

THE SAN DIEGO JOB SEARCH

San Diego's economy differs dramatically from other major U.S. cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago or New York. San Diego County is considered a "small employer economy" because 98% of employers have fewer than 100 employees, and 93% have 20 or fewer. There are only two Fortune 500 companies headquartered in San Diego, compared to 15 in Los Angeles and 30 in the Bay Area. The nature of the San Diego economy suggests that you need to use different job search tactics than you would in other cities.

How Smaller Employers Hire

Large employers advertise widely, post positions on job boards (e.g., Monster, CareerBuilder, HotJobs), and use staffing agencies to identify prospective hires. They also post positions on their company websites, and actively recruit at college and community job fairs.

In contrast, smaller employers cannot spend the same amount of time and resources to hire. Instead, they often rely on word of mouth, industry contacts, and referrals from current employees. As such, searching and applying for positions at smaller companies requires a more personalized approach from the job seeker.

Identifying Smaller Employers

Because smaller employers are less well known than their larger counterparts, students first need to identify smaller organizations in their area of interest. Here are some helpful resources for San Diego:

- San Diego Chamber of Commerce – Member Directory
- San Diego Business Journal – *The Book of Lists* includes the top 25-50 employers in each field
- San Diego Business Directory (Inside Prospects) – Up-to-date listings in Copley Library's "Databases A-Z"
- San Diego Business Journal & San Diego Union-Tribune business section – Good sources of information on new and emerging companies
- San Diego chapters of professional associations – Many chapter websites are listed at www.sandiego.edu/careers/associations.php

Examples of local association websites with employer listings:

- BIOCOM (biotech and life science industry) www.biocom.org
- 211 San Diego (social service agencies) www.211sandiego.org
- SD Creative Directory (advertising, marketing and communications) www.sdcreativedirectory.com
- SD Software Industry Council (communications technology and defense industries) www.commnexus.org

Applying for Positions with Smaller Employers

Once you have identified smaller organizations of interest, there are many ways to look for positions:

- Network with USD alumni and parents. Visit the offices of Career Services, Alumni Relations and Parent Relations to use the Torero Network of Alumni and the Career Networking Directory of Parents.
- Register, upload your resume, and apply for positions on USD's ToreroLink job site.
- Attend mixers and professional networking events sponsored by local professional associations.
- Network by emailing your resume to everyone in your social, academic and professional network, expressing your interest in gathering "information and advice" on particular industries or job functions.
- "Drop in" on companies that place a premium on customer service and walk-in traffic, such as restaurants, retailers, banks, hotels and resorts. Dress professionally and bring resumes.
- Visit employer websites to determine if jobs are posted. If so, apply to those for which you are qualified. If there is no job page, send a tailored cover letter detailing your interest and relevant accomplishments.