



THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

Playbook

How to Access 70%
of Jobs That Are
Never Posted

BARRY JENKINS
CAREER TRANSITION &
LEADERSHIP COACH





WHY THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET MATTERS

Here's a stat that will change how you job search:

70-85% of jobs are filled before they're ever advertised publicly.

That means if you're only applying to posted roles on LinkedIn, Indeed, or company websites, you're competing for just 15-30% of available opportunities—and you're up against hundreds (sometimes thousands) of other applicants.

The hidden job market is where:

- Hiring managers fill roles through referrals and internal networks
- Companies hire people they already know or have been introduced to
- Roles are filled before they hit job boards (or never posted at all)
- Your competition is smaller and your chances are dramatically higher

Bottom line: If you want to land your next role faster, you need to stop waiting for jobs to be posted and start accessing the hidden job market. Here's how...

Barry Jenkins



5 STRATEGIES

01 TARGET COMPANIES, NOT JOB POSTINGS

02 LEVERAGE YOUR STRONGEST CONNECTIONS

03 USE LINKEDIN TO FIND HIRING MANAGERS

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05 TARGET COMPANIES PROACTIVELY

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1 TARGET COMPANIES, NOT JOB POSTINGS

MOST JOB SEEKERS DO THIS

Wait for roles to be posted → Apply → Hope for the best

YOU SHOULD DO THIS

Identify 10-20 companies you want to work for → Build relationships there → Get hired when roles open (or before)

TAKE ACTION

- Make a list of 10-20 target companies (consider: industry, size, stage, culture, location, mission)
- Research each company: Who are the key decision-makers? What challenges are they facing? What's their growth trajectory?
- Identify 2-3 people at each company you can connect with (hiring managers, team members, recruiters, former colleagues who work there)
- Start building relationships NOW—before roles are posted

PRO TIP

Follow these companies on LinkedIn, engage with their content, and set up Google Alerts for news about them.

2 LEVERAGE YOUR STRONGEST CONNECTIONS

Your network is your master key to the hidden job market.

But here's the mistake most people make: They send generic messages like "Let me know if you hear of anything."

That doesn't work.

Instead, reach out to your 10 strongest connections (former managers, close colleagues, mentors, trusted peers) and ask them for warm introductions to 2-3 people in their network.

WHY THIS WORKS

- You're specific about what you're looking for (not vague)
- You offer value first (reciprocity)
- You make it easy for them (ask for 2-3 intros, not "anything you can do")
- You're not asking them to get you a job—just an introduction

Use the template on the next page



2 LEVERAGE YOUR STRONGEST CONNECTIONS

Subject: Catching up + a favor

Hi [Name],

Hope you're doing great! It's been [timeframe] since we [last worked together / caught up], and I've been meaning to reach out.

Quick update on my end: I'm actively looking for my next role in [specific type of role: e.g., senior marketing manager, product lead, director of operations].

Specifically, I'm targeting roles where I can [brief value statement: e.g., lead go-to-market strategy for B2B SaaS companies, build and scale operations teams].

How I can help you: Before I ask for anything, is there anything I can help you with right now? Whether it's making an introduction, sharing feedback, or offering my expertise in [your area], I'm happy to return the favor.

The ask: I know you have a strong network, and I'm wondering if you'd feel comfortable making a warm introduction to 2-3 people who might be helpful—whether that's someone at a company I should know about, a hiring manager in [industry/function], or someone who's been through a similar transition.

I'm not asking you to vouch for me for a specific job (unless you know of something perfect!)—just an intro so I can have a conversation and learn from their experience. I'll take it from there and keep you in the loop.

Let me know if that feels doable, and thanks so much for considering. I really appreciate your support!

Looking forward to hearing from you.

[Your Name]

[LinkedIn Profile URL]

3 USE LINKEDIN TO FIND HIRING MANAGERS (AND REACH OUT DIRECTLY)

Don't just apply to jobs. Find the hiring manager and reach out directly.

