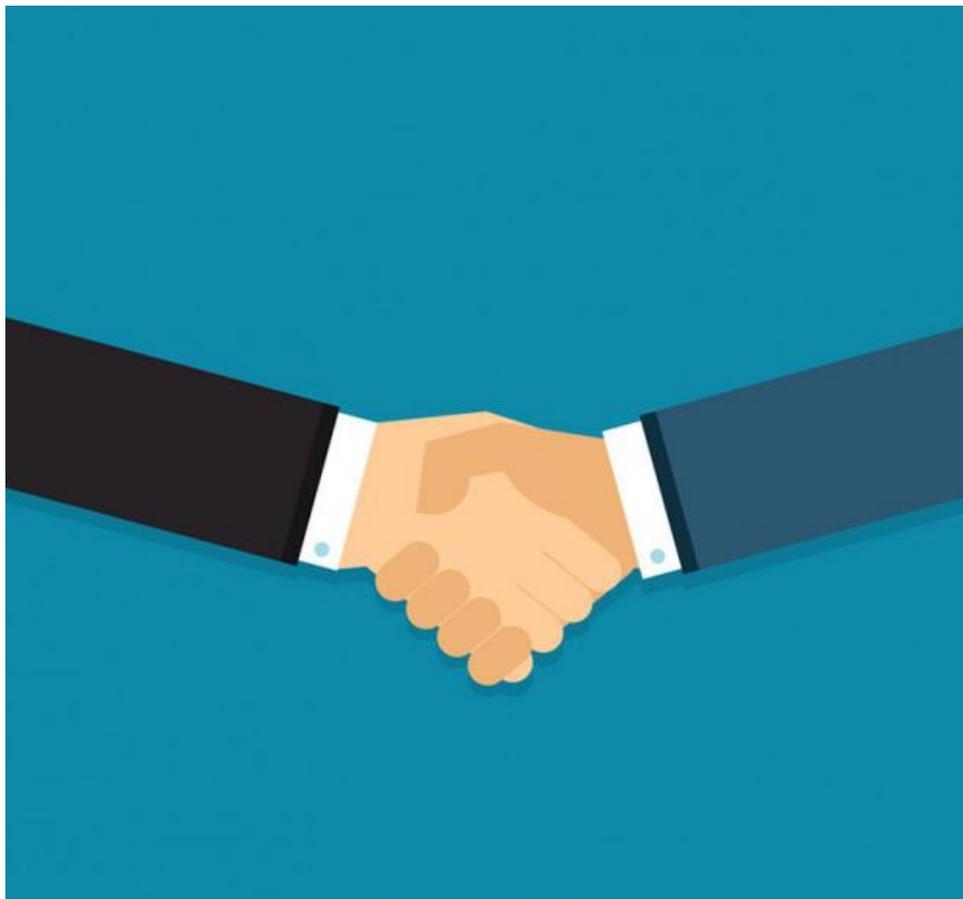


# LAND YOUR DREAM JOB

## How to Network like a Pro



Written by Phil Cawdery, MBA  
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## Thanks for picking up my eBook!

The job seeker in the 21<sup>st</sup> century faces unprecedented competition. For each open position, an average of 59 candidates apply for the job. To compound matters, **only 12%** of candidates end up being called in for an interview. With odds like these, it's surprising that people aren't volunteering to participate in *The Hunger Games* instead! Making matters even worse for the traditional job seeker, most jobs these days are not being filled through formal job postings. Every year millions of jobs are found through the hidden job market – jobs that are not ever advertised publicly. It is estimated that **up to 80%** of jobs are found through the hidden job market! Based on this, you should spend 80% of your time networking to find a job and only 20% of your time (at most) applying online. In this book I present a step-by-step system for how to make the most of your time networking.

Be it business, politics, sports or the arts, eventually the same old model for success ends up turning against the average participant. Like the blackjack table in Vegas, the odds become stacked in favour of the house. The advent of internet job sites such as Indeed, Monster and Workopolis have opened up job opportunities to the whole world. But instead of this helping the average job seeker, this has stacked the job marketplace in favour of organizations that can pick and choose from a long list of qualified candidates. I like to refer to online job sites as “The Black Hole of the Internet.”

