

## 7 STEPS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR NETWORK IN HELPING YOU GET A JOB



**Summary:** Use your relationships and referrals to help you get a job in seven easy steps.

Networking is an essential part of the job hunting process. We may not always think our friends or colleagues will be able to help us find a new job so we skip this important part of the process. What we fail to realize is that the more eyes and ears we have out there, the greater the likelihood there is of finding something that matches our criteria in a job. We don't know everything or everyone so we have to use other resources to learn about open positions. Follow these seven steps to maximize the resources of your network in your job search.

### 1. Get ready

You need to figure out what you want to get out of networking. Are you wanting to change fields or are you just looking to change your employer? Do the necessary homework first to learn about the field, study the organization, and join professional associations so you can immerse yourself into the industry immediately. You don't waste someone's valuable time with basic questions that you could have answered yourself. When you do feel prepared enough to meet with someone, keep your communications and notes organized.

### 2. Identify "inner circle" and peripheral contacts

Once you have determined that you are ready to make contact with your network to find a new job, you need to identify who your network is. Your inner circle is your immediate contacts that you know personally. Peripheral contacts are those you may know of but do not know you yet. Look for these kinds of contacts in your work contacts, friends, professional association members, classmates, alumni, professors, social group members, family, religious organization members, service providers, and more.

### 3. Organize your contacts

Organize and categorize your contacts by your level of connection with them. The categories could be divided into the innermost group, inner circle, outer circle, and prospects. When making these groups, consider the level of connectedness they have, such as if they know a lot of people or well-connected themselves. They should also be categorized by their relevance to your job search. You want to put a priority on those that are most relevant but pass over those that are less relevant to your job search.

### 4. Use your existing "inner circle" contacts

Reach out to your contacts to re-establish your connection. Start out by asking about them and then turn to the reason you are contacting them. State that you are going to be beginning a job search soon, sharing with them the job title you are looking for, mission area you want to work in, geographic location you want to be in, or type of organization you want to work for. You can do this by asking six requests: (1) Keep an eye out for relevant jobs and forward them to you; (2) Introduce you to people within your target organization or field of interest; (3) Recommend you to hiring manager; (4) Give you any tips on the hiring process of the organization or if any changes should be done to your resume; (5) recommend you on LinkedIn or act as a reference; and (6) meet with you in person to catch up and talk more.

### 5. Reach out to new contacts

With the introductions from your inner circle, reach out to new people, asking for an informational interview. These may be people with a job title that you admire or envy, work in an organization you want to, are accessible, are a few years ahead of you in experience, and/or are in a position where they could be responsible for hiring you or serving as a referral. If they agree to a meeting, be sure to be on time, respect the time reserved for the meeting length, pay for their coffee and/or food, arrive with questions, and do the proper research so as not to waste precious time on basic questions.

### 6. Feed your contacts

Keep the relationships with your new and existing contacts going by communicating with them often. Send them a handwritten note after an informational interview. If you do not have their mailing address, then write a LinkedIn recommendation. Let them know you will follow up with the person they referred you to and keep them posted occasionally about how your job search is going. Also be sure to ask how they are doing and if there is anything you can do for them.

Repeat steps four through six until you have a job. Then complete step 7.

### 7. Give thanks

Thank everyone that has helped you in your job search. For those that went above and beyond, you can even send a small, professional gift, thanking them for all their help you getting you your dream job. Revisit step 6, keeping an open relationship with them for the future.

Has your network ever helped you get a job? Share your experiences with us in the comments below.

**To learn more about how to network, read these articles:**

- [Building a Network Is Worth the Effort](#)
- [Enlist the Help of Your Network with the Right Email](#)
- [Networking Can Boost a Sluggish Job Search](#)

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