



4exMilitary Jobs Ltd

Information Guide No. 9

Job Search

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4exMilitary Jobs Ltd.

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1. THE JOB MARKET

1.1 Introduction

There are four main channels to getting your next job. These are detailed below together with their appropriate percentage share of success.

Advertised Vacancies	20%
Recruiters	20%
Speculative Applications Direct to Employers	10%
Networking	50%

The following pages review each of these channels and the use of various techniques to maximise your success.

2. ORGANISING YOURSELF

2.1 Introduction

Irrespective of whichever market you are aiming at a specific moment in time, an analytical approach to each job opportunity is essential.

For jobs being advertised on the open market, it will almost certainly involve stiff competition, both in terms of quality and quantity of applications. Therefore your application must be specifically targeted so as to stand out from the competition.

In respect of the hidden market, you will need to make use of all your existing contacts and extend your network of contacts, making your availability as widely known as possible. You will also need to undertake some researching and contact both likely employers and search and selection consultants who are known to handle assignments in your specific field and expertise.

2.2 Things You Need To Do

- (a) Identify six or seven agencies, all search and selection consultancies, that handle vacancies in the work area where you are seeking employment.
- Check that they handle jobs in your area, preferably at least 20% of their activity.
 - Find out the name of a consultant in each agency that handles the sort of vacancies you would be interested in. Telephone and introduce yourself to them, indicating the type of opportunities you are looking for.
 - Let them have an up-to-date CV and follow it up with another telephone call to the consultant – build up the rapport.
 - Contact them once a fortnight to see if they are due to handle any new positions.
- (b) Identify four or five companies each week that you would like to work for and make an approach.
- Know what they do and where you might fit in.
 - Choose either speculative or direct approach.
 - Follow up these contacts.
 - Be clear about what you want to do for them.

- Only write to a manageable number. If you contact 20 per day, you will lose track of where you are. Keep notes on everything that you do (copies of letters, records of phone calls, who you have spoken to etc)
- (c) Identify the newspapers and trade journals related to your career and identify warm contacts and reply to job advertisements.
- Go to the library and read them, or subscribe.
 - Analyse advertisements carefully, where you have a 70% match, go for it, if it meets your needs.

From articles: Identify expanding firms, or firms that are moving or restructuring.

- If they are advertising for senior people, this may indicate positions below may become vacant or expansion may be occurring.
- (d) Use your network of friends, relatives and business contacts to generate warm leads into firm one's, four or five per week.
- (e) Work about three hours per day doing these things (eight hours is too much). Give yourself a break with some physical activity each day, gardening, walking, golf etc.
- (f) When writing letters, identify exactly what you need to say that will catch the receivers attention.
- (g) Organise a ring binder or set of files to hold:
- CV data and up to date CV's
 - Copies of letters and examples of formats
 - Advertisements and their analysis
 - Complete list of contacts
 - Diary for letters, phone calls, interviews
 - Goals and objectives for your career
 - Career Plan/Action Plan
 - Analysis of career alternatives
 - Company information
 - Press articles and analysis
- (h) Once a fortnight, review how well you are doing.
- If response is poor consider changing method e.g. style of letters, firms approached.

- Review goals.
- Review personal appearance, is it up to scratch!
- Discuss with a close friend what else you might do.

If response is good:

- Keep doing the things that get results.
- Maintain standards.
- Tell someone about your success.

3. ADVERTISED VACANCIES

3.1 Advertising Channels

Job vacancies are advertised in the following ways:

(a) Newspapers

National, regional and local newspapers. Some of the national newspapers carry different job types on different days (see chart on next page). Advertisements are a mix of advertisements placed by companies and by recruitment consultants.

(b) Trade Journals

Trade journals, specialist journals and professional journals, monthly journals of Institutes (e.g. Logistics and Transport Focus – the monthly journal of the Institute of Logistics and Transport), normally all carry a number of pages of job adverts.

(c) Employment Agencies including Job Centres

Jobs are advertised on cards or A4 size posters in the front windows of the offices of these agencies.

(d) Internet Recruitment Sites

There are a number of general Internet web sites which have jobs placed by both Companies and Recruitment Consultants.

Most of the major newspapers and periodicals have sites on the web with searchable appointments/listings, and more and more companies are including web pages on their website to show their current vacancies.

