Strengths tend to be transferable to different occupations. Natural strengths are NOT the same thing as learnt skills, although there may be some overlap.

Learnt skills tend to be more past oriented. They tell us where we have been, not where we can go:

- **Natural strengths** – your talents and competencies for which you have an innate aptitude or gift
- **Learnt skills** – specific skills, often of a technical nature, that you have gained by experience or training

Based on a review of your listed achievements and your list of flow experiences, you can now list as many as possible of your natural strengths.

Just have a go now. There are many ways to describe strengths. If you want some more ideas after writing your own, you can Google [strengths wiki](#) and read the different lists of strengths under the “Now, Discover your Strengths” and “Character Strengths and Virtues” links.

YOUR NATURAL STRENGTHS: (Brainstorm possibilities based on your achievements and flow experiences)	

Now tick or highlight the top 12 above. Then in the table below list them in order of preference and strength.

TOP 12 NATURAL STRENGTHS	
1.	7.
2.	8.
3.	9.
4.	10.
5.	11.
6.	12.

Consider these strengths when choosing job targets. You can also refer to this list and your achievements list whenever you need ideas for cover letters, inquiry letters, resumes, selection criteria responses and preparing for interviews.

Key Question 3 - What are your job targets?

You now need to get clear on the work options you are targeting and what is available out there.

To do this, **review** your conclusions from the “what you want” and “what you have to offer” sections and **list all the jobs that you think *might* suite you.**

Brainstorm and list your work options

Tick (or highlight) the work options which you are most interested in. The resources on the next page can help you decide which options look best. They may also suggest some new ideas.

Also be alert to unexpected options that are compatible with many of your wants. In our rapidly changing economy we cannot foresee some of the best opportunities. **As you apply some of the job search strategies you can often come across options you hadn't identified but may suit you.**

If you find you are still unsure about what you want to do then you need to work through “The Complete Career Guide” which comes with this program.

Job Option Resources

Government websites

To help you identify type of jobs which may suite you, you can search the government website at:

www.myfuture.edu.au

It provides an in-depth look at a range of occupations, and their education and training pathways as well as useful contact details for more detailed information about each occupation.

Click "**the facts**" tab. In the "Work and Employment" box click on "**Occupations**." You can now browse in a number of ways or search by different categories. Consider particularly "Duties," "Personal Requirements," "JobOutlook" under Labour Market (click on "Job Prospects" on the next screen), some specific "Vacancies," "Related Courses" and "Further Information."

Job Outlook

For broad information on job prospects for different occupations go to:

<http://joboutlook.gov.au>

You can search for specific occupations, categories of occupations. Don't be overly influenced by this information as the techniques in this guide can help you successfully secure whatever jobs do exist. Plus job availability varies greatly at the local level. As it says on the jobsearch website, their predictions "*may not apply to individual job seekers or to particular regions.*"

Other resources

Seek.com can give you an idea of the types of jobs readily available in your area plus you can do Australia-wide searches to learn more about certain types of jobs.

Many people forget to consider the Not for Profit sector: www.ethicaljobs.com.au www.nfpjobs.com.au and www.probonoaustralia.com.au/jobs .

The "**Yellow Pages**" **directory** can also help you identify what employers are out there in the area you are interested.

People

Talking to people in different industries is one of the best ways to get specific, up-to-date information on the possibilities in your local area. This is called information interviewing or networking and is explained in detail in Step 4 of the Complete Career Guide.

NEVER decide on a long course of career preparation study without first talking to a couple of people working in the area you are considering targeting.

Add any new ideas to your list on the previous page and number these job options in order of preference. You can always change the order later as you learn more.

Key Question 4 - How can you make it happen?

The Seven Job Search Strategies

You have now prepared your job search foundation: you know what you want, you know what you have to offer, and you know what you are looking for.

You are now ready to develop and implement your job search plan. There are seven major job search strategies:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Direct contact | } | Hidden Job Market
60 – 70% of jobs |
| 2. Focused direct contact | | |
| 3. Personal and strategic networking | | |
| 4. Door opening – short term and volunteer work | | |
| 5. Job advertisements (newspaper & online) | } | Advertised Job Market
30 – 40% of jobs |
| 6. Employment agencies | | |
| 7. Direct mail – “Machine gun resume” | | |

The first four strategies target the hidden or unadvertised job market while the fifth and sixth strategy target the advertised job market. The seventh strategy doesn't really target any market effectively but is included for perspective (as a warning!).

