

How to Network

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

Informal networks can make a massive difference in the quality of not only [your job search](#) but also your life. Too few people take the time to understand the importance of informal networks and referrals when it comes to getting your foot in the door with an employer. If you're looking for jobs, networking can be a deciding factor in what job offers you will get.

One of the crucial aspects of informal networking is recognizing the power of endorsements, and that's really what a referral is. You see this happening all around you. For example, on television, an actor or actress might lend their name to a product. Diet products, cars, and investment firms all have a famous person giving an endorsement. Why is that? Because it works.

Contents

1. [Making Yourself Referable](#)
2. [Building Your Network](#)
3. [Using Your Network](#)
4. [Asking for Referrals](#)
5. [Etiquette](#)

People trust the opinions of those they are familiar with, whether those opinions come from famous actors and athletes or former coworkers and colleagues. Since you've seen the person before and have an idea of who they are that makes you much more comfortable. You're more likely to trust them. In the medical profession and in the legal profession, doctors, dentists, and lawyers rely almost exclusively on referrals. When someone is professionally recommended, it changes the balance of the equation. A recommendation carries a lot of weight.

That's how [employers](#) feel about getting job candidates. They would much rather meet you through a referral, because it makes you seem more trustworthy. Why is this the case? When someone meets you through a referral, there is already a lot of evidence as to your character and ability to do the job. It's almost as if the referral source has testified on your behalf.

When a [recruiter](#) gets involved it means the employer couldn't find someone to do it. Most employers, like you, like to refer people to things. If they have a friend or someone they know, they would rather bring that person in and refer that person to the job than otherwise. In most cases, they would rather network to try to find the right person.

When someone refers you to a [job](#), or when somebody refers you to someone else that has a job opening, you are much more likely to get that job than you would without that referral. For instance, if I suggest you consider my friend, or some other specific person, and you evaluate them that is going to make a huge difference. Coming through someone you trust as an authority for the person being recommended for a job is something that makes a giant and profound difference.

The writer Charles Lamb said, "Don't introduce me to a man. I want to go on hating him and I can't hate a man whom I know." That applies directly to your [job search](#). If your prospective employer knows you, it's more likely you'll get the interview and the job. On a personal level, an introduction by a colleague, business associate, and so forth can have the same effect as an endorsement.

I've been studying referrals and how they work for quite a long time, for most of my career, in fact. I remember when I was starting my career. I was working for one of the more powerful attorneys in the United States and in one meeting, I remember very clearly he said that the one thing he regretted more than anything was that he didn't develop good relationships with his classmates and others when he was in law school. I thought that was a very interesting observation. Essentially, what he was saying was that there were all of these people whom he could have relied on when he was getting into his career, but he had never been able to turn to them because he had never done the work to network with them.

There are people who can provide you with [employment opportunities](#) all around you. In addition to your coworkers, relatives, and friends, you will see at least a hundred other people who could be a resource for you, if you look closely. When you go to the grocery store, the cashier is an opportunity; when you buy gas, when you go to the dry cleaners, when you sit in the doctor's office—every single place that you go and where you spend your time is an opportunity to get a referral for a job. If you're looking for a job, you can use these referrals to [find new opportunities](#). If you're happily employed, you should always be in the process of building a giant referral network for yourself that you can rely on when you need it. Your network can help you get employed and stay employed.

Making Yourself Referable

How do you make yourself referable? How do you become that person whom others are willing to refer to a job? You're about to discover some basic strategies to ensure you are referable.

One of the most important things to understand about referrals is that in order to be referable, you need to do good work. That is pretty basic. If you want someone to stand behind you, your work must be exceptional. Being average is not enough. You need to be remarkable in some way. You need to be someone that others look at and say, "This is a person that I would recommend." You want to be the kind of person whom others look at and think, "This person seems like a good fit for this sort of job or that sort of job."

In becoming referable, there are a couple of aspects to consider, one personal and the other professional. In the personal category, you can goof off, have a lot of fun, and be a certain personality with your friends. But in the professional sphere, you need to be seen as a person who takes work seriously, who is serious, and who likes what they do.

These are the kinds of people that are referable. When you refer someone like that, it's because you believe this person is studying his or her field every day and this person is interested in it. These aspects make the person much more exciting and much more referable. That is exceptionally important.

In order to be referable, I believe a really important thing is that you position yourself in some way that is different from your competitors. You should present yourself as unique and as having something to offer that other people don't have. It could be your intense interest in the subject matter. It could be that you're very thorough in what you do. It could be lots of things, but when you're out there in the market and selling yourself, it's exceptionally important that you're viewed as someone who's unique, different, and memorable.