I used to rely heavily on applying for work online – it didn't get me very far. It was only after entering an MBA program, where I learned extensively about the power of networking, that I shifted my approach from applying online to networking with the right people to open up doors. Within just a couple months of shifting my approach and consistently applying my networking system, I landed my dream internship with the largest Canadian consulting firm. Once I finished my MBA, I used the same approach and, in short order, I landed a role in IT transformation with a Top 3 global bank.

Networking is about 3 things:

1. Connecting with the right people
2. Starting a meaningful conversation
3. Creating a professional relationship to uncover opportunities in the hidden job market

Seeing the transformation in my own career over such a short period of time has inspired me to share my system with others who are struggling to land their dream jobs. I give a lot of credit to my mentors and the MBA program in shaping my approach to finding my dream job. It's now time to pay it forward to you.

I hope you enjoy reading this eBook as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Phil Cawdery, MBA

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## SET YOUR INTENTION

*“All great acts are ruled by intention” - Brenna Yovanoff*

If you've picked up this e-book, you are in all likelihood a person of action. That's a great trait to have to help carve out a successful and fulfilling career. One drawback for many people of action however is that they tend to place too much emphasis on the “Fire” stage of the “Ready, Aim, Fire!” approach to reaching their goals. I can speak from personal experience - it didn't help that I was in a graduate program with a bunch of Type A personalities that were all about “Fire”!

There is great value in taking a step back and evaluating your goal to ensure it aligns with your values. Self-reflection and contemplation are both underappreciated in the Western world. These principles are much more common place in the Eastern world, rooted in the teachings of Buddhism. Regardless of your spiritual or religious inclinations (or lack thereof), inward thinking and self-reflection are keys to setting your intention.

### **Think BIG**

A common thread I see in many job seekers I help is not a lack of vision, but a small, self-limiting vision. Too many people grossly underestimate their abilities. This self-limiting behaviour leads to goals that are far below what they are capable of accomplishing.

To do your best to think **BIG**, I encourage you to paint a picture of your end game. What is it that you envision yourself being and doing 20 to 30 years down the line? Sipping a margarita at the beach is great, and perhaps a part of that vision, but what I'm referring to is the work you will be doing.

### **Be Specific**

It's important not to just come up with a goal such as *“I want to become a businesswoman who will make good enough money to eventually start her own business.”* While this is a start, this is not a vision that will lead you to your goal. To elevate your vision to a level that will lead you to your dream job, you need to be specific! To do this, you have to determine the position you are seeking. If you are already clear about this - great! You can move onto the next section. If you have any doubt or lack of clarity, this next exercise is for you.

Life is about decisions. You need to make decisions that align with your values and the life you want to live. Perhaps a work-life balance is your number one priority. Or maybe it's a high salary that influences your career moves. Being part of something bigger than yourself or contributing back to society are also aspects that could be central to your values. You need to be honest with yourself and pinpoint what drives you.

Taking a personality assessment such as Myers Briggs or DISC, coupled with a skills inventory test, will help refine what you value as well as what jobs would play to your strengths and personality while aligning with your values.

There are plenty of online career development websites to help with this process. A great online resource to do this is [MyPlan.com](http://MyPlan.com). It is a one stop shop for learning more about careers and to take assessments. I am not affiliated with this site, I just think it's a great starting point for anyone looking to better define their career.

For salaries, the two websites that I've found that are the best are [PayScale.com](http://PayScale.com) and [GlassDoor.com](http://GlassDoor.com). What I like about these two sites is that they provide typical salary ranges for a multitude of positions, across many organizations and industries. While these salary scales are based on user feedback provided to these websites, and therefore may not be 100% accurate, they are usually pretty reliable.

Looking towards the future, you will also want to look at trends and projected job growth in your areas of interest. I lean towards going to government websites that provide this information. There are sites at the state and provincial levels that you can find easily by googling "job trends [state/province]" There are also country level statistics that you should take a look at as well:

USA: <http://www.bls.gov/emp/>

Canada: [http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/LMI\\_bulletin.do](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/LMI_bulletin.do)

This is an important piece of the puzzle to find your dream job. Make sure you give this step the proper time so you can hone in on what type of job will not just fulfill you but also prove to be a reliable source of income in the years to come.