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A number of Search and Selection, Specialist and Search Consultancies have web sites which list a selection of their current assignments e.g. rpc – www.rpcrecruit.co.uk

3.2 Analysing Advertisements

Answering advertisements is time consuming, and, in view of the considerable competition for advertised vacancies (200-300 responses are not uncommon), it is unwise to expect such applications to yield a high proportion of invitations to interviews, or resultant job offers. Bear in mind also that the higher the salary level, the fewer the positions advertised, and the larger the likely response.

On the other hand, you can maximise your chances by making a careful, analytical approach to the job being advertised, and framing a well considered, ‘targeted’ response. As with all job opportunities, it is essential to define the details of the job being advertised and the employer’s requirements, and to match these against your experience and skills. You will also need to match your personal requirements for the job against the conditions on offer. Should you decide to submit an application, you should frame your response to demonstrate how your particular attributes match the employer’s needs.

As a first step – and before preparing an application – it pays to **analyse the advertisement carefully**, taking particular note of the following:

1. The **job title**: this should be checked against the duties specified, to ensure that you know what the job really entails and can define your response to the advertisement appropriately.
2. The **employer profile**: try to judge, from whatever information is given, the quality and tone of the prospective employer’s management style and business acumen. In-depth research at this stage is probably not appropriate but the flavour of, for example, culture, bureaucracy, etc, as well as size, objectives, outlook and any particular emphasis in the advertisement, should be noted.
3. The **job responsibilities**: do these offer you the opportunity to develop your skills, or will you stand still? Is there the chance of career progression? Have you enough previous experience to meet the challenge of the greater responsibility specified?
4. The **reporting channels**: if these are described, try to assess whether the prospective employer has a defined management structure or whether this is unclear. Beware of imprecise words like “co-ordinate”, “interface with” “liaise”, etc: they could conceal a job that has responsibility but no authority.

5. **Qualifications and experience:** try to assess which of those specified should be classified as essential, highly desirable or desirable. Prospective employers usually insist on those they regard as essential unless some compensating experience or qualifications can be quoted.
6. **Salary:** try to interpret precisely what is on offer:
 - “Circa £X” usually means they will try to pull down from “£X”;
 - currently earning not less than “£X means they will pay more;
 - “commensurate with age and experience” means either no salary policy or else internal staff pay problems;
 - “£X to £Y” usually fairly rigid, structured, pay parameters;
 - “up to £X” means you will be lucky to get £X unless exceptionally well qualified for the job.

If having gone through the above analysis, you decide to reply to a job advertisement, you should find a **reason to phone** the named individual who is dealing with the responses. Maybe you could ask for details about the size of the firm, its market sector, its precise location, or for other information not provided in the advertisement. By this means you will introduce yourself and ensure that your application will be expected, and will receive individual attention. The relevant caveat is that you should avoid being interviewed on the telephone.

3.3 Making Your Application

The following guidelines should assist you in making your application:

1. **Ensure that you meet the essential requirements of the job specification** – otherwise you are just wasting time and effort. Underline the requirements in the advertisement, analyse as already suggested and, when replying, point out how well you match them.
2. Always **send a covering letter of application addressed to the named person**. If no name is given, merely a job title, phone up and ask the name and style/title of the person to whom your letter is to be sent.
3. **When writing**
 - Use good quality stationery;
 - Type your letter and retain a copy for your file;
 - Use simple, basic English;

- Use “you” rather than “I” (“You will see from my CV ...” rather than “I attach my CV...”);
- Quantify any specific achievements highlighted.

(See Information Guide No ? for model letters of application and general advice on composition and presentation).

4. **Don’t indicate salary expectations**, even if asked to do so, because you may price yourself out of consideration, or jeopardise your negotiating position. Use the simple response “will discuss/negotiate”.
5. Always **keep a spare copy** of your application.
6. **Follow up** on any particularly attractive advertisement if there has been no response **3 weeks** after submitting your application. Telephone to affirm your interest in the job and ask whether your application is still receiving attention.
7. There are occasions when an advertiser invites “applications” without specifying whether letter or a CV. Generally speaking, a well constructed letter is to be preferred: **a letter can be directed specifically to the advertiser’s requirements** without adding any of the “extras” on the CV which may not be relevant and could be used to screen you out of consideration. The response rate to full letters without a CV is sometimes found to be higher than cases where a CV is sent with only a short covering letter.
8. As a general rule, it is inadvisable to state in an application letter that your reason for seeking another job is redundancy. Better by far to say that you are looking for an opportunity to advance your career/further develop your skills/widen your experience etc.

