

WORK CENTRAL AB

The Hidden Job Market

How to Reach Roles That Are Never Publicly Posted

A Career Resource from Work Central AB

Understanding the Hidden Job Market

The "hidden job market" refers to positions that are filled without ever being publicly advertised - through referrals, internal promotions, or direct outreach. Estimates vary, but a significant share of roles are filled this way, which means job seekers who rely only on job boards may be missing a large portion of real opportunities.

1. Why the Hidden Job Market Exists

- Posting and screening applications takes time and money, so employers often fill roles through trusted referrals first.
- Smaller organizations, common throughout Central Alberta, may not have formal recruiting processes at all.
- Some roles are created for the right candidate rather than posted from a pre-written job description.

2. How to Access It

- Reach out directly to organizations you're interested in, even without a posted opening - a well-written introduction can open a conversation.
- Request informational interviews to learn about a company or industry and build a relationship before a role opens up.
- Attend local industry events, job fairs, and association meetings where hiring managers are present.
- Stay active and visible on LinkedIn so you come to mind when someone is thinking of who to refer.
- Let your network know specifically what kind of role you're looking for - vague requests are harder to act on.

3. Making a Direct Approach

Cold Outreach Template

Subject: Interest in Opportunities at [Company Name]

Hi [Name], I've admired [Company Name]'s work in [specific area] and wanted to reach out directly. I have a background in [your field/skills] and would welcome the chance to connect, even briefly, to learn more about your team and share a bit about my experience. Would you be open to a short call in the coming weeks?

4. Staying Patient and Consistent

Hidden job market strategies tend to take longer to pay off than applying to postings, but they often lead to stronger-fit roles. Treat it as an ongoing part of your search rather than a one-time effort - consistency matters more than any single outreach message.

Hidden Job Market Checklist

- ✓ Identified 5-10 target employers, even without posted openings
- ✓ Drafted a direct outreach message template
- ✓ Requested at least one informational interview
- ✓ Updated LinkedIn to reflect what you're looking for
- ✓ Told your existing network specifically what role you want

Keep Your Job Search Moving With Work Central AB

Pair this strategy with our Networking Strategies guide for a complete approach to uncovering unadvertised opportunities. Visit workcentralab.ca/resources.