



Job Networking, a Beginner's Guide.

Ask your friends how they got their jobs, and a lot of them will tell you, “A friend helped me get the job.”
Networking. That's friends helping friends find jobs.

According to a Careerbuilder-Harris¹ poll, 88 percent of hiring managers rated friends-of-employees as their best source for above average hires. Maybe that's why most job openings are not advertised to the public—the jobs are quickly filled by the friends of the people who work there.

So, let's see if we can get your friends to help you find a good job.

1. Make a list of your close friends, friends who do the same kind of work as you, but for different companies.

These are people you know pretty well: friends, relatives, neighbors, classmates, and coworkers who changed employers.

This should be easy. Tell them you would like to apply for a job where they work. Ask if they would give your resume to

their hiring manager and put in a good word for you—“Just in case something opens up.”

2. Now, build a list of loose friends, friends who do the same kind of work as you, but for different companies.

These are old friends you don't see very often: former coworkers, classmates, friends of your family, friends of your friends.

Think deep. Friends with loose ties can be more valuable than even your closest friends. Not only are they glad to reconnect with you, they usually come with a totally different set of employers and work connections.²

Break the ice. People respond to personal connections best. So, instead of saying, “I'd like to friend you on Facebook,” say something personal or interesting. Try this opener—“Tristan! Hey,

remember when we...” Now, if you don't get a quick response, don't just knock once and walk away. Be a little persistent. People are busy. Sometimes it takes three or four tries before you get through.

Establish rapport. People are usually glad to hear from you. So, ask how they are and what they've been up to. Be friendly and interested. Catch up on old news. Mention your job hunt and a few of the companies where you've applied. But, don't complain about being out of work. It's a downer. Instead, be upbeat and optimistic about your prospects.

Ask a simple favor. Say that you'd like to submit a job application with their employer—“Just in case something opens up.” Ask if it would be okay if you listed them as a friend on your job application. You never know, their hiring manager might be looking for someone just like you.

Reach. If a friend seems eager to help, ask if she would give your resume to her hiring manager and put in a good word for you.

Send your thanks. Send a note thanking your friend for her help. Offer to return the favor. Stay in touch and grow the relationship—you never know when something might open up.

3. Finally, send a message to all your friends who don't work in your occupation or field.

Keep your message short and simple: “Looking for an IT job in the Boston area. If you know someone who could point me toward a job opening, I'd love to speak with them. Thanks so much for your help.”

¹ careerbuildercommunications/pdf/referralbook

² levin.rutgers/research/dormant-ties-paper