Information about your job redundancy is gratuitous and is better given verbally in the interview than in writing beforehand. A well-prepared statement of your reason for looking for another job, offered for the first time during an interview, stands less chance of being questioned or probed (See *Information Guide ? on Interviews*).
9. In view of the fact that organisations are quite often unsuccessful in filling a vacancy, e.g. because the person to whom the job is offered turns it down, it is well worth scanning back numbers of newspapers (indeed, up to as much as three months old) and getting in touch with advertisers of suitable vacancies to see whether the post has been filled. In some cases it won’t have been – and you might be able to make yourself into a short list of one.
10. Finally: check references, spellings, titles, etc – and type your name under your signature, especially if it is graphic rather than legible!!

3.4 Application Forms

For some jobs, the advertisement will ask you to telephone for an information pack and application form. In other cases even where you respond to an advertisement direct to a company and send off your CV and covering letter, a reply may well include an application form for you to complete and return.

Rarely, if ever, designed to allow your best image to be projected, filling in application forms constitutes one of the most irritating chores encountered in the job search.

Your annoyance at having to fill in apparently irrelevant details has to be tempered by the realisation that the Human Resource/Personnel Department's records are expected to be comprehensive and that forms are designed to serve a multiplicity of purposes.

Remember these points when filling in an application form:

1. Always **type or print neatly** and avoid erasures (photocopy the blank form first and mock up a rough draft); never fill out forms in a hurry, and try to avoid filling them out in an office lobby prior to interview; you should excuse yourself on the grounds that precise figures, dates, etc, can only be verified by reference to files and records kept at home.
2. **Read the instructions carefully** and don't deviate from them.
3. **Relate nothing but the truth** – however, this does not mean that you should volunteer information that may detract from your cause.
4. **Make sure** that when giving dates of education, military service, past employment, etc. **there are no gaps** in your history.
5. Don't answer a **“salary expected”** question with anything more than a **“to be discussed”**, or a **“for negotiation”** response; it is impossible to guess how much the position is worth until more is known about it.

Exception: to head-hunters, agencies, etc, give a wide bracket, starting from your minimum and state that this is “dependent on the total package.”

6. On questions relating to occupational history, always **stress your achievements**.
7. To questions on hobbies, pastimes, etc, try to **reflect an active personality but don't overdo it**; a balanced mixture of sport, civic and/or social interests is usually acceptable.

8. If offered the chance to provide “**additional relevant information**” do so – in spite of the additional chore – and reiterate your main marketable attributes as set out in the ‘profile’ of your CV.
9. Draw attention to any **part-time paid jobs** that enabled you to advance any stage of your education, qualifications, or career.

4 RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS & AGENCIES

4.1 Types

There are several types of recruitment consultants and they can broadly be classified as follows:

(a) Employment Agencies (normally High Street based)

These mainly deal with blue collar, secretarial and commercial or specialist trades (e.g. nursing, catering, driving etc).

Some of these agencies do advertise as dealing with managerial positions but this is generally part of a “catch-all” strategy and it is unlikely that you will find your next career move with this type of agency. However, if you are unable to relocate then a visit to ascertain their interest in your background could be made when time allows.

(b) Search and Selection Consultancies

Recruitment is the main activity of these companies. They will receive assignment briefs from companies and will usually spend some time on site in order to understand the background of the operation; they will then advise on the correct media to use, having drafted and agreed the job description and person specification. Then they will normally carry out a series of screening interviews and submit a final short list to the company. These companies frequently advertise assignments in newspapers such as The Times, Daily Telegraph etc.

In addition most Search and Selection Consultants maintain databases and therefore you are advised to write to these types of consultants asking to be put on their database and to have your details reviewed against their existing assignments (see section on letters).

(c) Search Consultants

Normally known as 'head-hunters', their expertise is in filling management positions without advertising. They will usually be meticulous in preparatory work with the client company, and often insist on meeting to discuss details with all the senior management who are going to be involved in the decision making process. On many occasions they will advise on corporate structures and senior personnel planning activity. They will draw up detailed job and 'person' specifications, and will then initiate a search without using advertising.

Having described the person they wish to recruit, they will decide which companies the ideal candidate is likely to be in and at what level of job, and will establish contact with those relevant individuals, usually by telephone. A second major source of suitable candidates for search assignments is their database that such companies build up as a result of carrying out the search process.

As a job hunter, you will want to have your availability made known to all the relevant headhunt consultancy firms. Although head-hunters will usually indicate, when talking to companies, that they start every search assignment from a completely fresh base, in many cases this is not so, and they rely to a large extent on individuals letting them know they are available and wish to make a career move. As with Search and Selection Consultants write to them asking to be put on their database.

