

## Robert R. McComsey Career Development Center



### **JOB SEARCHING FOR ARTISTS: FINDING THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET**

Alfred University  
Alfred, NY 14802

Phone: 607-871-2164  
Fax: 607-871-2791  
[www.alfred.edu/cdc](http://www.alfred.edu/cdc) - [cdc@alfred.edu](mailto:cdc@alfred.edu)

*Hours: 8:30-4:30 Monday-Friday  
Walk-in hours: 1:00-4:30 Tues., Wed., and Thurs.*

When the job market is tight, you need to use different strategies to find the opportunity for you. Conventional wisdom tells us that 75 – 85% of the jobs out there are **not** advertised. However, most students spend their time applying for the positions they see in the classifieds and on the mega-job websites like Monster. Instead of mass-mailing resumes, try to tap into that “hidden job market” that includes the jobs that are not widely advertised.

According to a recent NACE survey, some of the most effective ways companies said they recruited college graduates include:

- Hiring through their internship and co-op programs
- Referrals from current employees
- Sourcing through college career services offices
- Responses to postings on their own company website
- Sourcing through job fairs
- Sourcing through professional societies/associations
- Sourcing through internet sites and online resume databases
- Sourcing through search firms

#### **Use this list to add to your current job-searching strategies.**

*1. Mega-sites like [Monster.com](http://Monster.com); [Flipdog.com](http://Flipdog.com); [Hotjobs.com](http://Hotjobs.com); [CareerBuilder.com](http://CareerBuilder.com), etc.*  
The situation: Mega-sites like these are often discouraging for artists, except experienced commercial artists.

The strategy: First, use them cautiously. Fill in keywords (e.g. “Quark”) rather than using the search function. Then, instead of clicking “Send” to transmit your resume through the mega-site, just note the company name and find **their** website. Next, apply directly to their site. HR representatives are much more likely to pay attention. We do recommend posting your resume on mega-sites – it certainly won’t hurt – just don’t use this as your primary job search method.

*2. Websites that are specific to your field and/or geographic region*

The situation: Most companies who do not want to pay the huge dollars to advertise on Monster-type sites will pay smaller amounts to post jobs to their own industry websites, or to their local sites. For example, if you want to work in wood, you might be better off using [www.woodturners.org](http://www.woodturners.org). If you want to work in DC, try [www.cultural-alliance.com](http://www.cultural-alliance.com). Ask at the CDC for more ideas.

The strategy: At the CDC, we have a database of several hundred websites organized by career field. Ask us for a printout of the ones you’re interested in. Or, do a Google search on “marketing jobs” (for example), and see what comes up.

**Always check the online classifieds of the city's newspaper.** Many have a resume database you can post to, as well as a "push" feature to email you jobs that match your criteria.

### *3. Third party recruiters/Employment Agencies*

The situation: Depending on your industry of choice, many companies are turning to these search firms to find employees. In a tight job market it makes sense to register with the LOCAL employment agencies in your area. Often, temporary positions turn permanent.

The strategy: Find out which search firms are local to your cities of choice by using the phone book, Internet yellow pages, or some other search method – or ask at the CDC for assistance. Contact the search firms, describe your degree and experience, and ask if they are able to place people with your skills and qualifications. If they can, stop in and register.

### *4. Department of Labor*

The situation: Many businesses and organizations do not want to post job openings to national websites – they may want to recruit local candidates. Instead, they choose their local DOLs.

The strategy: If you are in town, visit the DOL and register with them. If you are conducting an out-of-town job search, go to America's Job Bank, which is the web equivalent at <[www.jobbankinfo.org](http://www.jobbankinfo.org)>. Use the zip code search for the cities you're interested in. You will find postings you won't see elsewhere.

### *5. Consider federal employment*

The situation: Within the next few years, over one-third of the federal workforce will be eligible for retirement. Federal jobs provide a decent salary, excellent benefits, job security...and they're hiring.

The strategy: Visit <[www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)> and see what's available. The website is a bit cumbersome, but well worth your time and patience. As you register, you'll need to know that most students are eligible for "competitive" positions (so you'll answer "no" to the first few series of questions). Also, most students are eligible for jobs at the GS-5 or GS-7 levels (higher for masters or doctorate degrees). There is quite a bit of lag time between the time you apply and the time you receive responses, but they are working on that.

### *6. Saxon Career Volunteer network/Alfred University Alumni*

The situation: A few hundred alumni have volunteered to be career mentors, and/or pass your resumes along to hiring managers for internship, co-op, and permanent positions. In a tight job market, having the Alfred connection can open doors that would otherwise remain closed.

The strategy: Ask at the CDC for a list of Saxon Career Volunteers in your career area/geographic area. Then, pick up our "Networking and Information Interviewing" handout for ideas of how to contact them. ALSO – when you graduate, be sure to register with the AU alumni office for complete access to their online database of the thousands of AU alumni.

