



The network for women studying Science, Engineering,
Technology and the Built Environment in Scotland

Project Job Attack

Everywhere I look, I am being told that it is extremely difficult to get a job. On the news, in the papers, even my friends are complaining about the hundreds of job applications that they are sending off into the employment black hole. So here I am, a recent graduate trying to fight my corner in the rapidly expanding pool of prospective employees. Many would fold under the pressure, but not I: I have a plan of attack. It's not come to fruition yet, but it is certainly making headway...

So here goes Project Job Attack:

1. Strategic Applications

Instead of applying to every job that I could do (due to my unemployment causing panic to set in), I am narrowing my search and spending the time tailoring my CV and cover letter to the jobs that I REALLY want. This may be time consuming in the short term, but once you have a few versions of each, the process becomes much faster. This way I am targeting the jobs and companies that I can see myself working with and I am demonstrating to them that I have put time and effort into my application.

2. Contact and Ingratiate

I am not just another faceless name in a pile of applications, I am an asset that companies should want to employ but they don't know me well enough through my application alone. I always try to get a contact name and number so that a couple of days after applying, I can call to check that they have got my application. It always helps to build up a relationship with HR or the recruiting manager as they are more likely to feel that they know me and therefore my application standing out from the rest of the pile. I like to ask whether they have had a large number of applications and when they are looking to have a shortlist for interview. If I feel that they like me, I sometimes even ask how many people they are looking to interview? It never hurts to know how many you are up against!

3. Little Black Book

As well as applying to advertised vacancies, I want to build up a contact list of people that work in companies that I want to work in who potentially could offer me a job in the future. So my Little Black Book/fancy excel spreadsheet contains companies (on both the large and small scale), that I would happily work for. I start with just company names and after a few phone calls, I might have the names of HR personnel, the manager that looks after the team that I am interested in, or the regional recruitment manager. I have used the phonebook, LinkedIn, Facebook and word of mouth to help gain industry contacts. These contacts are very important and point 2 (contact and ingratiate) applies again. I always introduce myself to them and ask if they are looking to recruit any time soon for the role that I am looking for, do they offer internships/work experience placements that I could apply for and would they be happy for me to send them a CV?

4. Polite Pestering Perseverance

With my Little Black Book coming along nicely, I want to ensure that I am not missing out on opportunities and that my important industry contacts remember about me when a position becomes available. I take time to contact them on a regular basis (about once a month) just to check in. I sometimes send them an updated CV so that they know about any new qualifications or experience that I have gained. Other times, I ask about potential new vacancies when they have won new contracts or when I have heard about departments

expanding. These are busy people who I want on my side, so I am always polite, but I keep in regular contact and I persevere. The more time that I spend speaking to someone, allows them to build up a better picture of who I am and that allows me to become a person, not just another application.

So after a few months of implementation and 2 really solid interviews, I feel that it is starting to pay off. I know a lot more people in my industry sector and feel confident that they know me as a person so that I will be the name on the tip of their tongue the next time a job appears.

Clare Nisbet

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