



# Get the Line on Unlisted Jobs

WITH A LITTLE DIGGING, YOU CAN MAKE SURE YOU'RE IN THE KNOW WHEN A SWEET OFFICE OPENS UP AT YOUR DREAM EMPLOYER. *by Daniel Bortz*

**YOUR NEXT JOB** probably won't be advertised. When it comes to filling positions at the director level and up, hiring managers prefer to target their ideal candidates rather than sift through applicant résumés. But don't just count on a call from a recruiter to pluck you from the ranks. "The job seeker who waits to be tapped on the shoulder might be waiting awhile," says Tonushree Mondal of HR consulting firm Mercer. Take these steps to find the job, since it may not find you.

## TALK TO THE TOP RECRUITERS

Higher-up HR reps tend to be gatekeepers for higher-level positions, so identify recruiters with sway at the businesses you admire. Can't determine the right person via LinkedIn? Scour the employer's career page for the most senior posting in your area and reach out to the person listed, says Kurt Kraeger, New York managing director at Robert Walters recruitment firm. Send a note saying,

"I submitted my résumé via normal channels but wanted to get in touch directly about my interest." Stay on the person's radar with a periodic email. "They may not look at it, but they'll remember your name," says Fred Coon, CEO at executive search firm Stewart Cooper & Coon.

## MAKE A FRIEND ON THE INSIDE

Since upper-level jobs are often revealed only internally, it can pay to establish relationships with peers at companies on your wish list, says Edina, Minn., executive career coach George Dow. Use LinkedIn to find a second-degree connection, then request an introduction from your mutual pal. Explain that you'd like to learn about what the company looks for in candidates. Once trust is established, ask your confidant for the favor of letting you know of openings. ("Forget about saying, 'Can you help me get a job?' or the person will feel used," warns Coon.) Offer something in return, like an intro to influencers in your network.

## IMPRESS THE C-SUITE CROWD

For you to be identified as a candidate, "companies need to see that you're a known commodity," says *Job Search Magic* author Susan Whitcomb. That means going beyond *attending* industry events. To capture the attention of those with hire power, you must steal the spotlight. Whitcomb suggests getting on the speaking docket at a trade conference or forming a cross-industry group on a trend in your field.

## GET THE BOSS'S BUY-IN

Want to climb at your current company? Ask the boss for a boost: "Under your direction I've learned so much and feel ready to take on a higher role. Can you help me find new opportunities here?" If that's uncomfortable, schedule a visit with the head of HR. "Say you're interested in moving up, and why," says Coon. Also, find a mole in finance, since filling jobs often requires budget sign off. Adds Coon: "It's detective work, pure and simple." **M**