How to do it:

1. Find a job posting you're interested in (even if it's on a job board)
2. Identify the hiring manager on LinkedIn:
 - Search: "[Job Title] + [Company Name]" (e.g., "Director of Marketing + Acme Corp")
 - Look for the person who would manage this role (e.g., VP of Marketing, Head of Product, etc.)
3. Send a personalized LinkedIn message or email. Template can be found on the next page.

WHY THIS WORKS

- You bypass the ATS black hole
- You demonstrate initiative and genuine interest
- You start a relationship before (or instead of) applying
- Hiring managers are more likely to respond to direct, personalized outreach



3 USE LINKEDIN TO FIND HIRING MANAGERS (AND REACH OUT DIRECTLY)

LinkedIn Message Template:

Hi [Name],

I came across the [Job Title] opening at [Company] and wanted to reach out directly. I've been following [Company]'s work in [specific area] and am particularly impressed by [specific achievement, project, or initiative].

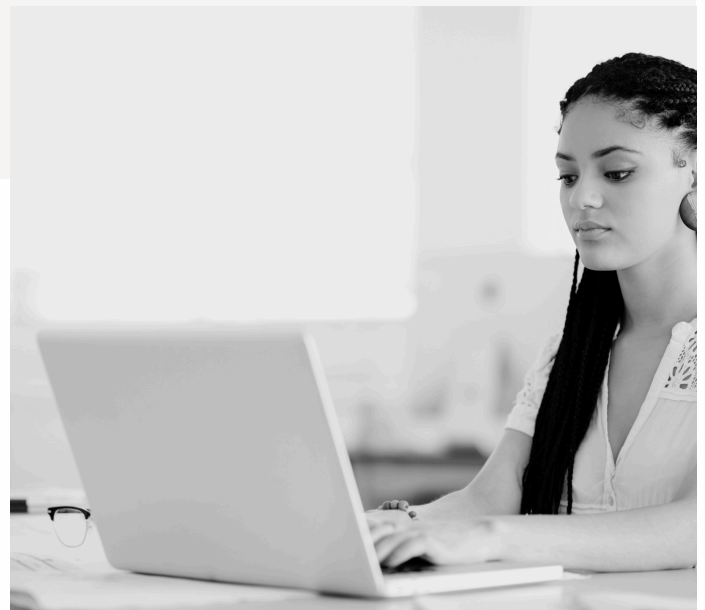
I have [X years] of experience in [your expertise], and I'm especially interested in [specific aspect of the role or company mission]. I'd love to learn more about [Company]'s goals for this role and share how my background in [relevant experience] could contribute to your team's success.

Would you be open to a brief conversation? I'm happy to work around your schedule.

Thanks for considering, and I look forward to connecting!

[Your Name]

[LinkedIn Profile URL]



4 ASK FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS (NOT JOB LEADS)

People are more willing to help when you're NOT asking for a job. Reach out to people in your target industry, company, or role and ask to learn from their experience—not for job leads.

Subject: Learning from your experience in [specific area]

Hi [Name],

I've been following your work in [specific area] and found your recent [post/article/project] about [specific topic] particularly insightful

I'm currently exploring opportunities in [field/industry] and am especially interested in [specific aspect—e.g., how companies are approaching X, what skills are most valued in Y roles]. Given your experience at [Company] and your background in [specific area], I'd love to learn more about your perspective.

Would you be open to a brief 15-minute conversation? I'm happy to work around your schedule.

Thanks for considering, and I really appreciate your time!

[Your Name]



WHAT TO DO IN THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW:

- Ask about their career path, challenges, and insights
- Learn about their company, team, and industry
- Build a genuine relationship
- At the end, ask: *"Is there anyone else you'd recommend I speak with?"* (This expands your network)

Important: Don't ask for a job in the first conversation. Build the relationship first. Opportunities will emerge naturally.