Here's a story to illustrate the point. One of the architects of Toyota, who helped the company grow and who helped General Motors grow at one point in the 1980s when he started working with them, was a man named Dr. Edward Demming. Dr. Demming talked about the need to always improve products and services. When an organization does that, it develops loyal customers. In business, identifying and creating loyal customers is really the most important thing. That's because merely satisfied customers may try a new product from a competitor and switch to it if the price is right. Loyal customers, on the other hand, are the ones who come back to your products time and again and might even pay more than the competition is asking. They'll brag about the quality of a product or a service, and they'll buy the company's new products with little sales effort, often bringing a friend.

What this means to you is, if you're able to demonstrate to your network how referable you are, that you're always striving to be the best in your field and improve, those people in your network will brag about you and tell others how good you are. When a job opens up, they will naturally think of you. That is what you should be thinking about in your career. You always need to strive to improve and that effort will definitely make you referable.

Most employers, or people that are in hiring positions, are constantly marketed to by friends, colleagues, and others looking for jobs. In most cases, if there is a job to be filled it can be filled through that informal network. That's why understanding these informal networks is so crucial and meaningful to your employment experience.

When someone refers somebody, they're really giving that person their seal of approval. If somebody refers a person who turns out to be dishonest, a bad worker, or lazy, this will reflect badly on the referrer. That's one reason it's always important to be honest, work hard, and be the sort of person someone would want to refer.

In a professional setting, and even to some extent in your personal life, it's important that you do everything you can to make yourself referable. Embody the personality, the characteristics, and the strengths that make you referable.

One final important point about referrals is that they're very inexpensive. You don't have to be part of a job site. You don't have to pound the pavement too much or spend money. Your odds of getting the interview are going to be higher, and your odds of getting the job are going to be much higher with the referral.

Building Your Network

Market research done by Ford has shown that a happy customer tells an average of eight people the good news about a product or service that they've enjoyed. A customer who's disgruntled will tell at least twenty people. If you're always complaining to friends, or always upset, or always having problems at work, and you tell your friends about this, it's going to impact your referral appeal. Your friends are a good source of referrals, but again, friends are putting their credibility on the line. When they refer you, they want to make sure you really are the sort of person who's referable.

Other people that can refer you are relatives. Relatives are a great source of referrals, not only your close relatives, who are the most obvious, but many times the best source of referrals are the relatives you don't even know very well. A lot of them want to do something for you and they may have never had a chance.

Your entire network of friends, and friends of friends, your relatives, and former coworkers are a good source of referrals. Again, that is why it's important to remember that when you're at a job, wherever you are, to make as good of an impression as you possibly can.

Relatives are a great source of referrals. Both relatives and friends typically feel a need to help you, and they should because they want to help people that are in a situation similar to them. They just want to help. It's always important that you have contact with friends and relatives and you understand that they are people that can refer you.

An excellent and often overlooked source is your former coworkers. People that you may have worked with in the past are a great source of referrals because they can speak to your abilities, to your character, and all sorts of other things. They're an important source of referrals, and people you should always count on anytime you're considering looking for a [job](#).

Even your current coworkers, if they understand your situation, can be helpful. I would just say to be careful with your current coworkers about letting them know you're looking for a job, if you feel like you need to.

Always stay in contact with people, including your friends, relatives, and former coworkers. That is easier said than done, and I'm not saying that is an easy thing to do, but you need to make a habit of it. Realize that every single person you know is one more person out there looking for a job for you and [looking for opportunities](#) to pop up.

When you see nominations for the Supreme Court, or nominations for ambassadorships, or people getting recruited to be at the head of certain corporations, these are often the result of referrals. It happens in lower level jobs, too, but those higher-level jobs you read about or see in the media are perfect examples of referrals working.

Referrals are a way of life and something that you need to build up. You need to realize that the people you know and the people you have relationships with are all very important and good channels through which to refer people to you.

Who else can refer you? Former coworkers and current coworkers. You obviously do not want to make it known, in certain respects, that you're looking for a job. But if you talk to current coworkers that you have good relationships with, they will refer new information about available jobs and so forth when they come up.

A lot of times, even your boss may want to refer you to another company because they think you'd do a good job and they think maybe you'd be able to refer business to them. You just never know. It's very important to realize that every source out there is a potential referral.