Most job seekers focus on the advertised job market which only has 30 – 40% of the total number of jobs filled in any one month. Hence it is **common to have between well over 100 applicants responding to an advertised position**. There are **two implications**:

- Only apply for advertised positions when you come **close to matching** what they are looking for.
- Your chances of success are often **better in the hidden job market** - less people chasing more jobs.

The **importance of giving priority to the hidden job market** is demonstrated in the following table which compares the employer's job creation perspective with your job search perspective.

Employer's Situation	Your Situation
1. Employer becomes vaguely aware of a need or problem within their organization	This is an excellent time to approach the employer via any of strategies 1-4.
2. Employer realises that they need someone to fill this need and do the work involved	This is the ideal time to be approaching the employer

1. Direct Contact

Direct contact approaches are well suited to job searches when you have a large number of potentially suitable employers. There are three main ways of making direct contact with potential employers:

Call

Using the relevant sections of Yellow Pages online call every potential employer, ask for the manager of the company or the department you are interested in, *briefly* introduce yourself and what you have to offer and ask if you could come in and discuss their needs and how you may be able to contribute in the future.

You need to adapt the words to your situation and personality but it might go something like this:

Hi. I'm Jane Brown and I'm a CPA with 3 years corporate accounting experience. I'm looking for contract or permanent work at the moment. If you think there is any chance you may need some temporary or permanent help in the next six months I'd like to come in and talk with you briefly about it.

You are not trying to tell them every thing about yourself and sell yourself over the phone. **You just want to get them interested enough to agree to meet with you** for 20 minutes in the next two weeks.

Don't worry if they end up offering you temporary or contract work which doesn't suit you. You can always politely decline.

Keep track of your calls and responses. You can **print out the relevant section from the online Yellow Pages** (www.yellowpages.com.au) as it is more up-to-date and gives you more white space to write notes on the page. Get yourself mentally prepared with your content and a positive attitude. Once you gain momentum **call as many employers as you can in one sitting.**

This phone call approach is far more effective than mailing a resume to an employer, however it takes more courage as they may say "no thanks." **Be one of the few with the courage and you'll be more successful.**

Call – send – call

A variation on the targeted phone calls above is to **call first and just ask for the name of the manager, correct position title and address.** You can say that you have some information you need to send them. Make sure you get the correct spelling for the person's name.

Then send them a **concise one-page enquiry letter** expressing your interest in working with them. Highlight your main achievements, skills, natural abilities and/or knowledge that may make you attractive to them (**see Sample Letter on page 19** and the Letters section in this manual for samples).

Don't send a resume and don't try to tell them everything - just enough to get them interested in talking with you. The only exception to the no resume rule is if you have a very strong, highly polished resume which you have had three people check and review for you. At the end of the letter thank them for their attention

and say that you will call them within 3 business days. Send the letter using an A4 envelope as larger envelopes tend to be opened first. For added attention you could express mail it.

Make a note to yourself in your diary to call them on the appropriate day. When you call **ask for the manager by name in a confident manner**. You will normally be put straight through.

If asked the purpose of your call just say that it regarding some information about your services which you sent the manager recently. When you get the manager on the phone **use the same approach as in the Call method above** - introduce yourself, refer to the letter and ask if you can make an appointment to come in to briefly discuss how your services may be of use to them in the future on a temporary or permanent basis.

The structure of this approach means that you will often get through to decision makers you would not have reached on the phone using the previous targeted phone call approach. They may also be better disposed to talk to you since they should have already read something positive and concise about you.

If you don't want to send information but you don't know exactly who you should be talking to you may wish to do a **Call – Call approach**. Make the first call to find out who the relevant person is and the second call later that day to reach them directly.

