

MASTERING A SPECULATIVE JOB SEARCH IN 5 STEPS

70% of job roles are filled without being advertised. Networking and speculative approaches are the keys to reaching the vast majority of vacancies. Speculative applications are often viewed as inefficient uses of jobseekers' time, as it's unlikely that anything will come of them. However, the Renovo career coaches believe that by mastering the art of the speculative job approach, you can significantly improve your career prospects. Here's how it's done:

1. Research

Make a list of companies you'd like to work for. Ask family and friends for ideas, look through the press and use online company research tools as well as LinkedIn. Rather than going through HR to begin with, identify the most senior person you'd most likely report to, as they will understand your specialist skillset. Call up the company to check that your contact is the right one, and you have the correct job title in case they have recently moved on. If they have, find the name of their replacement.

2. Target your letters

Now you have contact details, start writing. Make sure your letters or emails are targeted to the specific contact at the company. Your first paragraph should show that you've done your research and understand the company and its market.

3. Sell yourself

The remainder of the letter or email (keep it to one page) should inform the contact about your skills and achievements and explain how you can contribute to their company. Finish by suggesting a meeting or phone call in the future. Don't forget to mark it private and confidential before sending it – that way, it's more likely to be opened by the intended recipient

4. The follow-up call

When you follow up the letter, it may be tricky to make it past the receptionist – say that you're following up on your recent correspondence. Have a script ready so you don't come across as unprepared; your contact won't be impressed if you waste their time with an unfocused call. Remember that you're not trying to ask them for a job, but for advice and guidance with a view to securing a meeting. Aim to finish the call with the promise of another action – either a face-to-face meeting or another phone call in a couple of months' time.

Use this call to gain further information about their business needs. If they do not have any current vacancies find out about their recruitment process. How do they usually recruit? What skills do they look for? If they use agencies which ones? Finally would they be happy to connect on LinkedIn? This is a great way to keep on their radar so they will see any relevant updates/articles you share and any recommendations you receive.

5. Be realistic

Successful speculative approaches rely on you making a good first impression, so make sure you are focussed and are able to sell yourself effectively. Being proactive and taking this course of action requires plenty of determination – and a hint of good luck. Your goal should be to send out a high number of these letters, but each of them carefully targeted - remember, quality outweighs quantity.

Perennial is working in partnership with **Renovo** who provide our Employment Support Programme. Renovo is the UK's leading specialist provider of career transition and job search support having helped tens of thousands of people return to work twice as fast as the national average.

If you require help or support please call Perennial's helpline on 0800 093 8543 and speak to one of the team, or email services@perennial.org.uk and we will get back to you. Our office hours are Monday and Wednesday 9.30am – 5pm and Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9am – 5pm.

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