### **Work Back Sequentially**

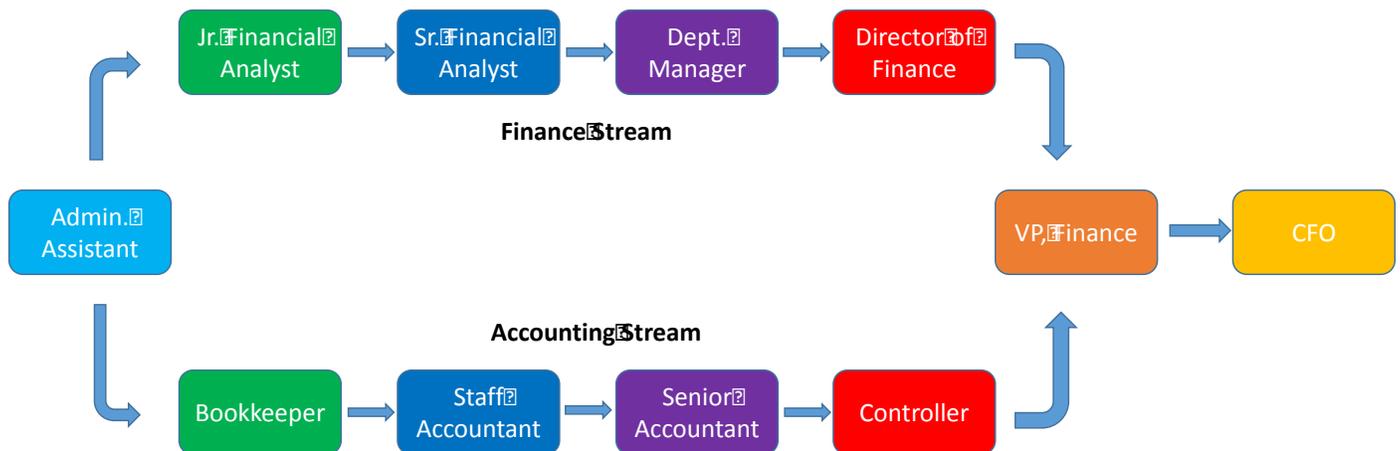
Now that you have a better sense of what type of position you aspire to attaining - be it a CFO (Chief Financial Officer) or an RN (Registered Nurse) - you need to work back sequentially to identify what positions you should apply for based on what stage you are at in your career. One of the biggest pitfalls I've seen when helping people aspiring to make their way to their dream job is a lack of a road map. Like any epic road trip, the road from where you are now to your dream job is probably not from point A to point B. There more than likely will be multiple points along the way that you will need to pass before you reach your final destination.

By using websites like PayScale and GlassDoor, you can take a look at typical career paths they map out that lead to your dream job. From there, you can take a look at the requirements that a typical job posting asks for on Indeed, Monster or Workopolis. This will allow you to reverse engineer what position you should be seeking first.

Let's use the example of CFO.

Here is a typical career path that will land you in a CFO position:

## CAREER PATH TO THE OFFICE OF THE CFO

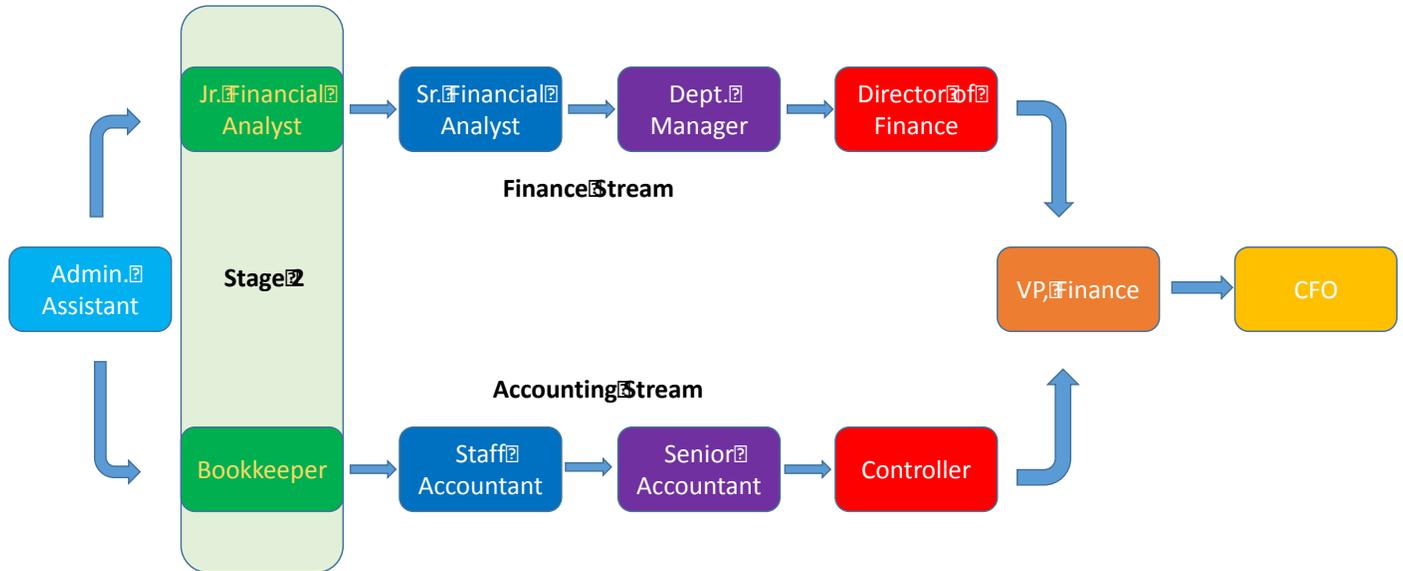


For this example, there are two major streams that lead to the CFO position - the Finance Stream and the Accounting Stream. While these streams share some similarities, there are also some distinct differences that you will find during your research through the online resources I have listed earlier. If you prefer one particular path, you do not need to compromise and can just focus on climbing that career ladder. If you are at least somewhat flexible, this will open up more opportunities to get on a career ladder to reach your goal. Keep in mind as well that as you progress throughout your career, you can switch between ladders with the proper certification and training. Considering the average 40 year old has held an average of 10 jobs, this is commonplace and something that you don't need to worry too much about.

Based on your research and online job postings, you can determine which stage of the career ladder you are on. If, for example, you have recently completed a Bachelor or Associate of Commerce with some entry-level experience and have not yet received further certification (e.g. a CPA or CFA), then you most likely will fall into the second stage of this ladder - either in the Junior Financial Analyst or Bookkeeper position.

These are the positions you should primarily target:

## CAREER PATH TO THE OFFICE OF THE CFO



### Write Your Mission Statements

Now that you have a clear picture of where you are headed in both the short and long term, it's time to create two mission statements for the following:

1. Your "Think **BIG**" vision statement
2. Your "Next Step" mission statement

For your "Think **BIG**" vision statement, you need to do just that - Think **BIG**! I want you to come up with the most audacious goal you can conjure. I also want you to be specific as possible. Here is a good formula for writing a "Think **BIG**" vision statement:

*"I, [name], will become a/the [position] of/in [organization/industry] where I will [action]"*

Here are some examples:

"I, Susie Chan, will become the CFO of KPMG Canada where I will create record profits for the organization."

"I, Alex Mirnov, will become a Sales Executive in the energy sector where I will lead a team that generates record sales year-over-year."

"I, Patricia Klein, will become the CEO of Habitat for Humanity where I will facilitate the construction of a record number of affordable houses."

"I, Raul Sidhu, will become the Director of Technology in the video game industry where I will oversee the development of the Game of the Year."

It's important to create a "Think **BIG**" vision statement because it serves as a reminder of your ultimate goal and the path you are blazing to attain your dream job. It also helps keep you motivated during times where you might experience frustration or self-doubt with the job search and networking process.

Your "Next Step" mission statement that you will write next is your goal to get on or move up the right career ladder to reach your dream job. This mission statement is about leveraging your network to acquire a suitable job for your skillsets and interests on that career ladder. We will use a similar formula:

**"I, [name], will find [position(s)] in [industry] where I will [action]"**

If you are targeting more than one position, feel free to write more than one mission statement. What I prefer to use is forward slashes between the two positions (e.g. consultant/business analyst) in a single mission statement.

Here are some possible mission statements that align with the vision statements above:

"I, Susie Chan, will find a bookkeeping position in consulting where I will gain an understanding of the industry and apply my education."

"I, Alex Mirnov, will find a sales representative role in the energy sector where I will make noticeable impact by exceeding sales targets.

