



## **Jobseeker’s Guide to Finding a Job during the Holidays**

There is a bit of myth out there that says that companies don’t hire during the holidays. But it’s just that...a myth.

In my government recruitment portfolio heyday, December into January saw some of our busiest times. I remember going back to my desk after one particular Christmas week ‘down time’ with 17 jobs advertised across a number of business units, all closing around the same date. Let the shortlisting processes begin!

Another time, I had an urgent request with a major Institute/department to urgently run job application workshops for internal staff, two weeks before Christmas break, in preparation for a January/February restructure with all jobs being advertised on the open market, attracting lots of interest from people in the private sector.

Whichever sector you work in or are targeting for future job opportunities, putting your job search on hold during the Christmas period lead up and New Year’s spillover might not be a good move.

It is a bit like hockey great Wayne Gretzky said, “You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.” So, if you’re not looking for a job during the holiday period, even though they are out there ..... you’re not going to find one.

Employers in general hire all 12 months of the year. In fact, many new positions are funded to start with a new budget year — which often coincides with a new calendar year. (Horses for courses). Other hiring managers have hiring budgets that must be spent before the end of the calendar year — “use it or lose it.” Both of these scenarios can offer opportunities for jobseekers in December.

The holidays / festive season also offers some natural opportunities to network and spread the word about your job search: there are company parties, social gatherings, end-of-the-year professional association events, and even Christmas cards and letters. This can pave the way for follow-up opportunities into early January/February. Many of these strategies are available whether you're unemployed or if you have a job but are looking to improve your job situation.

Working on your job search during the holidays may also mean less competition from other candidates who put their job search on hold. Many people wait until January — making it a New Year's Resolution — to look for a new job. If you wait until January 2 to start — or resume— your job search, you'll very likely have more competition.

It may even be easier to connect with a hiring manager during December as many key personnel are in the office while lower level staff take paid holiday time off during the month.

Even if you aren't offered a job in December, you can lay a lot of the groundwork by making connections before the end of the year, making it more likely that you'll be hired quickly in the new year.

## **10 Ideas for Job Searching During the Holidays**

Here are some specific strategies you can use in your holiday job search.

- **Accept all invitations you receive for holiday parties and get-togethers.** Whether it's a social or charity event, dinner party, spouse's Christmas party, or professional association event, use these opportunities to reacquaint yourself with people who might be useful in your job search, and make new connections. Be sure to follow up.
- **Re-connect with old friends and colleagues.** Your network can be a great source of information, job leads, and referrals. Get back in touch with previous co-workers and supervisors, people from high school and college, former neighbors, etc.

- **Ask for specific information or help.** For example, ask if the person knows anyone who works at “x” company instead of asking if they know of anyone hiring. During the holidays, your contacts might have more time to be of assistance, and they might be in a mood to be generous at this time of the year!
- **Volunteer.** There are many opportunities during the holidays to give your time to charities and organizations. Some of these opportunities might also help you build your network, make new connections, and bolster your resume.
- **Create a business networking card.** Develop a business card that lists your contact information and social media links — especially to your LinkedIn profile. You can use this in lieu of your normal business card — or instead of it, if you’re unemployed.
- **Update your social media presence.** If you don’t yet have a LinkedIn profile, now is the time to create yours. If you have one, give it a fresh look. Is it time to update it? Can you increase your number of Connections — or solicit additional Recommendations?
- **Look for opportunities to get your foot in the door.** If you’re currently unemployed, look for temporary or seasonal jobs that may lead to full-time positions.
- **Connect with recruiters.** Many are trying to reach year-end recruiting goals at this time of the year, and you may have just the skills they are looking for.
- **Set a specific goal for your job search.** Instead of setting a goal to get a new job, your goal might be to make a certain number of new connections or to schedule a certain number of informational interviews. Making progress on this type of goal will ultimately help you achieve your goal of a new job.
- **Make sure you’re reachable.** You might be asked to interview at unusual times — for example, the day before Christmas. Keep your phone on — and make sure you’re checking your voice mail and email regularly!

## Challenges To Overcome With a Holiday Job Search

Conducting a job search in December isn't without its challenges, however. While some hiring managers are hard at work throughout the month, others may be on vacation. Some companies also close during the week from Christmas to New Year's Day. The holidays can also distract you from your job search. Shopping, vacations, family activities, and holiday parties can all take away time from your job search, if you're not careful.

*Check your attitude, too.* The holidays are a season of joy and thankfulness, but that can be tough when you're out of work. However, it's important to maintain a positive attitude — or at least “fake it until you make it.” Even if you're not feeling it, “*act as if*” you are, because employers want to hire positive, optimistic employees.

Also, don't overextend yourself during the holidays. Be sure to exercise, get enough sleep, and eat well.

Don't be surprised if you don't hear anything back right away. Because a lot of people use their accumulated vacation time before the end of the year, you may find yourself waiting a bit longer than usual for a response to your resume or follow up after a job interview. Be patient, but persistent.

If it's your goal to find a new job in the new year, don't put off your job search just because it's the holiday season. A job search that starts in December gives you the opportunity to get hired before the end of the year — or to have momentum and a head start on other candidates once the calendar turns over on January 1.

We hope you have found this information of assistance.

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