

GET THE  
**Job**



# It's Who You Know

What's your strategy for making new connections and applying for jobs? Do you lean on a network of past colleagues and industry mentors? Or are you going it alone, simply uploading your resume to job boards and seeing what happens?

It turns out that in the job market, it really is who you know, not what you know — at least to a degree. The recruiting software company Lever recently reported that your chances of getting a job are .65 percent if you're cold applying for a position at a company on your own without a referral.

Here are some other interesting numbers from Lever's analysis:

- A referral bumps your hiring likelihood up to 6.25 percent.
- Having your resume submitted by an agency lifts your chances to 4.54 percent.

In a related study, the hiring software company iCIMS, Inc. and Hanover Research concurred that nearly a quarter of employee hires happen through referrals.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ENDORSEMENTS

Candidates with referrals are attractive to companies because of higher retention rates and increased productivity. The job search company Jobvite found that 40 percent of referred employees stay in a position for three or more years, compared to just 14 percent of those hired from job boards.

This may be due in part to employees not wanting to disappoint their referral by leaving a job too soon.



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## HOW TO GET REFERRED

When it comes to obtaining a quality referral for a position, it's all about networking. Reach out to your current and past

co-workers for job leads, and be upfront with them about what you're looking for.

Even if you don't want to return to a past company, you

never know what kind of connections you might uncover through proactive networking. If you have a particularly connected person in your peer

group, buy him a cup of coffee and float some ideas past him. You can't be referred unless you let people know you're on the job hunt.



# Education Trends

Summers off, flexible schedules and constant collaboration with enthusiastic youth — there are many reasons you might consider a job in teaching. Good news: Despite the ongoing struggles with funding that many schools have endured, employment in education still looks like a safe bet.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, a projected 3.5 million elementary and secondary school full-time-equivalent teachers were engaged in classroom instruction in the fall of 2014. This number hardly moved from the center's findings in 2004, making the profession a solid choice for teachers entering the field.

Here are some other interesting facts and figures from the most recent study by the NCES:

- Seventy-six percent of public school teachers are female;
- Forty-four percent are under age 40; and

- Fifty-six percent have a master's or higher degree.

## SALARIES AND PROJECTED GROWTH

According to the United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, wages for teaching positions vary based on grade level and geographic location. For example:

- In 2015, postsecondary teachers earned about \$10,000 more per year than elementary school teachers (\$64,450 compared with \$54,890).
- Teachers in Alaska generally had higher wages overall than those in

Montana. Nearly every teaching occupation, however, earned more than the \$36,200 median annual wage for all occupations in May 2015.

## QUALIFICATIONS TO KEEP IN MIND

To work as a full-time teacher in public schools, a degree generally isn't enough. Teachers usually need a certification or license, which entails completing a teacher education program and passing tests that demonstrate instructional knowledge.

You also may be required to participate in your university's internship

program. These student-teaching roles will expose you to all the requirements of teaching in public schools. You also likely will be required to pass a background check and complete continuing education classes or seminars in order to maintain your certification or license.

These are all factors to keep in mind when weighing your decision to become a teacher. Overall, your motivation should be focused on enhancing the educational experience for your students and making sure you provide an inclusive, positive learning environment.



Thank you

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# The Perfect Thank You Note

Job interviews are stressful. There's the preparation, buying new clothes and the grueling anticipation of which questions you will be asked. Once you successfully navigate an interview, you may be so relieved it's over that you forget one of the most critical pieces of the process: the thank you note.

Experts recommend sending a custom letter of thanks to your interviewers within 24 hours. This is not only a gesture of courtesy but a great way to remain top of mind during the hiring process.

How should your note read? How much information is too much? When exactly should you send it? Great questions.

## **BUSINESS HOURS ARE BEST**

When it comes to landing a job, the details matter. Try to avoid firing off

your thank you note at 2 a.m. Hiring professionals start their work day with a full load of emails to filter through, so it's best to send yours in the middle of the work day. Aim for early in the day or early in the afternoon.

