

## 13 proven ways to get a job interview

Before you can get a job offer, you have to get a job interview. The job interview is your chance to sit down, face-to-face, with a hiring manager and convince her that she should hire you instead of someone else. How do you get a job interview? Here's how—

### **1. Make a list of all the people you know who work in the same field or occupation as you**

Reach out to them. Ask if they could help you get a job interview where they work.

This is called networking—people connecting through other people.

Don't be shy about asking for their help. Some experts say you are 10 to 50 times more likely to be hired if you have an employee connection.

In fact, most employers prefer to hire the friends of their workers. Eighty-eight percent of hiring managers say it's their best source for recruiting above-average candidates. Friends are so valuable, some employers will pay a finder's fee to an employee who brings in a new hire.

It's been said that 80 percent of all job openings are not advertised to the public. Insiders and their friends usually fill those openings.

CNNMoney, Workforce Management

As the friend of an employee, you'll also have a special advantage over an outsider. Your inside friend can tell you about the hiring manager—her interviewing style, her management style, the issues she is most concerned about, the type of person she wants for the job, questions she is likely to ask, and the best way for you to ask for the job.

And here's an added bonus: Unlike answering a help-wanted ad or a job posting, where dozens of people might compete for the job, it's not uncommon for friends to be hired with little or no competition at all.

*How to get started:*

- Call a friend. "Hi, Betty. It's Duncan."
- Ask for some help. "I'd like to apply for a job as a baker at Bundt. I know that

you work there. Would you mind if I mentioned, on the job application, that you and I are friends?"

- Ask for information about the hiring manager. "Who is the bakery manager at Bundt? Is she the person I should send my resume to? What's she like?"
- Ask for a special favor. "Could I ask a favor? Would you mind giving my resume to Ms. Pillsbury and putting in a good word for me?"
- Show your gratitude. "Betty, thank you so much. If I get a job interview, I'll bake you a dozen dinner rolls."

## 2. Use email and social media to connect with your other friends

Ask for their help too. Keep your message simple. Tell what kind of job you are looking for and the city where you want to work.

*How to get started:*

- Explain what you want. "Looking for a job as a roofer in the Boston area. Do you know any roofing contractors?"
- Wait for someone to respond. "Tev, thanks for answering my message!"
- Ask for a favor. "Tev, you said your cousin is the assistant manager at Fiddler's Roofing. What's she like? Would you give her my resume and put in a good word for me?"
- Thank your friend. "Thanks so much Tev. I'll email my resume to you right now."
- Spread the word. Always ask your friends if they'll forward your message to their friends. If your 30 friends talked to their 30 friends, you could have 900 people sending you tips, referrals, and introductions.

## 3. Connect with your connectors

Connectors are people who know lots of other people. They have large networks of friends, relatives, and contacts. Connectors include teachers, preachers, politicians, beauticians, barbers, realtors, police officers, business owners, and other people you know.

Talk to as many connectors as you can. You'll be surprised who can make a phone call and set up a job interview for you.

*How to get started:*

- Call a connector. "Hi, Maxwell. It's Folger. I'm one of the morning customers at your coffee shop."
- Ask for some help. "Maxwell, you know lots of people. Do you know the manager over at Espresso Express? I'd like to apply for a bean grinder's position over there."
- Ask for a favor. "Holy decaffeinated! I didn't know Sissy Starbuck was a friend of yours. Would you mind if I mailed her my resume and mentioned your name?"
- Show some gratitude. "Maxwell, thank you so much. If I get a job interview, I'll buy a coffee and a jelly donut every morning for a week!"

## 4. Facebook and LinkedIn

Facebook and LinkedIn are not only great places to connect with friends, classmates, and colleagues—they are also great places for recruiters to connect with you.

Lots of employers use Facebook and LinkedIn to recruit people. When they spot someone

## CREATE A SIMPLE JOB-HUNTING PLAN

Every employer is not hiring today. You have to knock on a lot of doors to find the ones that are.