(d) Management Consultants

This is a generic description for all independent companies working on a contract or *ad hoc* basis for other companies. These will include: major accountancy firms (e.g. Ernst & Young, Pricewaterhousecoopers); international general consultants (e.g. McKinsey, A T Kearney); training organisations; the Industrial Society, and small 'local' sole employee businesses. Unless these firms have a division specially set up for recruitment, they will pick up recruitment assignments as an activity peripheral to their main business. It is usually only worthwhile contacting these firms when they advertise specific appointments, unless you ascertain that they do have an Executive Search and Selection Division in which case contact them as for Search and Selection Consultants.

(e) Specialist Search and Selection Consultancies

Recruitment in a specialist sector or industry is the principal activity of these consultancies. In the logistics and supply chain sector, The rpc Group is one such company; other examples are The BJD Group, Dixon Stewart Associates etc.

They operate in the same way as Search and Selection Consultants but clearly their main attraction is their high level of knowledge of both candidates and companies by operating in a specific industry.

These specialist consultancies should be your major priority and you should contact a number of them requesting your details to be put on their database and ask to be reviewed against their current assignments.

In some cases you may be invited to attend their offices for a general interview in which case you should take up the offer.

On an ongoing basis you should maintain regular contact with these consultancies as they are a major source of vacancies in your field of expertise.

(f) Recruitment Advertising/Response Handling Agents

These firms tend to act as a post box advertising the job(s), receiving the applications and forwarding them on to the client. They do not generally get involved in the selection process. There is no point in a job hunter speculatively approaching these agents as they rarely select and will usually pass applications direct to the employer for handling.

5. SPECULATIVE APPLICATIONS

5.1 Approach

In many instances jobs are obtained by making speculative approaches to carefully selected organisations. To achieve success, much thought, research, planning and preparation are required.

The key elements of your approach should be as follows:

- **to identify target organisations** i.e. those likely to provide a job opportunity that would satisfy your career objectives;
- **to research each of these organisations** in depth;
- **to identify the key decision maker** within each target organisation (i.e. those people with the power to appoint to a post at an appropriate level);
- **To define the nature of the contribution that you would be able to make** to each target organisation that you approach.

As a job hunter, emphasis should be upon the potential of your contribution to a specific organisation, based upon confidence in your track record and achievements. You need to convince possible employers of your personal and

professional qualities and your ability to contribute to the success of their enterprises.

5.2 Identifying and Researching Target Organisations

To decide which organisations to approach on a speculative basis, first reconsider the factors likely to influence your eventual choice, preferences as to geographical location, kind of industry and working environment, size of organisation profitability, scope of potential contribution, opportunity for promotion, remuneration scales, etc.

Taking these factors into account, it is possible to research and compile a list of all the organisations, companies or firms, for whom you think you might like to work. In terms of “where I want to use my skills”, your listing may be divided between ‘same industry’ (i.e. competitor organisations) and, thinking laterally, ‘other industries’ to which your skills may be transferable.

Companies in Related Lines Business – Competitors

If you would like to make a slight career change, but not a complete shift, a firm in a related line of business could be a good prospect, Ask yourself these questions:

- What companies do we supply that might offer the opportunity that I am seeking?
- What companies do we buy from that I should consider?
- What companies deal in related products/services

Competitors may be way of your reasons for switching, or want to channel you into the same sort of position as the one you want to leave. On the other hand, a company in a related line of business may feel that you could give them an insight into dealing with the kind of firm in which you already have experience.

Once you have defined what your preferences and job requirements are, it becomes a matter of researching, through use of contacts or other reference sources, the name of organisations that match your specifications.

Once you have selected those companies that you propose to contact, it would be wise to work out what exactly you are going to say in response to the inevitable interview question “Why do you want to work with us particularly?” (see *Information Guide on Interviews*).

5.3 How To Research Target Organisations

First of all, realise the importance of keeping up with the daily reading of the business press in order to identify changes that are happening in your sector of the job market place. This does not mean neglecting the job advertisements but it does mean that you will be reading the business press for a different reason – to spot

companies that are changing. Any change provides a potential opportunity; examples of such factors are numerous and include:

- Acquisition
- Advertising companies
- New building programmes
- Purchase/sale of capital assets
- New capital projects
- Change in company results
- New contracts
- Cost reductions
- Decentralisation of particular functions
- Centralisation of functions
- Reports on distribution problems
- Reports on financial problems
- Export business
- Industrial relations reports
- Inventions/licensing agreements
- Modernisation programmes reported
- Product launches
- Public relations exercises
- Relocation policies
- Establishment of new depots
- Appointment/dismissal of senior executives
- Training programmes reported

The major vehicle for your research is likely to be your County or Branch Library.