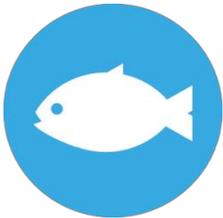
"I, Patrick Klein, will find a project coordinator role in the non-profit sector where I will make a meaningful difference and hone my organizational skills."

"I, Raul Sidhu, will find a testing position in the video game industry where I will learn more about video game design and the industry."

Now that you have your vision and mission statements down pat, it's time to make use of them! Every morning and every night, review these statements and repeat them out loud. Through *affirmation*, you will reiterate to yourself that your dreams are possible. Affirmation is a powerful tool to reaching your goals. It helps you stay focused, positive and forward thinking. Post these statements in your office, by your bedside - anywhere that you will see them twice a day so you can reaffirm your goals and your journey to yourself.



Regardless of the industry you are seeking employment in, there are three broad categories of companies in any given industry:



**“The Big Fish”**

*The Big Fish* are the top players and largest organizations in their industry. These are companies that, generally speaking, are well established and hold strong brand awareness in their markets. These companies do not necessarily operate internationally depending on what industry they are in and their service offerings. These are the easiest to identify - by simply googling “top companies [whatever industry]” you will be able to identify the *Big Fish*. Otherwise, you can google “companies by revenue [whatever industry]”; “companies by profits [whatever industry]” or “companies by size [whatever industry]”.

**For an industry, such as consulting in Canada, you would come up with a list that would look similar to this:**

1. Deloitte
2. PriceWaterhouseCoopers
3. Ernst and Young
4. KPMG
5. Accenture
6. IBM

Some firms in an industry have carved out their own niche. For example, Accenture and IBM are both well known for business technology consulting while Deloitte, while having many service lines, has a particularly strong health care focus. If there is a particular industry niche that interests you, do the research up front and make that company a priority target for networking.

**Pros of working for a Big Fish:**

- Great brand for your resume that can open up many doors to create a fulfilling and lucrative career
- Great training and systems that you can apply wherever you go in your career, be it a mid-sized player or a startup company
- Becoming part of an impressive network of professionals you can leverage and learn from

### Cons of working for a Big Fish:

- Huge amounts of competition for the same promotion or internal opportunity you have your eyes on
- Fewer opportunities to wear multiple hats in a role and take on different responsibilities
- Expect to work long hours starting at the industry average wage (at best)



### “Mid-Sized Players”

*Mid-sized players* are usually large companies with recognizable brands like *The Big Fish*, but usually are more specialized and may not have the same international brand awareness or reach compared to the *Big Fish*. These firms may not show up if you google top companies by revenue or size. In this case, you will have to do a bit more digging. You can do this by looking at free websites, such as Quora or Reddit, where people ask for information. Usually you can find a similar question with thoughtful answers from the website community without posting your own. In instances where you can't find the answer you are looking for, ask the community for a list of companies in the industry. You will tend to receive useful feedback within 24 hours of posting – I wish I received email responses that quickly!

### Mid-Sized Players in the consulting industry in Canada include:

1. MNP
2. Grant Thornton
3. CGI
4. BDO
5. Fujitsu

### Pros of working for a Mid-Sized Player:

- It's the “middle bowl of porridge”: firms can have enough structured processes and formal training that you can leverage while not having the same level of intense competition for positions within the organization
- You have the opportunity to wear multiple hats and take on different responsibilities
- You can have great mentoring opportunities as the organization may be small enough where you connect with the higher levels of the organization on at least a semi-regular basis

### Cons of working for a Mid-Sized Player:

- A Mid-Sized brand is usually not well recognized internationally or even across different industries nationally
- *Mid-Sized Players* have a tendency to be in a growth phase that includes mergers and acquisitions. While this provides more opportunities in some contexts, it can also lead to positions being cut as the organization moves towards streamlining employment and realizing greater efficiencies
- It's harder to take your experience at a *Mid-Sized Player* and go work for a *Big Fish* than the other way around



## “The Rest”

What I have coined as *The Rest* includes small organizations, startups and one person shows (aka independent consultants) in the industry. *The Rest* is a lot harder to encapsulate and is more varied than *The Big Fish* or *The Mid-Sized Players*. Aside from grinding away with Google searches, I find a lot of these potential employers can be located by searching on LinkedIn (more on this later) and connecting with your existing network who might know someone in this cluster.