Walk in

This is one of the boldest approaches and is particularly suited to those seeking **blue collar and entry-level work**. If you present yourself as someone who is appropriately dressed (neat) and highly motivated you will be remembered far more positively than any of the 150 resumes sitting on the desk saying nothing.

I have heard several personal stories of people, looking for an entry-level job, walking up one side of a major street and down the other and having a job by the end of the day.

You can adapt the words but try something like this:

Hi! I'm George Black and I'm currently looking for work (fill in the blank). Could you please let your manager know I'd like to speak with them briefly.

Have a copy of your resume (brief version) or a one-page enquiry letter with you and leave it with them if there is a possibility they may need staff on a temporary or permanent basis.

If you don't have enough printed resumes you can always ask for their email address, which is normally on their business card these days, and **email them a resume**. Emailing the resume later has the advantage of giving you the chance to customize the resume content to suit their needs, which you now may know if you had the chance to ask them.

Call–Send–Call Sample Letter – Basic Level

Assisting You With All Your Customer Service Needs

J a n e S a m p l e

2 Smith Avenue, Buderim, Q., 4556. Mob: 0451 00000
Email:

John Smith
Tavern Manager
XYZ Tavern
11 Brown Street
Woombye Q. 4555

30 March 2011

Dear John

If you think you might need any administration support staffing in the next 6 months then I would love to have a quick chat to you about it.

I am currently available for full-time, part-time or temporary roles.

I have 10 years experience and training in administration in the banking sector plus a year's experience providing admin support specifically for the hospitality sector (**see attached reference**).

My recent position with ***“Springlands Tavern”*** included:

- Cash Handling (banking & petty cash - large sums)
- Payroll
- Month-end and weekly reports for gaming machines
- Bank Reconciliation
- General Accounting including accounts payable & receivable
- Waitressing in the restaurant when back-up required

I am flexible, efficient, hard-working, reliable and keen to work! I was trusted with all keys including the safe in my previous position. I am permanently based on the coast (we are paying off a house).

I am also fluent in English, Mandarin, Cantonese and Malay.

I will call you in the next couple of days to see if you'd like to briefly meet me. Or feel free to contact me anytime (0451 000000).

Even if you don't need help right now I'd appreciate the chance to meet you and receive any advice you have to offer.

I realise you must be busy and will not waste your time!

Best regards

Jane Sample

2. Focused Direct Contact

This is the “**Rolls Royce**” of job search strategies for targeting the employers you most want to work for. This strategy uses some of the approaches from the **Direct Contact method above in combination with more intensive research and preparation** for making contact.

It is the **ideal strategy to use if** your self-assessment and options research clearly suggest a **limited number of desirable organizations**. For example if you are a pilot you may decide you really want to work for Qantas or Virgin airlines. A town planner may want to work for the local council or a small number of consulting firms. A salesperson may develop a short list of companies that produce products they believe in strongly enough to want to sell.

The main idea is that you consciously select a limited number of employers which based on your research will be the best employers for you to work for. They may have the best products, promotion opportunities, training programs, company culture, working conditions, and/or pay rates.

Your research may be a combination of reading journals, newspapers and the internet as well as talking to people in the field. You then learn as much as you can about your targeted organizations via the internet, a helpful librarian, observing their products and networking. Analyse their problems and needs. Think how could you make a difference in some way? What could you offer them?

Then work out the **best way to approach the person who actually has the power to hire you**. It will probably be one of these two approaches:

1. **A referral** (personal and strategic networking) from someone you know to someone who works in the organization. The call might go something like:

*“Hello. **Brian Wilson suggested I give you a call** regarding your fleet management needs. I have a strong background in fleet management and am currently researching my employment options. Brian thought it might be worth us getting together to have a chat. Could we meet for 20 minutes any time in the next week or so?”*

2. **The call-send-call** approach we have already discussed.

Your goal once again is to set up a face-to-face meeting with the person with the power to hire you.

Your ideal approach then is:

1. **NEEDS ANALYSIS** - Focus on understanding **their perspective of the organization’s needs** while tactfully demonstrating some of your depth of knowledge of the organization and your high level of motivation. What keeps this manager awake at night? The key here is to ask good questions, listen carefully, check that you have understood the crucial points, and clarify your understanding when appropriate.
2. **“CUSTOMER” FOCUSED, NEEDS-BASED SELLING** - Based on your understanding of their needs you should then present what you have to

offer (skills, abilities, knowledge and past achievements) in terms of what you can do to address these needs.