"How in the world?" you may ask. I gave you the example of a boss, but how could your current job be a source of referrals to another job? There are many ways that can happen.

If you go into your job, do good work, and are improving, but the company doesn't have any open opportunities, or if you've hit a roadblock, they may come to you if you express some frustration about that and offer a referral to another job that is

better and offers more opportunity. You just don't know. I've seen this sort of thing happen many times and it's something that's important for you to be aware of.

Another group of people that may refer people to you are customers. If you're in any type of business, you likely have customers, clients, or people you deal with in a professional capacity. That segment of the population that you're serving can be a source of referrals. If that segment of the population sees you as someone who's very interested, very committed, and very behind what you're doing, they're more likely to help you when you need it.

Your neighbors are a good source of referrals for a lot of reasons. Neighbors live close by and want to have a harmonious relationship with you. They want to feel good about the people they're near. If they see you as a committed mother, father, or whatever, and you come to them and they understand you're looking for a job or are interested in something, they're a potential source of referrals.

For example, say you're going to your child's sporting event. All of the people you meet at that one event are sources of referrals. It's very important that you're aware there are many sources of referrals out there. You need to take advantage of them.

In addition, don't forget about your church, synagogue, temple, or mosque. If you have a religious interest, that is another source of referrals. Allow people in these groups to know who you are. Every single organization that you are a part of is a source of referrals.

If you are in an association, that is a source of referrals. The association could be fraternal, social, industrial, or charitable. Charities are a huge source of business. They are a very good source of referrals.

Writers from newspapers are a good source of referrals, because they converse with and know so many people. For example, if a newspaper interviews me, I can be a source of referrals. The newspaper writer who's in the same industry as me can be a source of referrals. I've actually heard about attorneys learning about [job opportunities](#) from people that write in the industry.

Earlier, I mentioned using your dry cleaner as a source for a referral. You might ask yourself, "Why is a dry cleaner a source of referral?" The answer is that people are coming in to them all day long. Every five minutes, someone walks in, hands over their dry cleaning, and a lot of times makes idle chat. Throughout the day, this one dry cleaner probably meets fifty or sixty people, maybe more. They may only exchange pleasantries, but they may also know what their clients do for a living and that one of them in particular happens to be looking for a receptionist. You want to make sure this line of your network is open so that you are the one who finds out about the opening.

Using Your Network

So, you have a great big list of all these people in your network. How do you make use of all of these referrals? The first thing you do is let people know that you're looking for a job. It can be as simple as asking for a job. Just putting the word out there is something that is going to make a big difference in terms of you finding your next job or getting a job. It's so simple, but it's something a lot of people forget to do or are afraid to do.

I think, more than anything, it's important that you use your referrals to understand who may have a relationship with the sort of employer that you're interested in working for. Several years ago, we sold a house to the CEO of a very prestigious small children's hospital. We had a friend who was interested in potentially working at that hospital, but it was incredibly difficult to get a job there. When he learned that we knew somebody who'd love to work there, he started beaming, because he knew that we would be very nice to him in an attempt to make this referral. At least that was the sense I got, and he was right.

This guy was a perfect example of all the places you find people with which to network. Our friend told us she wanted to work at this hospital. We happened to meet someone who worked at that hospital and put the referral together. This was job networking at work.

Being referable means being passionate about your job. You want to be in a position where your interest in the subject matter is something you're passionate about. As I have said several times, it is of utmost importance that you're in a career that taps into your interest and makes use of your strengths. You should feel enthused about your industry, because when that's the case, this stuff comes naturally. That is what you want. Because that is what you're going to do to be referable, and when you call any of these people and ask if they can refer you to a job, they're going to think of you. Or, if they just see you operating out there, they're going to think of you whenever there is a job available.

In the legal publishing industry, one woman I know is incredibly professional. She's very efficient and does a very good job. For years, she's been dealing with all sorts of people in the industry. She gets calls, literally, once a month because they hear about a job opening or something coming up and they think she might be interested. She's probably been at the same job for a couple of decades now and never left, but she's always getting people proactively going to her and saying, "I know about this job and that job." The reason? She's just so passionate about and professional with what she does.

You need to be positioned as someone who's incredibly professional, very good at what they do, and also has a unique edge against competitors. What do I mean by unique edge? A unique edge means somebody can say something about you personally that makes you seem very good and better than the rest. An example would be that I know somebody who's incredibly detail-oriented and is in a job that requires him to be detail oriented. When I think about that person, he is the most detail-oriented person I know and that's what I would say if I referred him.