5 TARGET COMPANIES PROACTIVELY (EVEN WHEN NO ROLE IS POSTED)

This is the ultimate hidden job market move:

Reach out to companies you want to work for—even if they don't have an open role. Sometimes the best opportunities aren't posted yet.

Your outreach can create an opening.

Subject: Exploring opportunities at [Company]

Hi [Name],

I hope this message finds you well. I've been following [Company]'s work in [specific area: product development, market expansion, etc.] and have been particularly impressed by [specific achievement, project, or initiative].

I'm currently [your role] with [X years] of experience in [your expertise], and I'm exploring opportunities to contribute to companies like yours that are [specific value: innovating in X space, scaling Y, solving Z problems].

Even if there aren't current openings on your team, I'd love to learn more about [Company]'s goals and challenges in [specific area]. Sometimes the best opportunities aren't posted yet, and I'm happy to stay connected for when the timing might be right.

Would you be open to a brief 15-20 minute conversation? I'm happy to work around your schedule.

Thanks for considering, and I look forward to connecting!

[Your Name]

[LinkedIn Profile URL]

WHY THIS WORKS

- You're proactive (not reactive)
- You plant seeds for future opportunities
- You get on their radar before roles are posted
- You differentiate yourself from people who only apply to posted jobs

YOUR 7-DAY ACTION PLAN

Ready to tap into the hidden job market? Here's what to do this week:

- Day 1-2: Create your target company list (10-20 companies)

- Day 3: Identify your 10 strongest connections and draft outreach messages

- Day 4: Send 5 messages to your strongest connections (using Template from Strategy 2)

- Day 5: Find 5 hiring managers on LinkedIn at your target companies and send personalized messages (Strategy 3)

- Day 6: Request 2-3 informational interviews with people in your target industry/role (Strategy 4)

- Day 7: Send 2-3 proactive outreach messages to companies you want to work for (Strategy 5)

GOAL FOR WEEK 1

10-15 outreach messages sent. Even if only 20-30% respond, you'll have 2-5 meaningful conversations—and that's how opportunities emerge.



HOW TO DOWNLOAD YOUR LINKEDIN CONNECTIONS

- 1 Click the **Me** icon at the top of your LinkedIn homepage and select **Settings & Privacy** from the dropdown menu
- 2 Click **Data Privacy** in the left-hand menu
- 3 Scroll down to the **How LinkedIn uses your data** section and click **Get a copy of your data**
- 4 Select **Download a larger data archive**
- 5 Click **Request archive**
- 6 Wait for the email from LinkedIn. This email will contain a link to download your archive.
- 7 If you don't see the email from LinkedIn within 24 hours, check your spam folder.
- 8 Click the link in the email to download your CSV file and access your connections.

MAKE A SHORTLIST OF YOUR BIGGEST FANS

Refer to Strategy 2 on how to reach out to your strongest connections.



HOW TO FIND THE EMAIL TO THE HIRING MANAGER

LET'S BE HONEST

Most people who are not job hunting, are not on LinkedIn every day checking their LinkedIn messages

The best way to connect with the hiring manager is by sending an email directly to her inbox.

LINKEDIN

First, look for the title of the hiring manager in the job description.

Go to the company LinkedIn page and select the People tab.

In the Search field below the People tab, enter the title of the hiring manager. The search results should show the profile of the hiring manager.

If the job description does not list the title of the hiring manager, then do a little guess work.

For example, If you are applying for a “manager of X”, then enter “Director of X” into the People tab search field.

EMAIL HIRING MANGER

Do a simple Google search.

[Name of company] + [email format]

The search result should show the company email structure.

Plug the hiring manager's name into the email structure.

Refer to Strategy 3 for the email template.



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Career Transition &
Leadership Coach

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NEED MORE HELP?

If you're ready to go deeper—with a personalized roadmap, 1-on-1 coaching, and accountability to keep you moving forward—let's talk.

I help professionals navigate career transitions and land roles in 3-4 months (not 6-12 months) through proven strategies, insider knowledge, and hands-on support.

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