



Researching and Contacting Employers

Researching employers in your field and contacting them directly – whether you know they are actively recruiting for positions or not – is another work search strategy that has proven effective.

According to University of Alberta Career and Placement Services' most recent employment survey of UofA graduates, 42.1% of respondents found out about the job they held six months after graduation by contacting the employer directly.

There is an abundance of information and resources (e.g. industry directories) available at the campus career centre, in the library, on the Internet, and from professional associations. The question is, “where do I start?” These tips can help.

Tips

1. Watch for job postings

Get in the habit of reading the career section in the newspaper or on-line. Keep a file of jobs that appeal to you. Later, you can go through and identify possible employers. This will also help you become familiar with qualifications necessary for specific jobs. Some employers advertise their job vacancies in the newspapers (e.g. “Careers” section), professional journals, employment bulletins, and on their websites or employment sites on the Internet.

2. Check credibility

With any information, print or electronic, it is important to check the credibility of the source. Make sure what you are reading is current, relevant, and accurate.

3. Create a pitch

Write down and practice your “pitch” for contacting employers. Think about how you would introduce yourself and what you have to offer. Say your “pitch” to others and ask for feedback. Start with employers at the bottom of your list in order to practice the pitch and respond to questions. The more you practice what you want to say the more natural you will sound when you speak to employers.

4. Volunteer/intern

For many people, the best method for learning is doing. The true nature of the work environment will be clearer to you if you can experience it. Ask the organization of your choice if there is a possibility for summer or part-time employment. Volunteer work is another option.

5. Job market trends

Become familiar with the social, political, and economic trends and how they can affect the job market. This will be helpful in this stage of your employment search and beyond.

6. Ask about future openings

Some employers may simply tell you that they do not have anything available and leave it at that. However, you can ask them if you may leave your resume in case of future openings, or offer to contact them again in a few weeks to see if the situation has changed.