In business it's called a "unique selling proposition." A unique selling proposition is whatever sets a product or service apart. For example, Avis has been ranked number two. Their unique selling proposition might be "We try harder because we're not number one."

When you hear stories about people who have become successful, a theme that tends to run beneath is that person is constantly improving and getting better at what they do.

Here's an example. Let's say I want to hire an architect and I went into that architect's house. If I didn't see any signs of their interest in architecture I'd realize it wasn't a passion for them and just a job. As a result, I probably wouldn't want to hire that architect. The same thing goes for people in every profession. You want somebody who's interested, committed, and has a visceral passion and interest in the subject matter. You want that and need that. I would almost go so far as to say that to be referable you *need* that.

I believe the single most important characteristic, in terms of your being referable, is for you to understand that you need to come across as someone who's exceptionally committed to what you do. Not only that, but you must also show you're

continually improving and constantly getting better and better. One of the reasons this is so important is that when somebody refers you to a job, the person that's referring you has some bearing on them, too. By that I mean the referrer is putting himself out there. In the process of putting himself out there, he's showing that he believes in you and is putting his credibility on the line.

By being referable, you're putting yourself in a position where people are saying to themselves, "Is this the type of person that I want to refer?" You have to be someone who shows a lot of commitment to whatever kind of work you're doing.

Always put yourself out there and try to put a positive spin on the work you're doing. Always be someone that looks like they've done a good job and wants to do a good job.

Asking for Referrals

Who can refer you to certain jobs? The first group is friends. Every single friend and acquaintance of yours can potentially refer you to a job. That is why it's important that when you're around people, you are sure to display the characteristics and personality traits that make you referable.

Make a list of the people you know. The average person knows about two hundred and fifty people who can refer them to a job. It may seem difficult to believe that the number is as high as it is, but in actuality, when you start considering all the people in your life, it really isn't that outrageous of a claim.

Now ask yourself what kind of employer you're seeking. By knowing what sort of employer you want, you can concentrate on how you're going to get the right kind of referrals. In terms of knowing that employer, you want to know things like the size of the employer, location, and what industry the employer is in. Knowing these things in terms of your target employer will help put you in touch with the people who can offer you those referrals. Knowing this information is going to help you target your search.

For example, if you're in another part of the country from where you want to work, you need to find people in that location who have some regional contacts. If you want to go to work for a very small company, you need to find people who have contacts within that industry and you need to have different strategies than you would if you were looking for a larger employer where it would be easier to find people.

It's important to write down and have a good idea of the exact type of employer you're seeking. If you have that information at your disposal, it will be much easier when you start going through your list of people who can refer you. You can also look up jobs available from different employers if needed on a website such as [Granted.com](https://www.granted.com) for free, which can help you get a feel for what openings an employer has.

The next question you need to ask is, who can refer you to people within your target employer? As you might remember, these are all the people you discovered in the section Building Your Network.

I want you to understand that if you tell 10 friends that you're looking for a job, those are 10 people out there helping you. If you did the same thing with relatives, those are another 10 people or 25 people. If you have 100 friends, you have 100 friends helping you. With previous coworkers and current coworkers, those are more people helping you. Each of these people magnifies your [job search](#) in an incredible way.

Another type of person that can help you would be a customer. If you're selling something or you're in a certain business, they can assist you as well.

Neighbors like to help each other. Someone who lives in the same neighborhood as you or those you see each day can also be a great source of help.

People that go to religious services at your church or synagogue are also a great source of referrals. I've been in religious services before and someone got up and talked about how someone who's a member of the group is looking for a [job](#) and asked if anyone can help. Usually, other people stand up and offer some sort of help. It's amazing to me. That's a great source of jobs.

Any group that has any sort of shared interest, whether it's your friends, relatives, past coworkers, current coworkers, customers, neighbors, or church or synagogue members can be great.

Another thing is fellow members of an association, whether it's fraternal, social, industrial, charitable, or whatever, can also help you with referrals. It's very important that you let those people know you're looking, too.

Another incredible source of referrals is if you know any people who are considered leaders or celebrities in your community. Local or national, it doesn't matter. Anybody that has a lot of influence typically knows a lot of people.

Also, it's always good for you to have some sort of relationship with people who are considered leaders in your industry or local area, because they have access to all sorts of things that can help you.

Another overlooked source of referrals is if you know anybody who's a writer for a newspaper or someone along those lines. These sorts of people are typically very well networked because they need sources and are a great source of referrals.