Libraries normally stock the following:

- Extel cards/company reports
- Who Owns Whom (UK)
- Times 1000
- Kompass Directories
- Key British Enterprises (KBE)
- Bankers Almanac
- Directory of Directors
- Newspapers
- Periodicals
- Yellow Pages
- Brad
- Stock Exchange Yearbook
- Directory of Associations
- Who's Who
- Executive Grapevine
- Management Consultants in the UK
- Personnel Manager's Yearbook

Other directories that may be available but vary according to local demand are:

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- City Directory
- Market Research and Industry Surveys Index
- Holis Advertising and PR Directory
- International Business Directories such as Kompass/Principal Companies in Europe/Far East etc
- Macmillan's Unlisted Companies and/or Top 200 Private Companies
- Sunday Telegraph Business Finance Directory
- Computer Users' Yearbook
- Charities Digest
- Voluntary Agencies Directory

5.4 The Approach

5.4.1 Organisation

You will probably already have evolved a 'standard' letter to send to your contacts (*see Personal Contact Development section*), but for these speculative approaches it is preferable to produce a letter in which you specifically refer to the particular topical change factor that prompts your approach.

It is important to identify the decision maker who is relevant in your area of interest. This may be the Chairman or one of the functional Directors; it is very unlikely to be the Personnel Director, unless your interest is in a job in Personnel.

The 'Appointments Made' columns should also be watched; studying these can be more interesting and rewarding than the 'Appointments Vacant' columns. Why? Because the appointment of a new Chairman or Chief Executive is likely to herald changes in company structure and the teams which report to him or her.

Here are other ways of organising an approach:

- i. For a relatively easy beginning, phone the head office of a selected company and ask for their current annual report and accounts to be sent to you (if they want to know who you are, just tell them you are thinking of investing with them). These reports will tell you something about the outlook and prospects of the company as well as the relevant facts and figures.
- ii. Another way is to start by visiting the company's offices in person and collecting all the material you can lay your hands on – reports, catalogues, magazines, brochures etc; these can usually be had for the asking and often lie around in reception areas.

This way additionally provides an opportunity to gain an impression of the company: whether it is austere or plush, happy and energetic, in tip-top order, or muddled, inefficient, depressed and indifferent to any other enquirers.

- iii. If you happen to know that there is a job opening because someone is leaving, or has already left, contact the previous incumbent. Find out where this person went, and be open about why you are seeking information. You will probably get a biased viewpoint, about which you can keep an open mind; you will also get 'low-down' and a wealth of information that you won't get anywhere else. Assume, of course, that anything you talk about with a present or former employee will be reported back: be discreet, therefore, in your questioning.
- iv. A variety of reference directories, year books, almanacs, etc should be available at institutes and public libraries. These provide a wealth of factual information which will assist you in your search.
- v. Stockbrokers usually have various data sheets on most large companies. If you have contact with any, they could probably produce a collection of data sheets on competitors of a target company in a given industry. They might even be able to get you a prospectus or a research report on a target company. 'Extel' cards, and the Institute of Directors' files and research facilities provide alternative sources.

In all this research, be on the lookout for clues that will enable you to sense where and how your services could be used so that, when you get invited to interview, you can conduct an informed and intelligent conversation and ask the right questions. This will help you determine whether the organisation being interviewed/interviewing you is the one for which you would like to work.

5.4.2 Whom to Approach

When your research has yielded the name of an organisation to be contacted, your approach should be geared to getting an interview with 'the key executive'. This is the person to whom you would ultimately be responsible or to whom you might be reporting, i.e. the person in charge of the area defined in your job focus.

This means being able to identify the key decision maker in the relevant department; it also means approaching the person who is in a more senior position than that being sought. Thus – if you want to be a Managing Director, approach the Chairman; if you want to be Divisional Director, write to the Company Group Chief Executive; if you want to be the Production Director, contact the Managing Director, and so on down (or rather 'up') the hierarchical line.

It is important to identify that executive by name so that you can make a direct approach on a personal level: it is no use writing to a title, or even more vaguely, to the company in general, because your letter then has to be redirected by someone else, and may fail to reach its destination.

