

## HOW TO GET INTO INVESTMENT BANKING



**Q:** I recently received my bachelor's degree in political science from a major East Coast university. I want to get into investment banking and have tried the traditional approaches (i.e. human resources) without success. I have substantial international business experience, but am having difficulties approaching the correct people to pitch my story. Do you have any suggestions?

**A:** First off, you should continue to use the traditional approaches in your job search. Using traditional job-hunting methods is basically a no-brainer. They are tried and true and have proven themselves effective over time.

The most important and effective method you can use is "schmoozing!" You have to develop a network and work it hard. The Internet makes the development of a network easier than it has ever been because of the vast amount of research resources available. First, make a list of your target investment banking firms. Once you have a target list, you are ready to do your research!

Find out who works at the firm and then try and find a common bond with some of the target firm's employees. Look for someone from the same hometown, high school, college, fraternity, or sorority. Maybe even something as simple as an employee whose last name is the same as yours. Whatever it is, find the common bond and then contact that person. Find out if they know of any opportunities at their firm or any other firms. Ask if they know people who could help you. Ask if they would be willing to meet with you to discuss their firm, their job, and how they got their job. People love to talk about themselves and are usually eager to do so - especially with someone with whom they have a common bond.

Your friends and family are also a good source of contacts. Let them know you're looking for a job and make sure to tell them the firms you want to work for. The more people you talk to, the more people you have talking about you! Sooner or later you're going to hit gold and find yourself sitting in front of a decision-maker at an investment banking firm. Once you're there, it's up to you to sell yourself and to land the job.

Now, I do have one personal pet peeve about people who do an end-run around Human Resources to get a job interview. I generally find Human Resources Departments in major corporations to be bound in red tape and nightmarish bureaucracy. Still, corporate HR departments are a necessary evil and you MUST deal with them appropriately. Nothing - and I mean nothing - irks HR professionals more than a candidate who does an end-run around them. If you're going to schmooze your way in through "non-HR" contacts, that's great. Nevertheless, it's generally best to work the firm from both ends. In other words, make sure to send the HR person a cover letter too! You're going to have to deal with Human Resources somewhere down the line, so make sure you've treated them with respect. Like my mama always say, "Be respectful, be nice, treat everyone equally, and make sure you don't have anything hanging out of your nose."