A survey of 115 employers by recruitment agency Jobfind revealed that jobseekers who displayed a positive attitude towards work were favoured over candidates with more experience and qualifications. Enthusiasm for the job ranked highest against other attributes.

Sun-Herald 12 January
2003

3. **HIGHLY CUSTOMISED RESUME OR PROPOSAL** - Rather than handing over a basic resume at your meeting you may wish to agree to send them a customised resume or a written proposal within 3 days. Develop this highly customised resume or proposal based on what you have learnt in your meeting plus everything else your research has uncovered.

The purpose of this document is to **focus on how you would meet their needs** and why you are the right person for them specifically. Outline what you could do for them in the same way that a consultant might outline how they can help a organisation to secure a project.

Depending on your personality and what you have learnt about the organization you may wish to be fairly creative in addressing the needs or problems the manager has identified in talking with you. Rather than just fitting into one of their existing job positions you may propose the creation of an entirely new results-oriented role.

4. **RISK REVERSAL** – If you think the employer is reluctant to take a chance on you despite your approach so far you may wish to offer to reduce their risk by proposing some form of performance guarantee or free trial period. This is **called risk reversal in general marketing as it shifts much of the risk from the buyer to the seller.**

An example - you might propose a written agreement that you will cheerfully resign by an agreed period (perhaps within 1-6 months) if you do not achieve the agreed results. Alternatively you may offer to work for free for one or two weeks so they can verify your capabilities. **The most common way this happens these days is that organisations will contract people to do a specific project** and if they like them and their work they will either offer them a permanent job or give them an advantage when applying for an advertised position. This is not meant to happen in the public sector but it does – regularly!

5. **KEEP IN TOUCH** – Now that you have invested the time into making a positive impression on your target employer do not despair if they don't offer you a job straight away. **Follow up with them at least every two or three months with a brief, friendly phone call or email.** Few people will remember your interest in working with them for more than three months if you don't remind them. Frequently an employer will recognise a need for your services a month or two after your last contact with them.

This job search strategy requires the most effort and at times some courage but the pay-off is a much higher possibility of employment with one of your most preferred employers. **This is your most powerful method for landing your ideal job.**

3. Personal and Strategic Networking

Networking means talking to people you know to learn valuable career-related information and referrals to other key people. By talking with these other key people you can obtain both further information and more referrals so that the process can be ongoing.

A skilled strategic networker can eventually network their way to virtually any available information or organization in the world!

Networking can be used in different ways as an important component in many of the job search strategies described in this guide.

There are **two types of networking** requiring specific comment here:

Personal Networking

This form of networking focuses on your current personal network of friends, family, neighbours, colleagues, suppliers, clients, and community acquaintances.

You simply tell them:

“I’m currently looking for work in the field. Do you have any ideas regarding who I could speak to about this?”

If yes – *“Is it okay if I say you suggested I give them a call?”*

If no - *“If you see or hear of anything could you let me know? I’d really appreciate it!”*

Networking is **best done through face-to-face meetings** when possible but phone can be used when necessary. Only use email as a last resort as it is low impact - easily overlooked and quickly forgotten.

Strategic Networking

Strategic networking is often part of the Focused Direct Contact job search strategy. It involves **actively targeting specific fields or organisations by developing new connections with people outside your existing personal network.**

Often we become **too comfortable in our existing network of friends** and acquaintances and like a big frog in a small pond **we cut ourselves off from opportunities** beyond our existing personal network. Strategic networking can start with your existing network but it doesn’t end there!

Top five tips for strategic networking:

1. Attend or even present at conferences, conventions, workshops, university courses, and business and special interest groups.
2. Be “network-ready” with a concise, well-composed self-introduction, personal business cards, and address book and business card holder.

3. Be interested in others, a good listener, and make a special effort to remember and then use names when introduced.
4. Be prepared and willing to share appropriate business or occupational information with others (give and receive).
5. Be alert for “chance” opportunities.

