



Strategic Job Search Techniques

Navigating the Hidden Job Market with AI Tools

THE JOB SEARCH REALITY CHECK

- **Low Conversion:** 4-6 interviews from 250+ applications (typical yield)
- **Hidden Market:** 70% of jobs filled through networking, referrals, internal promotions
- **Referral Power:** Referrals are 4-5x more likely to result in a hire
- **Referral Speed:** 40% faster hiring process for referred candidates (vs. cold applicants)

*Sources: Glassdoor. (n.d.). Job application statistics. <https://www.glassdoor.com/research> | Jobvite. (n.d.). 4 reasons to invest in employee referrals. <https://www.jobvite.com/blog/4-reasons-to-invest-in-employee-referrals> | LinkedIn Talent Solutions. (2024). Future of recruiting report. <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/resources/future-of-recruiting>

KEY STRATEGY: Stop competing with 250+ applicants. Learn to find opportunities BEFORE they are posted and get referred by insiders.

THE 4-STEP STRATEGIC JOB SEARCH

Key Mindset Shift: You're not looking for ANY job — you're targeting specific opportunities at specific companies where you can add value and grow. Strategic job seekers report 3x higher satisfaction with their eventual role.

1. **DEFINE YOUR TARGET** - Identify 3-5 target job titles using AI to discover variations you might miss

COPILOT PROMPT: "I'm interested in [target role]. What are all the different job titles companies might use for similar positions? Include variations across industries."

2. **BUILD TARGET COMPANY LIST** - Create a list of 20-30 target companies aligned with your values and goals

COPILOT PROMPT: "I'm interested in [target role] in [city/industry]. What types of companies or organizations hire for this role? Give me 10-15 specific employers in this area."

3. **RESEARCH BEFORE APPLYING** - Deep dive into each company's culture, challenges, and growth areas. Find insiders on LinkedIn to connect.
4. **APPLY STRATEGICALLY** - Tailor applications, time submissions strategically, seek referrals first. Quality over quantity approach.

AI-POWERED JOB TITLE DISCOVERY

COPILOT PROMPT 1 (Title Variations): "I'm interested in [target role]. What are all the different job titles companies might use for similar positions? Include variations across industries."

COPILOT PROMPT 2 (Career Paths): "What entry-level and mid-level positions lead to [target role]? What adjacent roles might also be a good fit for someone with my background in [field]?"

Example - Healthcare Administration: "Healthcare Administrator" also appears as: Health Services Manager, Clinical Operations Manager, Practice Manager, Medical Office Administrator, Patient Services Director

Action: Create a list of 5-10 job title variations. Set up alerts for ALL of them on LinkedIn, Indeed, and Career Launch. Expanding your title search can increase relevant opportunities by 3-5x.

AI-POWERED COMPANY DISCOVERY

COPILOT PROMPT 1 (Find Target Companies): "I'm interested in [target role] in [city/industry]. What types of companies or organizations hire for this role? Give me 10-15 specific employers in this area."

COPILOT PROMPT 2 (Dig Deeper): "Which companies in [location/industry] hire [target role]? Which are growing or hiring now?"

Example - HR Professional in Evansville, IN: AI-identified employers include Toyota Manufacturing Indiana, Old National Bank, Deaconess Health System, GAGE Marketing Group, USI, SWIRCA & More, Alcoa Warrick Operations

Action: Build a list of 15-20 target companies. Follow each on LinkedIn and set up company-specific job alerts. AI can surface 3-5x more relevant employers than manual searching alone.

BUILDING YOUR TARGET COMPANY LIST

- **Industry Leaders** - "Best Places to Work" lists, Fortune 500, industry publications
- **Growing Companies** - Inc. 5000, local business journals, LinkedIn news

- **Hidden Gems** - LinkedIn company pages, Glassdoor, alumni network employers
- **Local/Regional** - Chamber of Commerce, economic development sites, USI employer partners

COPILLOT RESEARCH PROMPT: "What are the top companies in [industry] in [location]? Include both large employers and growing mid-size companies. What are their recent news, growth areas, and company culture highlights?"

Company Selection Criteria:

- Mission/values alignment | Growth trajectory | Development opportunities
- Culture fit (Glassdoor reviews) | Location/remote options

Goal: 20-30 companies tracked in a spreadsheet (Company, Website, Key contacts, Job alerts set, Notes)

SET UP LINKEDIN JOB ALERTS

- **Step 1 - Search:** Click Jobs at the top of LinkedIn. Search your target role, location, and filter by job type and date posted.
- **Step 2 - Activate:** Toggle "Set Alert" at top of results. Choose Daily for active searches or Weekly to stay open.
- **Step 3 - Maximize:** LinkedIn allows up to 20 active alerts. Create one per job title variation AND one per target company page. Manage anytime under Jobs > Preferences > Job Alerts.

Pro Tip: Create a separate alert for each job title variation (e.g. "HR Manager" AND "Human Resources Manager"). Step-by-step video tutorial by Oliver Schinkten: [linkedin.com/learning/linkedin-quick-tips-24566373/set-up-job-alerts](https://www.linkedin.com/learning/linkedin-quick-tips-24566373/set-up-job-alerts) (free with a LinkedIn account)

OPTIMAL APPLICATION TIMING

- **Best Days:** Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (early in hiring manager's week)
- **Best Time:** 6-10 AM (before the daily flood of applications)
- **Speed Matters:** Apply within 24-48 hours of posting = 8x higher response rate (many positions receive 50%+ of applications in the first 48 hours)

Pro Tip: Set up instant job alerts on LinkedIn, Indeed, and Career Launch. When you get an alert for a great match, drop everything and apply within 24 hours with a tailored resume.

GETTING REFERRALS THAT WORK

DO:

- Research the person and company first | Be specific about the role you want
- Make it easy for them to say yes | Follow up with a thank you regardless

DON'T:

- Ask strangers to refer you cold | Send generic copy-paste messages
- Pressure or make them uncomfortable | Forget to update them on your progress

Referral Request Template

"Hi [Name], I noticed you work at [Company] and I'm very interested in the [Position] role. I've researched the company extensively and believe my experience in [relevant skill] would be valuable. Would you be open to a brief call to learn about your experience there? If you feel comfortable, I'd be grateful for a referral. Either way, I appreciate any insights you can share."

Why Referrals Work:

• **4-5x** more likely to be hired with a referral | **55%** faster hiring process | **46%** of hires at top companies come from referrals
 USI Alumni Mentor Network connects you with alumni at target companies — activate in Career Launch.

7-Day Action Plan

- Days 1-2:** Use Copilot to generate 5-10 job title variations. Set up alerts for each on LinkedIn, Indeed, and Career Launch.
- Days 3-4:** Build target company list (20-30 companies). Research each on LinkedIn and Glassdoor.
- Days 5-6:** Set up job alerts + identify 5 insider contacts at target companies via LinkedIn and USI Alumni Network.
- Day 7:** Send your first referral request using the template above. Then apply with a tailored resume within 24 hours of posting.

RESOURCES:

Indiana Partners:

Ascend Indiana - Job matching for Indiana talent (ascendindiana.com)

Parker Dewey - Paid micro-internships (parkerdewey.com)

Indiana INTERNnet - Internship database (indianaintern.net)

Job Search Tools:

Career Launch - Job postings + USI Alumni Network

LinkedIn Jobs + Company Research | Glassdoor - Reviews + Salary data

Apollo.io - Company + Contact research

USI Career Success Center
 Orr Center, Room 1051 | (812) 464-1865

Schedule an Appointment
usi.edu/career-success | Career Launch