Then there are very benign people. People you would not expect who can refer you, like grocery store cashiers, cab drivers, and all sorts of people like that. There are numerous people out there who can provide you with referrals. I realize it sounds crazy to say grocery store cashiers, cab drivers, and dry cleaners, but in New York there is even a dating service run by a taxi driver who, when he sees people that look compatible, fixes them up. It's incredible.

Grocery store cashiers typically know a lot of people in the community, because they interact with them every day. You need to understand that there are many people out there who can provide you with solid referrals on a consistent basis.

Another thing I want to talk to you about, and I've talked to you about it briefly, is setting the stage for referrals. By "setting the stage for referrals," I mean make sure you're consistently referable. You know the type of employer you're seeking. You know people and have created some sort of list of those that can refer others to you.

Then you must set the stage for referrals. How do you do that? What is the most effective way to set the stage for referrals? One of the first things, I believe, is to just make sure you have truly excellent references. You can't always have good references, but it's important that you acquire the best references that you can.

People like to refer experts, and people like to refer those who are excited about the things that they do. I believe it's very important that you're excited about what you do for a living. That is the kind of person who is referable. When someone is very excited and animated about what they do, others want to refer them. If you are just so-so and don't really care too much about what you're doing, you're obviously going to be much less referable than if you're very passionate and completely

exuberant about your work.

When you ask someone for a referral, it's always nice to take the person out to dinner and offer to pay for it. Maybe don't even ask anything from them during the dinner. Just subtly bring up the fact that you're unemployed or unhappy in your job and if they know of any open positions, you'd appreciate it. Explain that you're out there networking. It's a classic technique and it's something that would be very effective for you to do.

In order to get referrals, stay in contact with people. You need to build a "file of facts" of sorts for all the people that I mentioned. This will help you keep them all organized and clearly know who everybody is.

Finally, always tell the person that's referring you that you'll speak positively of them. Say "I think so highly of you, could you help me out with this?" This one little thing is very powerful. The reason it's so powerful is that when you tell someone you think highly of her, it's like she's an advocate for you to whomever she referred you to. I think that is something that would be very meaningful and something you should think strongly about in terms of your use of referrals.

In looking for referrals, I think one of the most exciting things is getting out there and meeting people. When you meet people, it's not difficult to set the stage for a referral. If you ever watch these master networkers, you'll see there are lots of ways to do it. There is a good example in a book that I recommend you look at. It's called *The Referral of a Lifetime*. The gist of the book is this: when you meet people and want a referral, ask them three questions.

First, when you meet people, ask them what they do and then listen to the answer. You have to appear interested. You can't just ask somebody what they do and not listen to the answer. You have to appear as if that information feels relevant. That's not just good networking, it's good etiquette. If you show you're interested, people will talk more.

Then ask what it is they like most about what they do. That forces people to think. One of the fundamental principles of human relations is that people love to talk about themselves. Everyone is the most important person in the world in his or her own mind. It's very important to move away from that psychology, but that's a whole separate discussion.

When you're trying to set yourself up for referrals and being referred to jobs and so forth, it's exceptionally important, from a networking perspective, to allow people to talk about themselves and to pack interest in it.

There are different types of listening. There is passive listening where you kind of go, "Uh huh." There is listening where you look like you are very interested but you're not really sure what the person is saying. The kind of listening I'm talking about is acting as if you're really interested in whatever the person is interested in. When I say *acting*, I don't mean pretending. I mean actually getting inside that person and seeing where he or she is coming from. Now I've seen people do it in a fake way, but you need to make sure that you do it in a way that is very genuine while still letting people talk.

Ask them, "What is it you do? What do you like most about that? If you could start over, knowing what you know now, what would you do differently?" or "What would you do differently?" These kinds of questions are very good for getting at the heart of people.

After you ask those questions and the person has talked—and let them talk for three or four minutes—say something that is important like, "I enjoyed meeting you. Why don't we stay in touch?" Get their card or whatever and send them a short thank you note saying you enjoyed meeting them and that sort of thing. "You seem very interesting. I'd love to stay in touch with you."

Another thing I want to say in terms of setting the stage for a referral is, before you actually even ask for a referral, many times a really good strategy is to do something in advance. You might do someone a favor. Always try to do something in advance for people and have the stage set in such a way that people want to help you. So, you might take the person out to dinner and in the course of the dinner, if they ask you how your career is going, tell them. That is a very important thing. Before you ask for a referral, do something for the person.