## **BE SPECIFIC**

Sending in a bland, generic thank you note can be just as damaging as not sending one at all. Be specific to your audience and mention any personal moments that happened during

your interview. For example, if one of your interviewers engaged you in a conversation about a specific project that is on the company's horizon, don't be afraid to mention it and reiterate your interest in taking it on.

## **SHORT AND SWEET**

No need to tell your life story in a thank you note. Stick to the basics. Three total sentences should be all you need to get your point across. Start by thanking the person for meeting with you. (Mention the spe-

cific date for bonus points. You'll look focused and detail oriented). Then mention a custom sentence focused on something that happened during the interview, followed by a line repeating your interest in the job.

## **AVOID MAKING ANOTHER PITCH**

The thank you note is not about pitching yourself for the job. You've already done that. Your letter should focus on showing appreciation for the opportunity to interview and for any future consideration.

# Avoid Common Mistakes

The employment market is more competitive than ever, making the margin of error for your job search razor thin. When it comes to your resume, cover letter and online presence, it's important that you convey your specialties in a way that make you stand out.

With the average job posting attracting hundreds of applicants, the worst thing that can happen to a viable job candidate is blending in to the background.

## AVOIDING TYPOS

One of the most glaring mistakes a job candidate can make is submitting a resume filled with grammar and spelling errors. This shows serious deficiency in attention to detail and professionalism — two cornerstones of an effective employee.

Sometimes proofreading your own documents can be tough, especially if you've tweaked them multiple times. Run it by a certified professional resume writer in your area who is trained to market you in a professional, accurate way.

You also can pass your document around to friends and family members for some extra editing. Whatever path you choose, it's critical that your career documentation be powerful and typo-free.

## DON'T OVERSELL YOURSELF

When it comes to positioning yourself for a job opening, it's important to not appear self-important or arrogant. You want hiring managers to think you can seamlessly plug in to their team without any clash-



ing of egos or personality types.

Keep this in mind when building your resume and cover letter. Avoid cliché language that fails to capture you as an individual. Instead of trying to make grandiose statements filled with flowery phrasing, focus on concise,

keyword-focused language that tells your story in a cohesive way.

Hiring managers are more strapped for time than ever before. Give them a resume that is punchy and to the point. This will help it resonate with them during the candidate selection process.

## KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS

One common job search mistake candidates make is casting too wide a net. Instead of selling yourself as a jack of all trades, focus on your expertise.

Depending on your industry, jobs can be very specialized. Your knowledge of specific software or project manage-

ment methodologies can differentiate you from the pack, so make sure these skills are front and center in your documentation.

Read job descriptions carefully to make sure your resume and cover letter focus on the right skill set and achievements.

# Industry Conferences

Industry conferences are about more than branded stress balls and small talk. They offer an amazing opportunity to meet your next potential boss or business partner. Are you intimidated by an upcoming conference because of the list of industry heavy-hitters on the speaking circuit? Don't be.

This is your chance to build personal relationships with these professionals, potentially unlocking massive doors for your business or future career prospects.

Read on for four powerful ways to navigate these conferences. You'll be a pro in no time.

## RESEARCH THE ATTENDEE AND SPEAKER LIST

Industry conferences are filled with high-level professionals and important company decision-makers. Personal networking is the key to unlocking major connections with them.

Before you head out the door, work with your manager or employees to figure out who will be attending the event. Build a list or spreadsheet of the people who could help your business grow.

If you're attending the conference looking for employment opportunities, research which leaders will be attending from any of your target companies. Check out their websites or your local newspaper to see what positions they may be hiring for and put together your plan for pitching yourself as the right candidate.

## BUILD YOUR PITCH

Meeting the conference VIPs is great, but what will you say



when you get in front of them? If you're planning on winging it, you need a new plan. Consider this a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet these influential connections and pitch like you've never pitched before.

Build what professionals call your elevator speech. If you were on an elevator with this key decision-maker, what

would you tell her in the time it takes to reach your floor (probably 30 seconds)?