Finding out the right name is not usually too difficult; one of your contacts may be able to give you an introduction or at least identify the person by name.

Before proceeding further, however, ensure that the information that you have researched (by whatever means) is up-to-date and correct. There is no surer way of making a speculative approach ineffective than by addressing it to someone who has left the company to run a competitive business a week or so previously! Validate your information with a phone call.

Remember, in case of confusion or doubt, that it is always better to make your approach at too high a level, rather than too low down in the chain of responsibility.

Your objective is to get to the key executive to discover at first hand the 'specifics' of any possible job opportunity. The key executive is the person who may have the very problem that you are able to solve.

5.4.3 Method

A letter of approach should be short (definitely no more than one page). It should catch the reader's attention in the first sentence so that he or she is persuaded to continue reading and is sufficiently interested in the content to want to invite you for interview.

The construction of letters is covered in the *Information Guide on Letters*

5.4.4 On Being Referred to Another Executive or to Personnel

There is always the possibility that your letter, in spite of being addressed to the key executive personally, may be referred to some other executive or to the Personnel Department. This can provide a further opportunity.

If, for example, the Chairman has responded by suggesting that you should approach Mr X, the Head of..... you should immediately phone that person, or his secretary, to arrange a meeting. This, you should explain, is the purpose of discussing how you could be of use, or help in future developments of the business i.e. you make it clear that the Chairman's passing on of your approach letter includes an instruction to meet up with Mr X.

5.5 **Interviews with Key Executives**

When you succeed in getting an appointment to meet a key executive, approach your contacts to see if you can obtain some information about the key executive and/or the company in which you are interested.

Don't overlook the possibility of talking to 'opposite numbers' in other organisations to 'get the feel' of the firm you are approaching. Such people can probably give you a good indication of the problems that concern their own and other similar organisations. It is also possible that they will know your interviewer.

Since you requested the interview, you should prepare your mental agenda. The interview may go one of two ways: either "How can you help us?" or "How can we help you?" Be prepared for either course. To the first, respond by asking for

information about current plans for/progress in/the area of your interest. To the second, respond as you would in a contact development interview.

Initially, plan any interview with a key executive in an interested but uncommitted fashion – remember you are only assessing each other as yet. If the reaction to your approach is that there is not a job to offer, then aim to obtain information, advice and leads to others who may have opportunities for you. But, given the chance of exploring the possibilities of working for this company, be alert to the needs or problems disclosed to you. Your response should be directed towards these

For example:

PROBLEM/NEED REVEALED	YOUR RESPONSE
Due to expansion, a new training programme becomes a matter of urgency for existing and new staff	<i>Your experience in recruiting staff – how you trained them with what results, numbers and time involved</i>
Previous incumbent in the post had all the skills needed but “rubbed everyone up the wrong way”	<i>Talk of the inter-personal skills you see as desirable; indicate your operating style and skills</i>
Sales fall off due to customer dissatisfaction	<i>Query whether an effective post-sales support might be developed</i>

Listen to the ‘problem’; relate it to your own experience: say how you cope, or could cope, with the ‘problem’ as revealed.

Don’t feel over-anxious, or too flattered, when key executives invite you to an interview with them. If they have not had you screened by the Personnel Department first, the likelihood is that they have problems and want to talk to you. Maybe they are looking for a needle in a haystack – and it is possible that you won’t suit each other. But they will at least be appreciative and having had the chance to talk to someone, whom they would otherwise have not met, about a possible solution to some of their problems.

The difference between interviews with key executives and interviews with ‘Personnel’ is that key executives will be looking for, and wanting confirmation of, your positive and contributive attributes – they may well be disposed to overlook more of your negative points than will staff in ‘Personnel’. Remember that the objective of any interview conducted by ‘Personnel’, however charming they may be, is to see whether there is anything negative about you that could screen you out of the competition.

Bear in mind, too, that if senior executives want to interview you (and particularly if Personnel is being by passed in the process), the likelihood is that you are being

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seen as contributing a possible solution to some problems. In these circumstances, the interviews are unlikely to be entrusted to someone in Personnel not closely associated or conversant with current difficulties. Moreover, the executives have to be able to get on with, and relate to, anyone they hire. Their own promotion prospects could be in jeopardy if they were to hire a 'Mistake'... so they would surely not talk to you if they thought you were one!