People normally like to help others with their careers if approached appropriately. This means giving them the opportunity to help if they freely choose to. It doesn't mean demanding assistance and not respecting their other time commitments.

There are **six important points** to remember when networking:

1. The more people you get face-to-face with the quicker you will secure your next position.
2. The more strategically you network the better suited to you that position is likely to be.
3. Many job seekers have a tendency to approach networking on the basis of “how can you help me get a job?” It is better to try to identify real needs amongst potential employers and communicate how your skills and experience can be of benefit to them.

Be a problem solver for others rather than a “job beggar.”

4. Many job seekers assume that others automatically know and understand what skills they have to offer. However, even close friends and contacts may only have a vague idea of what you are looking for and may not recognise opportunities for you. Be sure to **explain clearly the types of work you are looking for and give examples** of relevant past work achievements.
5. Be careful not to make people in your network feel they are under any obligation to help as this will often sour the relationship.
6. Networking is often approached as a short-term exercise with the sole aim of getting a job. It is, however, far more effective if it is approached as an ongoing part of life, the purpose of which is to establish long-term mutually beneficial links with a wide range of people. The expression used by one networking expert is to **“dig your well *before* you're thirsty.”**
7. Keep in mind that the **Not for Profit** sector is not required to formally advertise positions so the best (and often the only) way to get work with them is networking, direct contact methods, and temporary volunteer work.

4. Door Opening – short-term and volunteer work

Whilst global economic changes have decreased job security the upside is that in many areas the changes have lead **to increased demand for temporary and project-based workers**. It is now often much easier to gain a “foot in the door” of many organizations by first undertaking some short-term work with them. This work can be in paid or volunteer positions.

Don't under-estimate **the benefits** that can come from short-term and volunteer experience within an organization. They include:

- Real world experience that can be vital for career changers or recent graduates
- Inside knowledge and specific skills that can lead to permanent full-time positions
- A strategically expanded network that can assist with future job searches
- Credible referees and valuable achievements, skills and experience for your resume

Short-term, casual and part-time work

When approaching your preferred organizations for employment it can be a good idea to specifically enquire into short-term, project-based, casual and part-time work.

Often managers can be far **more flexible and autonomous in how they decide to staff short-term projects** and positions. Formal recruitment and selection processes are less likely. For example, public sector staffing needs for periods of **less than twelve months normally do not have to be advertised**. This can be a gold mine of short-term work for some people if they use the focused direct contact approach as relatively few people target the public sector in this way.

Having even limited experience and contacts within the public sector can be of great assistance in the formal selection processes for permanent positions at a later time. I would go so far to say that the only chance many people have of breaking into public sector work, including universities, is if they regularly keep in touch with them seeking temporary work.

Volunteer work

As discussed in the Focused Direct Contact strategy, volunteer work can be one form of risk reversal when approaching a decision maker for work.

Some part time volunteer work may be **particularly valuable if you are unemployed for longer than about three months**. If well chosen it can boost your self esteem and confidence, expand your network of friends and acquaintances, and give you new skills and experience to place on your resume.

In our society, long-term unemployment often means considerable isolation for some people. Volunteer work is one way to deal with this problem.

The risk you must accept is that **they may use your services but not offer you a job subsequently**. This may be acceptable to you **if the training, experience, or contacts you will gain are adequate**. You need to carefully weigh this up.

When talking with the decision maker be specific on how much time you are currently willing to volunteer and also try to assess the value of the work experience and the probability of paid work becoming available in the future.

Be aware that occasionally unscrupulous employers take advantage of volunteers. This is more likely to happen with small, owner-operator businesses than with professional managers in medium to large size organizations. (There is no personal financial incentive for non-owner managers.)

Another problem occasionally is the requirement that you are covered by **worker's compensation insurance**. You can purchase your own if essential or get around this problem by working through a sponsoring organization such as your school or university.

In all Australian States there are state-based **not-for-profit organisations called Volunteering** (the State name e.g. Volunteering Victoria or Volunteering Queensland). These organisations can provide sponsorship and insurance coverage help plus volunteer opportunities. To find their websites which contain detailed information and contact details go to www.google.com.au and just do a search on Volunteering

 (and your State e.g. WA, SA, NSW).