Here's a simple plan that takes only an hour or two a day. Give it a try and see how many interviews you get.

- Contact five employers every day. That's 25 employers a week, 100 a month. Use a good mix of all 13 ideas in this chapter.
- Now, you may not get a job interview the first week or so because it takes time for employers to respond.
- But, after two weeks, your phone should start to ring.
- When you begin to get job interviews, don't stop contacting five new employers every day. Stick with your plan right up until the day you accept a job offer.
- If you do stop, your flow of interviews will dry up in about two weeks. Then it will take you two more weeks to get the pipeline flowing again.

with the skills they want, they start a conversation. Conversations can lead to job interviews.

It's a slow process. But then, you're not hunting them, they're recruiting you.

*How to get started:*

Search Facebook and LinkedIn for "groups" that are interested in your industry or your occupation. Join the conversation—hiring managers and recruiters are listening in.

You can get noticed simply by participating and being active. Here are four ways to become active:

- Ask questions about the news, tools, procedures, projects, people, or companies in your industry.
- Answer other people's questions when you have information or an idea to share.
- Offer advice, tips, stories, and comments on interesting topics.
- Recommend blogs and links that might be of interest to the group.

### **5. Do you have a top-ten list of employers?**

Visit their web sites and see what kind of job openings they have.

*How to get started:*

- Start with your favorite employer. Visit their web site and navigate to their employment page or career page.
- Look through the job postings. Apply only for the jobs you are qualified to do. When you find a job that interests you, bookmark

that web page so you can find your way back to it later.

- Next, contact your friends. Ask if they know any mutual friends who work inside that company. Dig. You are 50 times more likely to get a job if you know an insider.
- When you find an inside friend, ask if you could list him as a friend on your job application.
- Then, ask if he would give a copy of your resume to the hiring manager and put in a good word for you.
- Be sure to thank your friend for his help and friendship.
- Then, move on to the next employer on your top-ten list and repeat the process.

### **6. Answer some help-wanted advertisements**

Job boards like Indeed, CareerBuilder, Monster, LinkedIn, and Craigslist are popular ways to find job openings.

But don't stop there—check your area's online newspapers for help-wanted ads, plus the help ads posted on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn too.

*How to get started:*

- Again, apply only for the jobs you are qualified to do.
- Submit a clean job application. Don't let misspellings, wrong numbers, missing information, and information typed in the wrong spaces disqualify you. See "job application," on page 32.
- Attach a cover letter with your job application and boost your chances of getting a job interview. Writing your cover letter is fast and easy with AIDA—see the details on page 24.

## 7. Mail a letter and ask for a job interview

Suppose you want to work for SawBuck Bank. Why not send them a letter and ask for a job interview?

Now, suppose you want to work for any bank. Why not pull together a list of all the banks in your area and send each of them a letter asking for a job interview? You could do this with the employers in your industry too.

*How to get started:*

- Log onto 411.com or YellowPages.com. Type your industry (Banks) and zip code in the search fields. The search will bring up a list of all those businesses in your area—including addresses, telephone numbers, and web addresses.
- Keep your letter short and simple. See “How to write a cover letter” on page 24.

## 8. Call a hiring manager and ask for a job interview

Hiring managers get lots of letters, resumes, and job applications. They respond quickly to the top candidates. But, the rest of us have to find a way to stand out and get noticed.

How can you stand out in a crowd? Easy. Just pick up the phone and give a manager a call. It says that you have guts and that you really want to work for her company.

Now, before you pick up the phone, here's something you need to know. The hiring manager is usually the manager of the department where you want to work. In sales, it's the sales manager. In maintenance, it's the maintenance manager. At a small business, it's usually the owner.

To get the hiring manager's name, call the business and speak to the receptionist who

answers the phone. Don't be shy, lots of people call and ask for this information. The receptionist will be glad to give you the hiring manager's name and telephone extension.