Finally – in an interview with a key executive:

- Don't try to discover the extent of all the problems of the whole organisation (unless it is very small).
- Stick to the needs or problems that appear to be of concern to your interviewer.
- Don't assume the problems have to be vast, complex or undetected: the small, the simple and the obvious are often at the core of an employer's anxieties.
- Don't lead with loaded questions asking for an exposure of 'problems' (because that might imply incompetence or inefficiency) and don't imply that any needs or problems are worse than they really are. Instead, speak positively about "this concern of yours for...", "the priorities of the situation...", "the area you are planning to move into ..."

6. NETWORKING

What is it?

Quite simply, networking meetings are brief, face to face sessions with your contacts, their contacts and their contacts

Networking is the means by which we can access the "hidden" or the "unadvertised" job market.

Networking patently represents the most powerful tool or process for researching a sector to determine whether that is where you want to be- or not, and if you do to enable you to land the job that you want within that sector. You will quickly come up to speed in what is happening, and the critical issues in sectors and organizations.

Why network?

Networking offers some distinctive advantages to the job hunter – research and anecdotal "evidence" suggests strongly that networking is the single largest route to a new job. It is particularly effective as vehicle for a complete career change. Some argue it is a powerful antidote to ageism.

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- You can set your own pace and be in control, as opposed to the implications of other job search processes via advertisement and / or intermediaries.
- The networker will be well positioned to obviate the need for a role to be advertised, thus avoiding the competition.
- Networking provides you with quick, effective and accumulating research to give you “proceed” or “don’t proceed” data with regard to particular sectors. It is a process, a valuable mind clearer.
- Networking allows self-presentation practice completely free-standing from formalized job descriptions.

Do’s

- Firstly create as long a list as you can of you’re A team to include family, friends, contacts, colleagues, suppliers, customers.
- Your objective will be to get referrals to their contacts.
- Prepare for each networking meeting. (Have a specific agenda).
- Ask loads of relevant questions
- Be proactive and talk about your background, achievements, aims, aspirations, your USPs, your strengths and portable skills.
- Ask for the contacts own contacts.
- Evaluate your meeting performance. (Be self critical).

Don’ts

- Never ask for a job. (It’s embarrassing and has nothing to do with effective networking).
- It isn’t advisable to mix networking with socializing. (Keep it taut and businesslike).
- Don’t be put off easily by suspicious or obstructive PA’s, or the contact you wish to have a networking meeting with.
- Never give up. Many are unhappy with the very idea of networking, disliking the idea of being obligated or finding the process threatening or too difficult. Practice and persistency pay off and the great majority of your networking contacts and their contacts will be more than helpful. *Wouldn’t you be?*

7. THE INTERNET

7.1 Using the Internet as a Tool for Your Job Search

The world wide web is a huge resource that you can use for a variety of activities as part of your job search strategy. Millions of companies advertise their products and services, offer career information, and provide background information into their history, company philosophy and even financial status. If you are an experienced 'surfer' you can swiftly pinpoint the relevant sites and information you need, download it, print sections of it, learn from it and communicate to companies of other users. For many people however, the Internet seems to be an incomprehensible modern phenomenon, requiring advanced IT skills and abilities to access and understand.

The next few pages offer some basic information to get you started. For those who are familiar with the Internet and its potential, there are some useful web site addresses and hints and tips to help you make the most of this wonderful electronic resource. If you are new to computers and the world wide web, this information will help take some of the mystique out of the process and open the door for you into a world of easily accessible information and potential career opportunities.

There are five main activities that you can carry out using the Internet when conducting your job search and these are:

- Researching companies to target for your job search.
- Viewing company websites who have a web page showing their current vacancies
- Researching and contacting recruitment agencies and search and selection consultancies and accessing job vacancies.
- E-mailing your application letters and CVs
- Researching background information on a company prior to interview.

7.2 A Database of Companies to Approach

Millions of companies use the Internet to advertise their products and services and finding specific ones to target as part of your job search can be a daunting task. Recognising that searching for specific detail amongst a plethora of information is like searching for the proverbial 'needle in a haystack', a number of companies have set up 'search engines' on the Internet to filter and narrow searches to make them more manageable.

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There are a number of search engines and a few examples are given below. You can access these by typing the address (e.g. www.google.co.uk) in the address box at the top of your home Internet page. (Your home Internet page is accessed through your own computer's access channel, e.g. Internet Explorer 8 etc).

