

Navigating the Job Market: Alternatives to Recruitment Agencies and Online Job Boards

"I just feel like I'm not finding enough opportunities for myself." This is a common complaint that I am receiving from my clients at the minute. In the last two days I have had two clients say to me that they are speaking to agencies, searching online job boards and looking through the paper and are not seeing opportunities that interest them or relevant to their skills sets.

Recruitment agencies are suffering severely in the current economic climate, with more businesses recruiting in-house or not recruiting at all. Some agencies are reporting a 40-50% reduction in fees in comparison to this time last year and we have seen significant redundancies or reduction of staff across most players in the Australian market.

Budget restraints mean that even those organisations that don't have a recruitment freeze (or "cool down") may not be using traditional methods of recruitment. This is supported by the ANZ bank's job advertisement series, which found that Internet and newspaper job advertisements fell by 6.7% in June, following a couple of months of stabilisation, which is takes the annual fall for 51.4%.

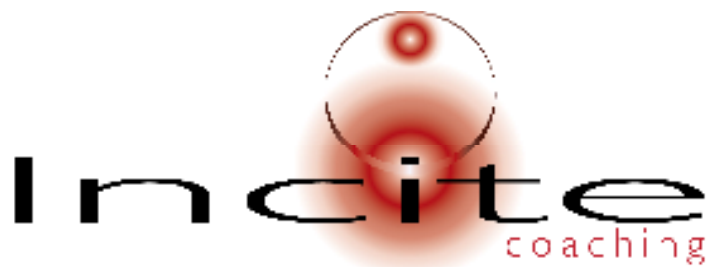
Individuals are still finding new jobs and companies are still recruiting, so how do you find these opportunities?

1) Network

John Lees, reports that approximately 60% of job seekers find work through their network, in comparison to merely 10% through recruitment agencies. Quite often the job opportunity doesn't necessarily come through your first degree network, rather through their network.

Create a list of all the people that you know and batch them into groups (e.g. sports teams, previous colleagues, parents of your kid's friends). Then get clear about what you want to achieve and what outcomes you are looking for. For example if you have a specific company you would like to work for, write that down. If you would like a contact within an organisation where you have applied for a role directly, write that down.

Once you have your outcomes listed email, call or meet members of your network and ask for their help. Many people have a fear of burdening their network or coming across as "desperate." However, if done in the right way, most people are happy to help their friends/network, feeling privileged to have been asked. Ask for help in an informal way, or over coffee. If you are composing an email, include your request as part of another relevant topic to your groups.



By keeping track of who you have contacted and what the outcomes were and when you need to follow up, you will soon feel like you are making progress. Tracking your progress using Excel or another such tool makes it even easier.

2) Approach Companies Directly

Is there a company or industry that you have always wanted to work for?

Why not research opportunities with them directly? If you were to go to a recruitment agency, they would contact these organisations on your behalf. As many organisations do not have the budget to work with recruitment agencies. Why not try this yourself?

First of all, get really clear about why you want to work for this organisation. What is the benefit to them of hiring you (have you worked for a competitor previously? Do you have a strong understanding of the industry? Do you have invaluable contacts to help with business development?

Then research their website. Get a strong indication of who they are and what projects they are working on. Look at the careers section of their website; do they have any relevant job opportunities? Speak to your network and see if there are any hints that they may be recruiting in the future? For example if you know that the business is currently tendering for a large project, this could mean that there will be opportunities available if this is won.

Once you have gathered this information, and feel confident about the benefits of hiring you, call or apply on line. Remember if you are applying to a specific job, tailor your resume accordingly (for information on how to do this [download your free copy](#) of the E-book, **Overcoming Resume Roadblocks: 10 Steps to Success**). If you are calling to find out if there are any opportunities, firstly see if your network knows any contacts within the business. Alternatively, find the number for HR or call via the reception desk. Explain your reason for the call, why you would love to work for the company and ask if they have current opportunities, or potential opportunities in the future. An employer is more likely to hire somebody who is genuinely keen to work for their organisation, so even if they don't have any opportunities available right now, ask if you can send through your resume, so that it is on file. Such calls can also result in an informal meeting, in case things change in future.

By using a wholistic approach to your job search, you are more likely to find the job you want. Use the above strategies in conjunction with existing relationships with recruiters and frequently checking online job boards, papers and industry publications.

For a more in depth discussion of how you can find job opportunities that suit you, contact +61 2 9560 4407 or email info@incitecoaching.com.au to speak to one of our Career Coaches.