*How to get started:*

- Call the manager and introduce yourself. “Good morning, Ms. Cuspid. My name is Den L. Floss. I'm a dental assistant.”
- Say something friendly. “Thank you for taking my call.”
- Give your reason for calling. “Ms. Cuspid, last week I sent you a letter with a copy of my resume. I wanted to follow-up and see if you received it.”
- Prepare for the unexpected. “Oh, I'm sorry to hear that you didn't receive it. I was hoping to schedule an appointment to learn about the career opportunities in dental assisting at your office.”
- Ask for an interview. “Would it be possible for you to spare a few minutes to explore those opportunities with me—perhaps one day next week?”
- Prepare for the put-off. “Oh, I do understand. A lot of employers have hiring freezes this time of year. But those hiring freezes can't last forever.”
- Sell yourself. “I'd like to be the first on your list to be considered when your hiring freeze is lifted. I think you'll be impressed with my skills and accomplishments.”
- Wrap it up and confirm the date. “Excellent. That's Tuesday afternoon at 2:10. Thank you so much, Ms. Cuspid. I really appreciate you taking the time to talk with me and fitting me into your busy schedule.”

## DON'T GIVE A HIRING MANAGER AN EXCUSE NOT TO INTERVIEW YOU

If you have a weird email address or personal web page, like NakedRunner@PDQ.com, get a new address with a mature name for your job hunt.

If you have embarrassing photos, statements, or language on a message board or a personal web page, remove them.

If your telephone-answering message isn't short and friendly, redo it.

If you are planning to contact several different hiring managers at the same company, don't.

If you're thinking about hiring a resume distribution service to e-bomb thousands of employers, save your money.

If you are thinking of applying for jobs that you aren't qualified to do, don't waste your time.

## **9. Look for some “Now Hiring” signs**

One of the easiest ways to get a job interview is to look for “Now Hiring” signs on business buildings, doorways, and billboards.

*How to get started:*

- Walk into the shop, store, or office. Smile, and ask one of the employees if you can fill out a job application. You might say, “Hi, I saw your now-hiring sign. May I have a job application, please?”
- Ask a few questions to show your interest. You might simply ask, “Which jobs are available? What are the duties of a yodeler? Which days and hours are available?”
- Get an inside referral. The best way to get a job is to get someone who works inside the company to put in a good word for you. So, while you’re in the office, ask the employee if someone from your neighborhood, school, or former employer works there.
- If you know the insider, call him when you get home. Mention that you applied for a job where he works. Ask if he could give your resume to the hiring manager and put in a good word for you.
- If you don’t know any insiders, contact your friends and relatives. See if they know an insider who might be able to help.

## **10. Attend a job fair or a company open house**

Where can you meet dozens of hiring managers, face to face, all in one day, all in one place? Simple. Go to a job fair or a company open house. Managers are standing there, waiting to meet you.

To find an event in your area, Google *Job Fair, Career Fair and Company Open House*. Also, check for open-house announcements in the help-wanted section of your Sunday newspapers. And, check with your school’s career center and your state’s One-Stop Career Center to see if they’re planning a job fair (see page 23).

*How to get started:*

- Once you are inside the job fair, walk up to the employer’s table or booth. Make eye contact with the recruiter, smile, and say hello. Offer your handshake and introduce yourself.
- Deliver your “sales pitch” from page 23.
- Answer the recruiter’s questions.
- Offer the recruiter a copy of your resume.
- Ask how you can schedule a job interview.
- Be sure to ask for the recruiter’s business card.
- Thank the recruiter for speaking with you, smile, and offer your handshake.
- When you get home, send the recruiter a thank-you note. All of her contact information is on her business card.

## **11. Sign up with a temporary employment agency**

Temporary employment agencies are match makers. They bring together employers that need help and job hunters that need work.