Find Your Dream Job in 2 Hours
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Expanding your network will help you get the job you want.

With modern technology, finding job postings are easier than ever. Online job sites provide thousands of listings and easy access to send companies your application and resume. Employers can now receive hundreds of applications for a position they are looking to fill within a day or two. This can be a problem for recent graduates looking for a career. Since employers have to sift through such a large quantity of applications, they rely heavily on internal referrals on who to interview.

So let's talk about how you expand your network to get those internal referrals at your dream job by following these three easy steps:

Step 1: Prioritize Employers
There are lots of employers in any given job industry. The L.A.M.P. method, provided below, is one way you can effectively prioritize companies that you would be interested in working for, based on any connections you might already have within the company and how interested you are in working for them. Get an Excel sheet ready and follow these next few steps:

• L: List
  • Make a list of at least 40 employers divided into 4 categories: Dream employers, Alumni employers, Posting search, Trend-following
    • Dream employers: any employers you’ve dreamed of working for
    • Alumni employers: look for employers for which your school’s alumni works for
    • Posting search: search for job listings that interest you online
    • Trend-following: Google search trends in your target industry and skim articles for employers mentioned in articles

• A: Alumni
  • On LinkedIn, search using the ‘employer’ specification. Find out if there is anyone working with your target employers that you know or when to your same university
  • If yes, put a ‘Y’ in front of the employer’s name on your spreadsheet if you find someone who attended your university, otherwise put a ‘N’

• M: Motivation
  • Assign your target employers a score from 1 to 5 based on your motivation to approach each employer. 5 being the most motivated and most familiar with, 1 being the least and most unfamiliar with

• P: Posting
  • Search indeed.com (or any other job posting sites) by employer. Find out if any relevant postings are available
  • Award another score from 1 to 5, 5 being has many relevant postings to 1 has no postings at all

Once you’ve gone through this LAMP process, use Excel to sort your list in this order:

• Motivation - largest to smallest
• Posting - largest to smallest
• Alumni - reverse alphabetically (Z to A)

Google employers with a motivation score of 1, don’t spend more than a minute or two researching the employer. If you find the employer interesting, bump up the motivation score and reorder your list. Once you have gone through all of your listed employers motivation scores, move on to the second step.
**Step 2: Naturalize Contacts**

To naturalize means to find an alternative starter contact if you don’t have an alumni working for a company you are interested in. Starting at the top of your list, focus on employers that have a ‘N’ in the alumni column. Go through these next few methods to convert that ‘N’ to a ‘Y’.

**LinkedIn**

Search for employer names in the search options. Look for contacts you might know or who may know one of your connections. With LinkedIn, you can also see if there are any people who work for the employer that are in a part of a group you are also in via LinkedIn. Once you’ve found contacts, write down their name and contact information (separate from your LAMP list).

**Fanmail (AKA Google stalking)**

Google search news articles that are related to an employer you want to work for. Look for employees mentioned in the article and see if you can find their contact information online. If so, email them and let them know you liked the article and ask for 15-20 minutes of their time to discuss it more in-depth.

**Cold Calls**

If all else fails, call the company’s main telephone line. This is mostly effective with smaller businesses that have human receptionists.

**Step 3: Gathering Information**

Once you’ve gotten in contact with an employee for your desired company and they’ve agreed to meet with you, you’ll want to prepare questions and topics to discuss with them. Don’t expect them to come to the meeting with questions, but if they do, they will most likely ask the big three scary questions that most people don’t like: “Tell me about yourself”, “Why are you interested in our company?”, and “Why are you interested in our industry/function?”. Come prepared to answer those questions in advance.

Small talk in something that should occur naturally. If it doesn’t, that’s alright. It is usually pretty easy to induce small talk by simply bringing up a general topic such as: “How has your day been?”, “Are you working on any projects you particularly enjoy?”, and topics similar to those.

When getting to the deep topics of your meeting to gather useful information, keep in mind this helpful acronym when thinking of questions or discussion topics:

**T.I.A.R.A**

**T - Trends**

“What trends are impacting your business the most right now?”

“How has your business changed the most since you started working in your position?”

“How do you think your business/industry will change over the next several years?”

**I - Insight**

“What surprises you the most about your employer/job?”

“What has been the best lesson you’ve learned from your job so far?”

“If you had to attribute all of your success to one skill or trait, what would it be?”

**A - Advice**

“What can I be doing right now to prepare for a job in this field?”

“What do you know now that you wish you would have known at my age?”

“If you were me, what would you be doing right now to maximize your change of breaking into the industry?”

**R - Resources**

“What resources should I be looking into next?”

“Are there any steps you recommend someone in my situation be looking into taking next?”

**A - Assignments**

“Have there been any projects that have increased in popularity in your company?”

“What project(s) have you done for your employer that you felt added the most value to your organization?”

“What kind of projects have any of your interns or contractors done for you in the past?”

After your meeting is over, always send a follow up email. Thank them for their time and any information or advice they gave you. Don’t be afraid to ask for any other suggestions they might have for you. And remember to
keep in touch! Send monthly emails giving updates on your progress of breaking into the industry and letting your contact know how their advice has helped you along your journey.

These 3 steps are probably not going to provide a job or even an interview the first time, and that's OK! The goal is to find and keep connections with people who could lead you to new opportunities in the future. Keep repeating steps two and three with new people until you do find a contact that leads to a promising chance of employment.

We hope this helps refine some of your networking skills and eventually leads to an amazing career opportunity for you. Go Aggies!