

ON THE HUNT

Even after all the economic upheaval, the age-old skills of networking and researching still apply in the search for a new job.

BY LINDSAY SCOTT

Q I haven't looked for a new project management position in years. What should I be aware of?

A The job market for project managers may feel a little different, but not much has actually changed. There are still three routes you can take to find a position:

1. Start with your networks, both online and the good old-fashioned face-to-face. Don't just blanket-mail all your old colleagues and peers, though. If you haven't kept up-to-date with your connections, take the time to rebuild them. Networks are for life, not just for when you're looking for a job.

2. Target recruitment agencies that focus on particular sectors, job titles or types of work. Research your options and narrow down the possibilities. Too long a list will mean you can't realistically build a relationship; too short, and you could be missing out on opportunities.

3. Go right to the source. Sometimes it's best to go straight to the company. Along with browsing the want ads, draw up a list of companies you'd love to work for and regularly check for vacancies on their websites. Keep in mind, though, that many openings are never advertised. Making a direct approach to a human resource manager is often the best way to tap into these hidden opportunities.

Keep at It

No matter what route you take to reach your potential employer, you still have to have a plan. Identify your objective and how you plan to achieve it. Are you looking for a permanent, contract or interim role? What kind of organization, sector or project would you like to be a part of? What characteristics are you looking for in a role or organization?

Once you have a clear objective, you can move on to other tasks, including:

- Fine-tune your résumé.
- Write a cover letter template.
- Create and maintain online profiles on job boards and networks.
- Brush up on your "elevator pitch" for networking events.
- Practice interview techniques.

Only then should you start looking for a job. Before you reach out, research your target organization to understand its current business needs and project management culture. Be prepared with notes—the company

needs to hear why you are a good fit and what you can bring to it.

Keep a spreadsheet to track where you applied, contact details, dates, reference codes and URLs. When you are seeking employment, you could have many opportunities pending, so it pays to have them organized. The spreadsheet will also help you follow up. If you've reached out to a company or agency and haven't heard back, ask for an update. If you still don't hear anything,

scratch that one off your list—save your energy and sanity for other opportunities.

Finally, keep researching and leveraging all your available options.

The same old rules apply: Persistence pays off. Continue to work those pipelines of potential so you can feel confident you're taking all the right steps to make things happen for you. *PM*

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