If you do need to purchase your own insurance one company that provides policies specifically for unpaid “work experience” is www.icfrith.com.au . Click on “Insurance Services” and then “work experience.”

Another excellent site provided by SEEK for volunteering opportunities is www.volunteer.com.au . You can search for opportunities within 10 KM of your postcode and by types of work.

5. Job Advertisement Response – print & online media

This is the most commonly used job search strategy. If you are currently in a job and have plenty of time to scan the advertised positions over a long period it can bring good results. However if you want to find a good position in the next two months you should not rely on this strategy alone.

Sources of advertised positions include:

- Major Australian internet job sites such as www.seek.com.au , www.careerone.com.au , www.MyCareer.com.au and www.jobsearch.gov.au, (these are the 4 largest in order of size)
- Other minor job sites: www.search4jobs.com.au , www.michaelpage.com.au , and www.thewestcareers.com.au
- Local, metropolitan and national newspapers
- Professional, trade and business journals, magazines and increasingly emailed newsletters
- Specialised job sites such as www.australia.gov.au/98 (Federal Government and Defence jobs. State and Territory jobs can be accessed by the link at the bottom of the home page), www.lgjobs.com.au (mid level and senior local government jobs), www.defensejobs.gov.au , www.it2.com.au (IT jobs) and www.teachers.on.net (“Australia’s number one education employment website”)
- Not for Profit sector: www.ethicaljobs.com.au , www.nfpjobs.com.au and www.probonoaustralia.com.au/jobs . You should also Google “not for profit jobs.”
- International job sites such as www.monster.com
- Company websites (if you find jobs advertised on their own websites your odds can sometimes be better as you should have less competition)

The **general recommended process** for advertised positions is:

1. Research and **identify the best sources of advertisements** for the type and location of work you are targeting.
2. Identify positions as soon as they are advertised and allow yourself substantial time to research and write an application.
3. Select **only** positions that are a reasonable match with your self-assessment work in the “what you want” and “what you have to offer” sections.
4. Research the organization and the job as much as possible before writing your cover letter. Always customise your resume to reflect their needs.
5. Use techniques from the focused direct contact approach to differentiate yourself from others. For example, it is normally a good idea to attempt to

set up a meeting or at least a phone conversation with the advertised contact person and if possible the advertised position's supervisor or manager BEFORE writing your application. (Sometimes the contact person will be the position supervisor and sometimes not.)

6. Once written, review your application again after 24-hour break. Get two to three other people to also review your application before sending it.
7. Follow up within a week with a polite, friendly phone call. If you are not successful stay in touch with your new contact within the organization. If their first choice leaves or they create an additional position you may receive a phone call.

It is recommended that you develop your online job search skills and knowledge as this will become an increasingly important source of job advertisements. One way to do this is to go to www.google.com.au, type in something like **online job search techniques** and spend sometime reading all the resources the search engine then lists.

Five key tips for managing the online job search process are

1. Get a professional email address.

Don't use hotstuffxxx@gmail.com. Now is the time to get professional. Create an email address with your full name.

2. Make sure your email address and mobile number are on your resume.

And remember to check them each day!

3. Register at appropriate online job sites.

Although Seek is by far the largest there are many others which can sometimes be good for specific job areas. Also check out your local newspaper online listings.

You can select from many different general and specialized internet job sites at www.careersonline.com.au/aujobs.html.

4. Google yourself.

Sounds egotistical doesn't it? But just in case you (or somebody else) wrote something in the past that would reflect badly on you now, it is better to check what is out there on you in cyber space. Also while you are at it, Google your email address, telephone number and address and make sure there is nothing displayed that you don't want public.

5. Use social networking sites to your advantage.

Make a special work and career related account on **LinkedIn.com** (the number one professional networking site) or Facebook specifically for your job search. Keep your personal social networks tightly restricted to your friends.