If you're trying to sell a product or service, what would you say about it in this limited amount of time that would persuade someone to buy it? The same goes for yourself. What can you say about your background, goals and key differentiators that

could help you land your next big job?

## FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIPS

Once you've made your pitch, it's time to hone in on the person in front of you. Ask questions. Build a rapport. Focus on the relationship.

These are key strategies in cultivating immediate trust with this person, and we all

know that trust goes a long way toward opening up big business opportunities.

If your boss sent you to the conference to build relationships with specific industry leaders, be sure to make yourself memorable and succinct. Be proactive in setting up additional meetings or with follow-up emails after the conference.

# All Headshots Are Not Equal

You've updated your LinkedIn profile or personal website with strong, keyword-focused content. Now it's time to improve your photo.

Research shows that having a professional-looking headshot can increase your engagement on social media channels while also establishing a level of credibility with your target audience. By not posting any photos of yourself or by uploading a low-quality version, you're losing your chance to make strong initial impression.

After all, they say a picture is worth a thousand words. In business, this can translate to a thousand new deals.

## TIPS FOR TAKING A TRADITIONAL HEADSHOT

Once you decide to take and post a new professional headshot on your social media channels and website, it's time to reach out to local photographers. These connections likely have packages in place for this type of project. If they don't, the likely can accommodate your request with a little bit of direction from you.

You can opt for an inside photo complete with a classic backdrop. This screams professional and is always a great option. If you're going for a



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business look, take your project to the streets. Pose in front of unique local buildings or a bustling downtown.

Remember to dress appropriately and look your best. This new headshot is like your handshake to the virtual world. Make it a strong one.

## SMALL BUSINESS OWNER

If you run your own small business, a headshot is more than a photo of your face. It's a representation of how you want to be viewed by potential customers, partners and employees.

Your headshot should be

engaging and warm for maximum impact. A standard, straightforward photo is probably your best option if you're in a traditional industry such as retail or sales, but don't be afraid to be creative if your career calls for it.

The owner of a pond man-

agement business, for example, may be better off posting a photo of himself on a boat or holding a large fish. This type of shot speaks to customers in the industry and shows off a degree of commitment to the specific line of work.

# Executive Search Firms

If you're a high-level professional, you know that the competition for top corporate jobs is fierce. These roles include company vice president and C-level leaders (such as chief executive officer or chief financial officer).

Breaking into this senior management echelon requires years of dedicated service and overwhelming results. It also takes help. That is, in the form of an executive search firm.

These agencies are hired by companies to seek out the best talent available in the marketplace, whether they are actively working at a different company or currently unemployed. Aligning yourself with recruiters who work in these types of firms can be a huge step in the right direction, especially if you're looking to make a career move.

## THE HISTORY OF SEARCH FIRMS

Executive search firms burst onto the scene in the 1960s, when financial services companies and manufacturers started putting more emphasis on organizational leadership and efficiencies. Bringing on accomplished business executives could help differentiate companies from the competition, but finding the right fit was a challenge.

Enter the search firm. These agencies act as powerful liaisons between employers and executive employees. The biggest firms in the country are placing hundreds of executives per year into high-paying, high-visibility jobs.



And as the evolution of the job market has led to more competition for executive-level jobs, the role of the search firm has become more relevant and necessary than ever before.

## DEALING WITH RECRUITERS

If you're an accomplished executive with a strong social

media presence and effective career documentation, you may find yourself being contacted by recruiters almost on a daily basis. How do you know which recruiters can open up the right doors for you?

Here are a few questions you should ask before engaging in what can turn into a time-consuming process:

- Do you have an industry specialty?
- What is your success rate for placing executives into companies?
- Why do you think I am the right fit for this open position?
- Can you help with negotiations if I'm not happy with the salary or benefits that are offered?

Knowing answers to these questions can give you a head start when it comes to establishing trust and a relationship with an executive recruiter. Remember that these trained professionals are likely interacting with other candidates for the same job, so be sure to effectively and authentically sell yourself to make a great impression.