

NETWORKING



How expanding your list of contacts can help you find a job

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MAKING CONTACT

DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE MAN WHO...

...Found a job through the brother of the aunt of the girlfriend of the superintendent at the school where his wife's grandfather's hairdresser's son went?

Many positions are only advertised within the organisation or filled by candidates referred by people who are already working for the company. Knowing someone "on the inside" can yield impressive results. You will be astonished at what the people around you will do to facilitate your search.

APPROACH FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND ACQUAINTANCES

Tell your family, friends, neighbours, and anyone else you know that you're looking for a job. Tell them what field you are in and ask them to give you a hand in your efforts. They can provide you with information about hiring opportunities in their own place of work or in that of someone they know. Don't forget your ex-employers, your former co-workers, your insurance agent, your bank manager, your hairdresser, the cashier at the bookstore... The more people are aware that you are looking for a job, the greater your chances of identifying job opportunities and obtaining an interview. This is what is known as the snowball effect.

Once you have contacted the people in your own network (or have been referred to one of their contacts), tell them what kind of job you are looking for and mention your strengths. Make it clear that you are not necessarily expecting a job offer, but tell them that you would like any advice, ideas or useful hints they can offer.

A positive attitude is your best asset: it gives you enthusiasm on the job, attracts people's interest, stimulates productivity and enables you to derive full benefit from your personality.



EXPANDING YOUR NETWORK

OBJECTIVES FOR MEETING WITH A CONTACT:

- Exchange information (you are looking for a job, you are asking them for some kind of assistance, they will tell you what they can or cannot do);
- Describe yourself (tell them about your experience, your achievements and your skills);
- Generate new contacts (ask them for the name of two people they know who might be able to help you in your search).

HOW TO EXPAND YOUR NETWORK OF CONTACTS

Ask your contacts to identify two people who can provide information about jobs that may be available and help you to access them.

Since many employers trust each other and refer each other to their in-house pool of applicants, it is by no means a waste of time to take your resume to the employer for whom you would like to work. There is a possibility that your resume will be added to their own database, or passed on to someone who is looking for an employee just like you.



YOUR ON-LINE NETWORK

NETWORKING AND THE INTERNET

Social networking is also a great resource. LinkedIn is a social network used mainly by businesses and job seekers, and is a great way to make contacts with employers and people in the sectors you're interested in. Many companies are also turning to Facebook and Twitter to post jobs and other news. Be sure to put your resume on JobBoom, Monster.ca, Workopolis, and other employment sites.

MANAGE YOUR PROFILE

If an employer looked you up on Google, what would they find? Make sure it's nothing incriminating by managing your on-line persona. Run a search on your own name, and do your best to remove anything an employer may find questionable. That includes photos, status updates, posts, blog entries, etc. It's also a good idea to have a professional email account that uses your real name (or business name, if you're an entrepreneur), and not a pseudonym or on-line handle.