6. Employment agencies

There are two basic types of employment agencies:

- **Job Services** - These are the agencies you are referred to by Centrelink if you are unemployed. The government pays them for placing people in work. Don't rely on these services. Let them help you but remember that any employer is going to be far more impressed by someone who is taking initiative themselves in their job search.
- **Recruitment firms** – These are for-profit firms that are paid for their assistance in recruiting and selecting staff for other employers.

If you have skills and knowledge in demand then employment agencies are an important component of your job search plan. If not, don't expect too much. The exception to this is that job network providers are paid more for assisting certain categories of long-term unemployed job seekers and therefore can at times be quite helpful if you are long-term unemployed.

Recruitment firms are working for the employer, not you. **Good recruitment consultants will try to be polite and helpful but they are often pressed for time.** At times they may provide valuable insights into your job market and how you need to present yourself. At other times they may be too busy to do anything other than say "Send us your resume and we'll call you if anything comes up."

Recruitment firms are becoming increasingly specialised. Common specialisations include senior executives, accounting, finance and banking, hospitality, IT, telemarketing, law, engineering, electrical, mechanical and building trades, and health services.

The **recommended process** for working with recruitment firms is:

1. **Identify targets** – Select the employment agencies that recruit people with your background. You can do this by analyzing the "Employment Services" section in the Yellow Pages, talking to people in your field, observing the recruiters advertising similar positions in the media, and most importantly, undertaking internet searches with Google.
2. **Make contact** - Use one of the Direct Contact methods (call, call-send-call, or walk in) to try to establish a positive relationship with one of the consultants handling people in your field. A call might go like this:

YOU: Hello. My name is Simone Franklin. Do you supply permanent or temporary legal staff?

RECEPTIONIST: Yes, we do.

YOU: Who can I speak to about this?

RECEPTIONIST: Cynthia Geiger handles that area but she is not in at the moment. Would you like her to call you?

YOU: No. I'll call back. When do you expect her to be available?
3. **Set up meeting** - Your objective when you call back and get the consultant on the phone is to set up a meeting with them. To secure this meeting concisely state your top two or three "qualifiers" for the type of

work you are seeking, say that you understand their time is valuable but that you would very much appreciate the chance to meet with them briefly even if just for 10 minutes.

4. **Meet and follow up** - You prepare for and approach this meeting as you would a job interview. You then keep in contact with this consultant, as a suitable position might not come up for several months.

If recruitment consultants are not available to meet with you **do not take it personally**. This occurs frequently and often just means that they are too busy filling positions that currently do not match your skills. They will probably suggest you send them your resume.

Have a suitable resume prepared and ready to go BEFORE contacting a recruiter. The shorter the time gap between when you speak to them on the phone and when they receive it in their email inbox, the more attention they will pay it. If it is the next day or later it just becomes another email without a clear connection to the personal interaction with you.

If you feel this recruiter may be important to your job search ask if you can **deliver it in person** (if this is practical for you) and introduce yourself when you do. Then move onto another recruitment firm and make a note in your diary to contact them again in three to eight weeks as their staffing needs may have changed by then.

Always be polite and friendly just as you would be with a potential employer.

7. Direct Email – “Machine gun resume”

Warning: don’t just send your resume out to everyone. Spraying your resume around like a gangster on a rampage with a machine gun makes you look unprofessional!

Direct email has its place in a number of job search strategies however as a stand alone approach **it is not recommended!** It is **more effective to combine it with other techniques** as in the Call, Send, Call method.

Mailing or emailing out lots of resumes is an attractive job search strategy for people who would like to avoid all situations of what appears to be personal rejection. The advantage of a direct mail strategy in most people’s minds is that you can efficiently contact a large number of employers without experiencing any rejection. While this is true, without customisation of the letter as in the call, send, call approach there is a VERY low response rate. Most managers are too busy to pay much attention to a letter and resume addressed to “Dear Sir/Madam” or “To whom it may concern.” To improve your response rate you will need to have excellent written content and presentation.

This is probably an effective strategy for you only if you have achievements, skills, qualifications, and abilities which are currently in low supply and high demand in your target job market.

Job Search Tips

Always be prepared for the job market

You never know when you might find yourself unemployed... or come across a great opportunity to advance your career. Hence, be prepared. Keep a list of your work achievements with specific details and update it regularly. Keep your resume updated. Be thinking about what skills and experience you need to add to your portfolio and what would be a good next step in your career. Don't expect your employer to do this for you. Your employability is your responsibility.