One of the things you want to be very careful with is not spacing your request for a referral too closely to asking for something. If you haven't had contact with the person in six months and then you do something for them and two hours, a day, or two days later you ask them for a referral, your efforts will come across as disingenuous.

Do something with the person. Talk to them. Have a telephone conversation. Then let the information come out that you may be looking for a referral. This is the logic you must follow when asking for referrals.

It's also good to know when people are likely to be the most receptive. This is important, because people are typically receptive at certain times. For example, I tend to work very hard in the morning and in the early afternoon. My wife knows that's not a time when I'm receptive to various requests for help and that sort of thing. She'll ask me at night when I'm relaxed.

I want to briefly go back to the people you can target for referrals. One of the important things about these people is that you need to determine which people are those that have a good relationship with the employer you're already interested in.

Let's go through an example of meeting people making a referral and how that's done. A lot of this is going to come from you internally and what you feel like you're going to do, but this is a point where a lot of people get uncomfortable and don't know how to go about it.

We talked about identifying the type of employer you're seeking. We also talked about identifying people who can help you. Then we talked about setting the stage for referrals in a couple of different ways. The next thing I'd like to talk about is how to ask individual people for a referral. One of the easiest ways to do this is to just ask people. Don't be bashful. Asking outright is the best thing to do when you are with someone you know. Most times, you can't get a referral if you don't ask for it. You can certainly set the stage, but I recommend just asking people the same questions that we talked about above when dealing with something you already know personally.

Go through your list and just ask people, "Who do you know in the _____ industry?" Then ask some friends, relatives, coworkers, and customers. Of course, the blank is the kind of industry you want to be a part of or the job you want to do. That is a very important component to it.

Another thing to remember is every time you meet somebody new, it's a good idea to ask them for a referral at some point. It doesn't have to be during the actual first meeting, but it's a good idea to ask people for referrals anyway at some point in your relationship.

If you're asking someone for a referral, make sure you'll make the person referring you look good to others. This is vital. Referrers, in many cases, are trying to look good to the person they refer you to.

When asking people for referrals, a lot of times people will say, "I don't know anybody." Go through the person's list of

friends, neighbors, and relatives with her to see if you can find a connection. Someone did that with me once and it actually worked. I was able to tell him about someone who could help once he had jogged my memory.

Those that are good at getting referrals systematically stay in touch with people. There are all sorts of people out there that they know and by staying in touch with them, they won't let relationships die. That is very important, and I think their ability to systematically keep in touch with people is one of the best-kept secrets of some of the best politicians and networkers out there.

In January, they may give a New Year's card. On the Fourth of July, they may send a Fourth of July card. On Thanksgiving, a Thanksgiving card, and so forth.

And another thing: after you meet people, it's a good idea to send a thank you note. This will make you more memorable to potential referrers.

I hope this diagram here can help you in terms of uncovering hidden assets and opportunities that you have. It's very important to realize that getting referrals and having people refer you to others is something that is going to make a major difference in your [job search](#) and in your career.

In some industries, having referrals is the name of the game. You have to have a referral if you want to land a job. In many cases, the employer won't know anything else about you. The important thing is that the person suddenly has some information, based on that exchange, and can feel positive about you.

Etiquette

There are some points of etiquette that go along with getting referrals and using an informal network. First and foremost after meeting people, send them thank-you notes, as I mentioned above. I don't think there is anything wrong necessarily with asking for a referral the first time you meet them, though generally, you're better off waiting. It's easy to do it right away and much harder to follow up. The follow-up makes people feel good and makes a difference in how you're perceived.

Another thing that is important is that you should give referrals to other people as well. Always try to give back to the people who helped you. When you give other people referrals, you reap what you sow and those referrals will come back to you.

Also, keep in touch. It's absolutely crucial to send out cards on the holidays around December. It's a good idea, though not 100% necessary, to send a card on the Fourth of July. People like that. It separates you. Sending out Thanksgiving cards and staying in touch with people is very important. When you fail to stay in touch with people, you break that bond a little bit.

In closing, I just want you to understand that referrals are an incredible way to get jobs. It's something you need to integrate into your strategy. Many people use Online Data Contact Manager or something similar to keep track of everyone.

Regardless of what you use to manage your contacts, make an effort to utilize it more to fully benefit from referrals.

Read More About The People Who Leave Your Company Are Just as an Important Network as the People Currently at Your Company:

- [Finding Jobs Through Contacts](#)
- [You Need Connections to Make the Most of Your Career](#)
- [Meg Whitmans Greatest Achievement, Networks and Your Career](#)