



## [DR. SHIRLEY'S CAREER CORNER]

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# Job search mechanics: Strategies for success, part 2

According to research conducted by Marcia Bench, founder of the Career Coach Institute, the “unpublished or hidden” job market — where an opening is filled without it ever being advertised — represents approximately 80 percent of the total jobs filled each year. So, this strategy is very important to an effective job search campaign. I have found it very interesting, though, that many job seekers do not pursue it. Perhaps this is because they do not know it exists, or they do not know how to access it.

Strategies within the “unpublished or hidden” job market include: 1) Networking for unpublished openings, 2) Targeted mail contacts with companies, 3) News and company events as a vehicle for job search contacts and 4) Persuading a company to create a job (yes, it's possible).

### Networking for unpublished openings

First of all, networking is not telling everyone you know that you are out of work and need a job. Certainly, you can get in touch with your contacts to let them know of your status, and get their recommendations as well as referrals. True networking as a strategy for the job search is meeting with the appropriate people in a specific industry or career focus area to discover what they do and what their firm's current needs are. A key here is developing “strategic relationships.” This process is also known as “informational interviewing.”

To maximize the value of networking, here are some principles to keep in mind:

➤ Remember the goal of networking. It is to gain information and referrals. Many times, if you initially focus

on “asking” for a job, you may put your contact on the defensive and impede your results.

➤ Apply the “1:10” rule. Everybody knows at least 10 other people from various parts of their life. Then, realize that each of these people knows at least 10 other people. The likelihood that several of these individuals will know someone who works in one of your target industries is very high.

➤ Use a powerful approach letter. Usually, you should mail a letter to the prospective networking contact first. Then, follow up by phone. Effective use of the phone and e-mail can double your response in reaching people.

➤ Schedule a specific time for the meeting. Usually a 15-20 minute meeting will suffice. Face-to-face is better, but a phone meeting can also yield great results.

➤ Research the company and networking contact. Do your homework. You will create a positive impression if you are prepared with knowledge of the company, and, when possible, the contact as well.

➤ Prepare a verbal summary. Have a verbal 1- to 2-minute summary of your background prepared. You can always e-mail a résumé after the meeting along with your thank-you letter.

Remember — the objective of the networking meeting is to gather information and referrals.

### Targeted mail contacts with companies

What you do here is to approach companies within your target industry and geographic range that may have a need that matches your areas of expertise. The letter should be addressed

to a hiring manager and simply describe your background, current situation (as necessary) and how you may be able to meet a need of the employer. This targeted letter introduces you to the company and opens the door to further conversation.

### News and company events as a vehicle for job search contacts

Directing an approach letter to a recent event in the industry or company can improve its chances of leading to a meeting. News of such events can be found by perusing the local business journals or the business section of the local newspaper. New product launches, recipients of venture capital or other investment funds, relocations, company expansions and the like are all appropriate types of events for this strategy. The question to keep in mind while reading these articles is, “What job opportunities might this event lead to?”

### Persuading a company to create a job

I know this may sound far-fetched, but it can happen. Keys to getting a job created for you include:

➤ Determining what you want to do.  
➤ Finding an industry/company that could benefit.

➤ Conducting informational interviews with hiring managers to learn more about their needs.

➤ Identifying a need they have that you could fill.

➤ Submitting a proposal for a job you could do for them — including a cost/benefit analysis — then marketing yourself for the job.

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