

HOW **2** guide: “Prospecting” Employers

Savvy job seekers recognize that a targeted job search will often yield better results than just surfing commercial job boards. What do we mean by a “targeted” job search? Instead of waiting to see what positions turn up on job boards, you should “target” the companies where you want to work, and then visit the company website for job postings. The challenge, therefore, is to find a list of companies in your field. Fortunately, there are now resources available that make this kind of research much easier. For example, check out www.zoominfo.com. Let’s say you were an Accounting major looking for a list of accounting firms in Naples. You would simply type in the search area – “accounting naples florida.” Or try “marketing atlanta georgia.” A listing of firms will appear, along with a brief profile of the company, a contact phone number and, most important, the web address. You can then visit the company website and check for job postings.

Search Tip: The search process is more manageable if you know the industry and city/state where you want to work.

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if there aren’t any jobs posted that I am qualified for?

You can bookmark the site in your favorites and check back weekly. However, if you really want to work for this company, you may consider applying for an open job you would love to have, even if your qualifications don’t match up perfectly. (For example: The preferred qualifications ask for two years experience. You don’t have two, but completed a couple of good internships. Or, the position asks for a Management Degree and you have a Communication degree, but have supervisory experience.) If you adopt this approach, you must make a compelling argument as to why you are a good fit for the position, despite whatever qualifications you may be lacking. The key is to get the interview where you can really sell yourself!

What do I do if there aren’t any job openings posted on the company website?

Consider sending a “prospecting letter,” which is similar to a cover letter. The goal of the prospecting letter is to:

- 1) Express why you are interested in working for the company
- 2) Briefly summarize your qualifications
- 3) Communicate your willingness to further discuss possible employment opportunities

Include a copy of your resume in the email. Use your best judgment to determine which person in the company is the most appropriate to send the letter. There are no guarantees that you will even get a response from your letter. However, this approach has worked for job seekers. And remember, nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Other helpful resources: Check out www.referenceusa.com, a database with over 14 million companies. It can be accessed only through the FGCU Library website. Got to <http://library.fgcu.edu/> and select “Articles and Databases.” You should also look into the websites of the professional associations related to your field.

Checking company websites for job postings can be a time-consuming process, and consequently, many job seekers settle for just using commercial job boards since it is easier. The problem with that strategy is that only a relatively small percentage of available jobs at any given time are posted on job boards.

If you have any questions about the “prospecting” process or how to craft a “prospecting letter,” schedule an appointment to meet with a Career Advisor by using the contact information at the top of the page.

(To view a sample “prospecting letter,” as well as all the other job search guides used by FGCU Career Services, go to: <http://studentservices.fgcu.edu/Careers/handouts.asp>)