Get organised

To implement a successful job search you will need to prepare some resources. These include:

- Well lit desk
- Computer with internet access
- Telephone (ideally at the desk)
- Answering machine/voicemail
- Filing system
- Address book and files or database for keeping track of contacts
- Time management diary (1 week per 2 page spread is good for planning your week)

Enquire as to permanent AND temporary work

Many employers may not be ready to put on a full time permanent employee but will be interested in talking to someone who is available on a more flexible basis to meet their peak staffing needs. If the organization is attractive to you this is a good way to get a foot in the door.

The higher the position, the longer the process can be

Be mentally prepared for a longer job search process if you are targeting a senior level position. There are fewer positions to target the higher you go and a more professional self-marketing process is required. It takes time to develop your profile in the job marketplace and to locate suitable openings. Average job search campaign for positions over \$80,000 is three to six months. Persevere and don't let it get you down. It is the nature of the game.

Take care of your referees

Good referees are very valuable. Don't take them for granted. Be sure to ask their permission to have them as a referee. Keep the relationship strong by remembering to do little things such as send them birthday cards, Christmas cards, and copies of articles which you think might interest them.

Once you have their permission in general don't bother them every time you put down their name as a referee. However you should make it clear to the employer or recruiter that they should tell you if the selection process gets to the point where they will soon be contacting your referees. (This is normally only the top applicants after they have been interviewed.) **When you know they will soon be contacted call your referees and send them the position description or job advertisement, a copy of your application, and a concise list of your main achievements while working with them.** The purpose of this list of achievements

is to prompt their memories and prepare them to make you sound like a million dollars (or whatever your salary will be) when the employer contacts them.

Use the internet to learn more about job searching

This guide will give you an excellent grounding in all the essentials of job searching as well as key advanced techniques. However there is a wealth of additional job-search learning resources waiting for you on the internet. Use a search engine as your online research assistant. I recommend www.google.com.au. Just type in what you want to learn more about (eg. online resumes, interviewing, cover letters, how to use internet job sites), and click “pages from Australia” before clicking “search.” Don’t miss www.careersonline.com.au and www.quintcareers.com .

Send thank you notes

Always remember to send a thank you note to anyone who makes their time available to meet with you or helps you in your job search. This includes your networking contacts, job interviewers and employment agency consultants. This can be an email or, for slightly more effect, a hand written card. If you didn’t get a business card their receptionist can give you their email address.

Three things NOT to do

Don’t just go through the motions of a job search. Find something you can get yourself excited about going after. If you don’t know what that is, seek career assessment and coaching.

Don’t do the same old things and say the same old things that everyone else does. Be original in some way.

Don’t just go for jobs in large well known organizations. These are the most competitive places to seek work. Smaller organizations (less than 150 staff) create most new jobs and are often better places to work.

Take care of yourself

Career transition, particularly when it is associated with forced unemployment, can be a very stressful experience. It is normal to go through some real down periods and to question your value and your abilities. To help you handle this period:

- **Share your feelings** with people you trust – family, friends, a counsellor or a career coach.
- **Reflect** – career transition is a time to re-evaluate your life direction and make some changes for the better. It is also an opportunity to deepen your perspectives on life.
- **Exercise** – not only does it keep you healthy it also improves your mood.
- **Maintain balance** – watch that you are sleeping, eating healthy, and connecting to people. Seek help if these or alcohol and drug use become an issue.
- **Learn and help others** – take short courses or read some helpful books. Making this a time of personal and professional development will improve your self-esteem and your interview performance. So will helping others in some way. Consider seeking some volunteer work if unemployed for more than about 12 weeks.

Believe in yourself. The job search process is tough for most people no matter how great their competence and character. By applying what you have learnt here you can be victorious.

There are worthy work options out there and these seven steps will help you find... or create them.

If you'd like some help from a professional career coach and counsellor please get in touch.

(mitch@career-wise.com.au or just call 0422 582 356)

Good luck and enjoy the journey!