

# Use your Network

If you have spent time in the professional world, it's likely you have built a network of peers and managers.

Did you know that up to 80 percent of jobs are not published? According to experts at Career Horizons, most of these spots are filled by recommendations from others in the field to place the perfect candidates.

When finding it difficult to gain traction after applying to online listings or in person, it may be time to take a new approach. Make a list of your previous work relationships and reach out to contacts to discover potential job leads.

If you plan to enter a new field, there also are great situations to take advantage of when building a new networking web.

## MEETING NEW PEERS

Building a network isn't difficult but requires plenty of work on your end to execute efficiently. Take advantage of professional social media outlets such as LinkedIn to display your career goals and accomplishments while connecting with like-minded peers.

You also should be aware of conventions or job fairs in your area. Consider different ways to market your brand and explain your openness to new opportunities during conversations. A good way to



make a lasting impression is by creating a memorable business card.

## FACTS ON THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

To understand the importance of networking, check out these statistics from the Association for Talent Developers regarding the hidden job market.

- 51 percent of top organization leaders find new hires from current employee referrals;

- The expected period for job retention of networkers is eight years — only four for job searchers; and

- The average annual income is 6 percent higher for those who

are referred to a position.

## RECONNECTING WITH FORMER PEERS

It may feel awkward to reach out to a peer you have lost contact with to ask for a referral or recommendation letter. To lessen the stress of this situation for both parties, don't begin the conversation with an

agenda to land a job.

Instead, send a short email or request to connect on social media outlets to catch up. Once you feel comfortable with bringing up your agenda, do it in a way that benefits each of you. For example, ask what you can do for them — not what they can do for you.