- www.askjeeves.com
- www.ukplus.co.uk
- www.excite.co.uk
- www.yahoo.co.uk
- www.allthetopbanaas.com

In addition to these, your home Internet page may have a searching capability and you can use this to carry out an additional search e.g. (www.aol.com)

Each search engine asks you for 'key words' or in the case of askjeeves.com, a question. When you have typed in the key words, for example 'retail' 'public services' or even 'jobs', the search engine produces a list of sites which are related to those words.

A note of caution here – searches can throw up hundreds or even thousands of sites, some of which are totally irrelevant. Some search engines will list the most relevant sites at the top of their lists, so it is worth looking through these first. As the search engines look for sites all over the world, you can narrow your search by putting 'uk' in front of your key words.

To open a site, double click your mouse on the highlighted section of the site listing. Quite often there are links from sites to related sites, so for example if you open the Wessex Water site (www.wessexwater.co.uk) you can click on links to other UK water companies as well as government and regulatory departments. The website for the BBC (www.bbc.co.uk) also has many useful links – the only danger here is becoming sidetracked, reading useful information unrelated to your job search!

It's a good idea to keep a note of useful web site addresses so that you can return to them at your leisure. You can build up a directory and begin to identify the companies you wish to target. Some company sites contain information about career opportunities and recruitment and you may be able to apply direct.

As with all companies contacted, you need to keep a note of when you sent your details so that you know when to follow up your approach.

7.3 Browsing Company Websites for Vacancies

Once you have identified companies for your job search and found that they have a vacancies web page as part of their website, then you should be reviewing these sites on a regular basis. The easiest way to do this is to add the company website domain name to your "Favourites" folder

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7.4 Recruitment Companies on the Net

Many recruitment companies have seen the potential of the world wide web as a vehicle for advertising positions and collecting CVs and information from potential applicants. Registering your interest in a position or searching lists of advertised vacancies can be done easily and economically from your computer terminal.

This method of distributing your CV and researching possible opportunities should not be seen as an alternative to more traditional methods, as it is sometimes unclear how regularly the jobs are updated, and how efficient agencies are at collecting and reviewing details which come to them electronically. Instead it should be seen as complementary to your job search, maximising your exposure in the market place and providing an additional source of information on potential career opportunities.

There are hundreds of recruitment companies who advertise on the Internet. If you carry out a search as detailed previously using the key words 'recruitment companies' your search engine will produce a list for you. Some of these specify type of industry or geographical location, for example www.oconnell.co.uk a recruitment company specialising in financial services, or www.ceema.com , a Bedfordshire based company providing recruitment services for engineering or technical personnel.

There are some specific job vacancies sites and a few examples of these are:

- www.monster.co.uk
- www.reed.co.uk
- www.totaljobs.com
- www.jobsite.com
- www.fish4jobs.co.uk

For a more comprehensive list see Information Guide No.2

7.5 E-Mailing Your Application and CV

The electronic communication system or 'e-mail' allows you to transmit your CV to your target company instantly and economically, without having to rely on the vagaries of the British postal system.

Some company sites have personal details sections, incorporated in them which allow you to register directly with them using their preferred format. All you need to do for these is fill in the boxes with your own details and 'hit the button' to send them.

You may, however, wish to send an e-mail to a company instead of a direct approach letter, attaching your CV, and this section tells you how to do this.

You will have a mailing system on your computer, perhaps Microsoft Outlook Express or Hotmail. These differ in design and layout, but essentially the principle is the same. There is a space for the e-mail address you are sending your communication to, a space for the subject and copies to, plus a large section in which you can write your main message. (The return address, i.e. your e-mail information, will appear on the receiver's copy). You can attach your CV to your e-mail as a word document which will then be opened on receipt.

7.6 Research Prior to Interview

The information given by companies on the Internet provides an excellent resource for research on the background and activities of companies, once you have that all important interview date. Spending time studying this information is time well spent as it will give you the confidence to discuss the company with the interviewer, provide you with material to construct some questions to ask, and enable the interviewer to see that you are genuinely interested in the company and the position you are applying for, as you have done some prior research.

You can find information on specific companies either by using the search engines as described previously, or by typing the address directly into the address box at the top of your home Internet page.

(Many of the larger companies are easy to find as you can just type in their name plus 'co.uk' or 'com', however this does not always work so you may need to go through the search process).

When you access a company's web site, the home page will come up first and enter at the top of the home page or down the left hand side will be a number of titled navigation bars e.g. Company History, Latest News, Products/Service, Recruitment etc. By clicking on the relevant bar, will take you to the pages concerned.

You can either print the relevant information for later reading or make notes on particular sections.