

THE SECRET TO MAKING YOUR JOB SEARCH MORE PROACTIVE

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Is your job search passive or proactive? A change in strategy could shorten the time you spend hunting and help you land a more rewarding position.

You're probably familiar with passive job search methods. You browse through job boards and classified ads, and respond to advertised openings. You go on interviews and wait to hear back from the human resources department.

However, you may be underutilizing more proactive measures. **That's where you discover or create positions that match your skills.** You reach out to companies where you want to work.

Learn how to broaden your job hunt and take greater control of your career path. Incorporate these proactive strategies into your tool kit as you seek your next position.

How to Be Proactive about Finding Job Opportunities:

You've probably heard the conventional wisdom that **about 80% of job openings don't get advertised.** Think about where you want to work and the kind of work you want to do. Then, target your top priorities.

Use these strategies:

1. **Research companies.** Explore organizations that interest you. Visit company websites to read about their products, services, and staff. Subscribe to industry publications and read the business section of major newspapers.

2. **Seek referrals.** Use your personal network and LinkedIn to discover who you know inside the organization or someone who can make introductions for you. Tapping an insider can help you find out more about current activities and the hiring process.
3. **Conduct information interviews.** Focus on gathering information instead of rushing to get a job offer. Many contacts will be more receptive to sharing knowledge rather than discussing an immediate position.
4. **Multiply your options.** Broaden your vision. **Having multiple job leads will help you stay motivated and make sounder decisions.**
5. **Try contract work.** Even if a full-time position is your ultimate objective, you can use temporary positions or contract work to gain valuable experience. You'll also get a first-hand look at a potential workplace before making a longer commitment.
6. **Volunteer your services.** Community service is an excellent way to broaden your network and discover job leads. Contact charities that interest you and mingle with the staff, board, and other volunteers.

How to Be Proactive about Pursuing Job Opportunities:

You'll stand out from the competition if you initiate contact with companies that interest you. Use the hiring process to demonstrate your enthusiasm and communication skills.

Try these techniques:

1. **Be tactful.** You can be polite and persistent about following up. Follow application instructions, and avoid leaving multiple messages so you come

across as confident rather than overzealous.

2. **Confirm details.** Some employers will appreciate an effort to confirm an application or interview. **Unless the company requests otherwise, make it a policy to follow up and ask about the next step.**

3. **Ask informed questions.** Take full advantage of interviews or any continuing conversations. Have a written list of relevant questions that will help you to understand the position and showcase your worth.

4. **Articulate your value.** Play an active role in interviews. **Guide the discussion towards your unique abilities and the specific contribution you can make.** Highlight your past achievements and show how you can help your next employer reach their goals.

5. **Express your appreciation.** Remember to send thank you notes or make a follow up call after each contact. Let others know that you are grateful for their time and consideration.

6. **Stay in touch.** Work at developing and sustaining relationships. Even if an interview doesn't end with a job offer, it may be worth reaching out once in awhile to monitor future needs or ask for other suggestions.

There's nothing wrong with passive job search methods, but **you can achieve more when you use a broader range of resources.** Thinking proactively will help you find more opportunities and make a positive impression on potential employers.