

**How wide is my
network?**
The Basics...



During your job search your first thought will often be who I might know that can help me with advice, information or indeed tell me about a vacancy and help me get my next role.

Clearly the job boards and newspapers are full of vacancies but surprisingly it's only a small number of available jobs which are advertised publicly. Can this be true? Where are these roles and how can you access them?

The answer is that they are either advertised internally initially or, in some cases, have not actually been officially advertised or notified to the HR team or agencies. Networking and direct contact are the best ways to unearth these hidden positions.

So if you haven't given it much thought so far re how wide your existing network is? With a bit of thought and effort you might find that it is wider than you think.

Firstly, who do you already know?

Step 1, get organized! Create a list of people you can contact. Getting your key contacts and target companies down on paper gives you focus and confidence. The best way to start is take a large piece of paper, and think about your existing contacts. Draw circles on the page - one for each category. Examples can include "people I've worked beside and with", "Friends", "Clients", "Suppliers", "people I know socially" and so on. Then think of each category separately and draw up a list of people who you would be comfortable calling and speaking to. On a separate piece of paper, draw up a list of target organisations that you're primarily interested in working for.

Two, go online

Having drawn up your contact lists, you now need to track them down and unless you have a great "black book" of contact numbers you will likely have to find them online. Using a professional networking website such as LinkedIn is the best way to start. LinkedIn is more professional for a job search than Facebook or similar. Having your network online allows you to search more effectively for contacts at your target firms, and is far more effective than putting your CV 'out there' and hoping the phone will start ringing.

LinkedIn is a great way to increase your profile.

Third, events you should consider attending

Attending job related events, conferences and meetings increases your visibility and will increase your confidence and network considerably. When you make contact with your network ask them which events they recommend and when and if you do attend make sure you use your time effectively and take lots of business cards. Likewise don't forget to ask for business cards and be effective at following up with them post event.

Locally you will also find business networking meetings, breakfast meetings and similar. Attend as many as you can and you will soon work out which are effective ones to support your search and which ones are not.

Four, you need to keep in touch for networking to work

Great though you may be you need to remind your network that you are still looking for that elusive job and are still active. Networking is most effective when people have got you in their mind. Keeping in regular contact is very important; as it makes it more likely that they'll think of you should an opportunity arise. And don't forget that networking is a two-way process, so think about ways you can help and support them.

Finding someone you trust and respect to listen and give you 'sage advice' when needed is key. This might be a previous colleague, someone you meet during your networking or an agency such as ours. Here at Tmrecruit we pride ourselves in our knowledge and breadth of experience. Our approach is to understand and support the candidates we work with and to aim to build long term partnerships. We might not know all the answers to your questions but we might know someone or an organization that does!

Five, get out there

For your network to really understand what you're looking for, they'll need to spend some time with you. So don't be shy about calling them and suggesting a meeting. Give them a reason to meet you too, for example to discuss whether there is anyone you know that they might like to meet in order to help them with their business?

Six, keep your notes up to date

You will be making lots of calls and having multiple meetings. Unless you have a great memory your contacts will soon blur and you will forget what you've already discussed were with each person, when you met and what you agreed as next steps. Keeping a detailed log of your meetings serves two purposes. Firstly it is a great reminder of what you need to do to be successful. Secondly it will impress your network! You'll come across as professional and organized and demonstrate that you're taking your meetings with them seriously.

Seven, be patient as it will take a while

Be patient. If creating an effective network was easy everyone would be doing it and new roles and opportunities would be dropping on your desk with increasing frequency.

You may have to work long and hard to create a great network but in the end it will bear fruit. Not only in your job search but also to support you in the future when you are successfully placed in your next role.