

Searching for and Finding a Job

If you want to be successful in your job search, then being focussed and targeted is the quickest and easiest way. In order to do this, you need to consider the following points:

Choosing a Job:

Your skills, aptitude and motivation

Take a step back and be honest with yourself.

Forget what job you have in mind for a second and think about three things:

What skills do you have evidence of being great at already?

Be brutally honest here, you may have a job that involves analysis but if you always delegate it to someone else then this is not one of your key skills!

Think about what people come to you for advice on, consider where your comfort zones are in your current job, make a list of the skills that you know you can rely on in a sticky situation and talk about at length.

Where do you have natural flair or ability?

Now think about what you're naturally good at; even if you have a job in reconciliation in Finance you may still have creative flair. These may not be things you use very often so you may not have much evidence of it, but if you know you can deliver when challenged then put them on the list.

What motivates you?

Here you can put down everything you really enjoy doing. Don't think careers necessarily, think fun. Think about what you wanted to do when you were a kid and what you do in your spare time. Think about what gives you a kick at work. It might be watching football and reading the transfer news or getting a promotion, but write it down.

Now look at them together and consider which job would put your skills to good use whilst touching on activities / environments that motivate you. Again, be realistic here. You may not be good enough to be a pro golfer but you may have marketing skills that could be put to use at a golfing products manufacturer. It may be less obvious than that; you may really enjoy completing tasks, so you may want a career in New Product Development where you see a product through from concept through to implementation on launch day.

Clearly the jobs you have done and the career you are in at the moment will weigh heavily on the jobs you are suitable for, but try to be creative and think outside just the obvious.

If you're stuck, go back to basics and try the planner on the Prospects site. Just a warning, this is aimed specifically at graduates looking for their first role, but it could provide you with a reminder of the basic skills you now take for granted. You have to register first but could be beneficial. <http://www.prospects.ac.uk/> - What jobs would suit me

Industries

If you're looking at a change in industry, you need to consider which working environments appeal to you and the sort of lifestyle you want. By doing a little research, and asking around, you will soon find out the pace, culture, levels of pressure and environments of the industries you are interested in.

If you've come to our website and found this document then you're already focussing on either Retail or FMCG (because that's where we recruit) which is a start. But there are many different areas within these. For example you may want to stay in sales and account management but have you considered foodservice rather than the multiples?

Salary levels

Make sure you understand all of the details of your salary and package, including bonuses, commission, pension (and the % you and your employer contribute), car allowance, health care etc. Go to HR and ask them if you're unsure.

Now decide what aspects of these are important to you and what you would be happy to discard in the search for the right job. Make these requirements specific. With regards to basic salary, whilst pay raises within one company might be 5%, in changing company, you should look for more of an increase but again, be realistic. Most managers at salaries of £25k to £60k will not get much more than a 12% increase in moving jobs, but this is not a rule and the % increase goes up as the starting salary increases.

Companies & Culture

This is an important part of your job search. Once you've narrowed your search into an industry, do your research and look into what companies would suit you. Lots can be found from websites, even more from word of mouth.

Remember to search the news pages for latest news on their financial and commercial developments; this will give you an idea of how secure a job with this company will be. Companies going through large redundancies and profit warnings should be avoided, although if comments from the chairman / CEO are talking of a convincing turnaround and a credible change in strategy this may be a good time for opportunities and growth.

Where to Look:

Recruitment Businesses & Agencies

Choose one which specialises in your area and sector as these are often more respected than generalists and will place you more accurately. Agencies can be found via internet searches such as Google, and their websites will have a contact number or email address. Alternatively look out for recommendations, if they have already placed somebody in your industry and your contact was happy with the service, then this could be a good place to start. The best way of deciding which recruitment consultancy to work with is to read their website and testimonials, and then give them a call. They will advertise jobs on their website but there are often more than those posted. Talk to a consultant in the field you want to work in and gauge their understanding of the area you are interested in and most importantly your requirements. Their understanding is essential if they are going to represent you in the marketplace.

Recruitment consultants act as the intermediary between you and the client. A good consultant will always provide you with detailed information on the role and company, they will take time to prepare you for the company interviews and they will give you detailed feedback at every stage. They will advise you on which moves are right for you and which ones to avoid. They should explain in detail, the culture and environment of their client so that if successful, you will have made the right choice and fit. They will also negotiate the salary and package offered to you if you are successful to sit in line with the requirements you discussed.

Once you have explained what you're looking for, most consultants will ask you to send your CV in by email. Recruitment consultants will tell you straight away whether they have a job you're right for or not.

If there is something appropriate, they'll arrange a full interview between you and one of their consultants so that they can properly assess your suitability.

After that, if your interview went well, they will discuss you and your ability with the company they are recruiting for. If they agree that you sound right for the role, you will then be invited to an interview with the company itself. If successful, this is normally followed by a final interview and on some occasions an assessment centre or psychometric testing.

If the consultant doesn't have something immediately suitable, they'll put your details on their database so that when any new job comes up, your details will be compared with the role requirements and you will be called about anything you might be right for.

On some occasions consultants will make calls to your desired businesses on your behalf, without revealing your name, to see if they have a vacancy that may be right for you. In order to do this the consultant will organise a full interview with you and get all of your needs, requirements and wants from your next role. Consultants often have strong relationships with many of these companies and will be able to get quick and useful information or opportunities to help you in your job search. They will then organise interviews as detailed above.

Any good consultancy will also offer a free post-placement service. This means that someone from the company stays in contact with you throughout your first year in your new role. This is to ensure you are getting everything you were told about, that you are properly trained and welcomed into the company and that any difficulties are ironed out. They will also talk to your line manager to make sure that all is going well from their point of view.

Websites

If you are looking for a job it is a good idea to post your CV on jobsites such as Monster. This is the largest CV database and many recruiters and agencies look for talent here. In addition a large number of businesses place adverts on these sites widening your search for a new role.

Websites to search for jobs in general are:

Monster.co.uk
TotalJobs.co.uk
Jobserve.com
Jobsite.co.uk
telegraph.co.uk
timesonline.co.uk

Websites to search for jobs in Retail are:

Retail Choice
In Retail

Websites to search for jobs in FMCG are:

The Grocer
Food Manufacture
Marketing
Marketing Week

Websites to search for jobs in IT are:

CWjobs.co.uk

Press

Publications to search for jobs in general are:

Daily Telegraph

Sunday Times

Publications to search for jobs in Retail are:

Retail Week

Drapers

Publications to search for jobs in FMCG are:

The Grocer

Food Manufacture

Marketing

Marketing Week

These lists are by no means exhaustive, but should provide you with a starting point for your search.