### *7. CDC Employer Contact database*

The situation: The CDC maintains an extensive database of thousands of company contacts organized by state and industry. The database includes companies that have recruited at Alfred, posted a position with us, or have been identified as quality contacts.

The strategy: Ask a counselor at the CDC for a list of contacts in your industry/geographic area. Identify the ones you're interested in, and structure a cover letter and resume to mail or email them. Or, check their company websites and apply for positions online.

### *8. Use professional organizations*

The situation: Much of the hidden job market comes as a result of knowing people in the field. Many industries list postings with their professional organizations only, and do not bother with general newspapers or websites.

The strategy: First, find out from faculty or the CDC which professional organizations match your target industry. Many societies/organizations have student membership fees that are quite reasonable, and it may be well worth your while to join. Professional organizations offer services like mentoring, career networking, career fairs, professional development seminars, job banks limited to members, local city chapters, and much more. AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts), for example, offers a designer directory, membership list, monthly publication, advice to students on resume writing – AND it is completely free to students. Once you're a member, volunteer for committee work – it is the best way to get your name and skills out there to potential employers.

### *9. Consider applying your skills to a nonprofit organization*

The situation: Non-profit community organizations, human services agencies, volunteer centers and museums - though not in the for-profit business - still need people with a huge variety of skills. They are often community oriented, locally-based, and advertise available positions accordingly.

The strategy: Our #1 recommendation is to check <[www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)> a website of Action Without Borders. At any time you will find thousands of jobs and internships working for companies that are trying to do good. You can also search for a list of organizations in the cities in which you are interested, and apply directly to them. If Idealist doesn't turn anything up, a CDC counselor can assist you in finding lists of non-profit and community organizations for the cities you are interested in.

### *10. Use the resources of other universities*

The situation: Many universities offer "reciprocal services" to graduates of other colleges. You will often be able to search their job listings or use their career libraries, but you will need permission to do so. Also, many universities employ as many people as the whole village of Alfred.

The strategy: Contact the Director of the CDC and request a letter of reciprocity to the colleges and universities in your geographic area. The Director will contact the Career Services director of those universities and ask them to allow you permission to use their services. In most cases, the universities will respond directly to you with the services that they will extend to you. Also, look up the HR pages of colleges in your area and see what they are hiring for. As an added bonus, you usually get free tuition with a full-time job at a college.

### *11. Chambers of Commerce*

The situation: Most communities have a Chamber that includes all businesses from the tiny non-profits to the largest businesses in the city. They may have web and print directories that will help you locate organizations to which you may want to apply.

The strategy: Start with <[chamber-of-commerce.com](http://chamber-of-commerce.com)> for a city search. Each Chamber's website will look different, some much more high-tech than others. In any case, you can usually use it to find links to businesses' addresses and contact people. You can also sign up to receive visitor information that could be a gold mine for you.

### *12. Business Journals and Book of Lists*

The situation: Most cities publish weekly or monthly business newspapers and journals, and a yearly "Book of Lists" that includes the top businesses and organizations in just about every category – hospitals, non-profits, advertising agencies, etc.

The strategy: Start by going to <[www.abyznewslinks.com](http://www.abyznewslinks.com)> for a list of all the local and state news journals of the cities in which you are interested. Look for the

business journals and click on them. You can use this to research companies that are expanding into new markets or adding employees, or just to find out more about a company that you are interested in.

### *13. Networking*

The situation: In the annual outcome survey, Alfred University graduates indicated that the most effective way of finding a job was to network and develop personal contacts.

The strategy: First, tell everyone you know that you are looking for a job, and what kind. The “friend of a friend” strategy pays off much more often than the mass-mailing strategy. Second, ask at the CDC for a list of potential networking contacts and begin to conduct information interviews. For example, if you want to be a glass artist in Rochester, the best way to begin is by sitting down with current artists and asking for their advice. We can assist you in finding contacts, structuring your letter, phone call or email, or developing a list of information interview questions. Yes, this method is time intensive – but it works.

### *14. Attend trade shows and expositions*

The situation: As it says in *Cool Careers for Dummies*, “trade shows and expos are the equivalent of career shopping malls.” Hundreds of booths offer opportunities for you to network and get ideas you never would have thought of.

The strategy: Identify a couple of interest areas of yours - sports, comics, skiing, gardening, independent films, etc. Research and find trade shows and expos related to that interest area in or near your geographic area, or plan a trip around one of them (we can help with this if you are not sure where to begin). Get your resumes ready. Once you are there, walk around and check out the booths. You can collect business cards, ask about employment, ask the booth owners how they got their start and what they would recommend to a person wanting to get into that career, and even hand out resumes.

Remember, the counselors at the CDC are here to help you explore career options, structure a job search strategy, and deal with the details of the process (interviewing, salary negotiation, etc.)