Working a holiday job is a great way to earn extra cash or get your foot in the door for a permanent job. But why are we talking about holiday jobs now? Because if you wait too much longer to start your search, you might be too late.

By September, many businesses have already figured out their staffing needs for the holidays. According to job search engine Snagajob, 94% of seasonal jobs will be filled by the end of November, so it pays to start looking early.

The best way to pinpoint opportunities is by thinking about the kinds of businesses that are busy during the holiday season. The most obvious answer is retailers — lots of gifts to buy, stockings to stuff, food to prepare, holiday dresses to wear. From grocery to clothing to electronics, just about every retail store will see an uptick in business during the holidays. But if you dig a little deeper, you might come up with other less obvious sources of holiday jobs. For instance, with online retailers taking a significant chunk of the holiday business, they will need lots of seasonal employees to fill customer service positions, warehouse and shipping jobs, and even marketing and advertising jobs.

Start with your strengths and interests and go from there. If you’re a wine enthusiast, don’t wait for an opportunity to find you, inquire with your local wine shop to see if they’re hiring for the season. Caterers, department store decorators and window designers, photographers, restaurant and hotel workers, and Christmas tree farm workers are just some of the many untapped possibilities to consider.

Keep in mind that most seasonal jobs don’t pay very much, although the range can vary depending on your expertise. Just remember that even if it’s “only a holiday job,” that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t take it seriously or feel as if you’re entitled to better. The seasonal job market is competitive and businesses are still looking for employees who are enthusiastic and eager to work. This is especially true for delivery companies such as UPS and FedEx, where punctuality and reliability are everything. Another trait that companies are looking for in seasonal employees is flexibility. Holiday hours can be long and unpredictable, and employers are looking for staff who are willing to work odd hours, such as early morning, late night or sometimes spur of the moment. Play your cards right, and the company may consider hiring you for a permanent position after the holidays.

If you’re unsure where to begin your search, start by checking the websites of discount and big-box retailers like Target, Best Buy and Kohl’s; big department stores such as Macy’s and Bloomingdale’s; or online retailers like Amazon.

Time to start thinking about seasonal work