### Pros of working for The Rest:

- You will likely work side-by-side with the key players in the organization which can lead to fantastic mentoring opportunities
- You *will* wear multiple hats. In any small organization that lacks the structure of a Big Fish or Mid-Sized Player, you will be expected to fill in the gaps wherever needed – lots of learning opportunities
- With the best of *The Rest*, if you exceed their wildest dreams, the career advancement opportunities can exceed yours when the company is rapidly growing and begins to need a more formalized structure

### Cons of working for The Rest:

- Lack of a brand you can leverage for exit opportunities with more mature organizations
- There is less job security as startups and smaller organizations are more likely to be bought out or fold
- With less structure, you will have to be comfortable handling a high level of ambiguity and change at work (if this suits you – add it to the Pro list!)

As you can see, there is no right answer which of these three categories of organizations is best to go after. There is only the right answer for **YOU**. If you are just graduating or are not currently employed then finding **A** job in the industry rather than **THE** job maybe your strategy. Some others are adamant about working for a *Big Fish* or a startup and will patiently plug away at networking and applying for work until the right opportunity comes along. I can't tell you what is best for you – listen to your intuition.

### What if I am open to different industries?

Great! If that's the case, you can follow this process for multiple industries. If you are open to pretty much any industry, you can create a list of 20 dream companies you would like to work for as a starting point and will fill in the rest by who is in your network and your network's network later in this system.

### Should I connect with people that work in a type of organization not in my preferred category?

*Absolutely!* For one, it's difficult to project how your networking activities are going to go with your preferred firms. Even with a direct contact, due to timing and circumstances, you will not always be able to convert your networking efforts into a job offer. Secondly, people in the industry know each other. This provides you an opportunity to connect with your contact's colleagues through your networking efforts.



## Setting Up your Network Tracker

An organized job search leads to great results. As you use this networking system, you will need to keep all your contacts and points of reference organized in a spreadsheet. This will also allow you to track follow up action you need to take.

Here is a template to use to track your networking progress and follow up required:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	Priority	Company	Contact Name	Title	Contact Info	Connections in Common	Action Taken	Action Date	Follow Up	FU Date	Second FU	FU Date
2	1	Deloitte	John Hancock	Partner	Email/LI profile	Alice Wong	Sent LI msg to AW to connect with DB	02-Oct	Left VM to AW	09-Oct	Emailed	23-Oct
3	1	KPMG	Martha Brown	Senior Manager	Email/LI profile	DIRECT CONTACT	Sent email to MB	02-Oct	Spoke with MB, meeting on Fri	21-Oct		
4	2	MNP	Randal Smith	Director	Email/LI profile	Janice Thompson	Sent LI msg to JT to connect with RS	03-Oct	Meeting set with RS on Wed	19-Oct		
5	2	Grant Thornton	Sara Greene	Manager	Email/LI profile	DIRECT CONTACT	Sent email to SG					
6	3	ABC Consulting	Allan Chen	Founder	Email/LI profile	Phil Bailey	Sent email to PB to connect with AC					
7	3	Sparrow Co	Christine Young	Owner	Email/LI profile	George Forrest	Sent LI msg to GF to connect with CY					
8	3	FRS Consulting	Wilma Stone	CEO	Email/LI profile	DIRECT CONTACT	Sent email to WS					

With this tracker you will record a priority ranking from 1 to 3 in terms of your interest in the company, the contact details of your direct or shared contacts and action/follow up dates for reaching out to these contacts. As you read through the book, you will learn how to record these details and how to follow up to set up informational interviews.

## Know Your Network - It's Bigger Than You Think!

Once you have researched the industry you want to break into, it's time to identify the people that are going to help you get your foot in the door with those companies.

How many people do you think your network is made up of? 100? 200? If you are just looking at the number of people you are connected to on LinkedIn, you are sorely mistaken. Given the law of the six degrees of separation, where everyone in the world is connected to each other by a maximum of six degrees, your network is inevitably going to be much bigger than you might expect.

When you think about your network, think outside the box and think **BIG**. Brainstorm all the ways you know people - from the hockey team you play on to your family friends. These people are all part of your network.

Here is an example of what your network might *really* look like:

## Your (Bigger Than You Thought) Network

When I completed my MBA, I took this concept to heart and made a concerted effort to get my name into the marketplace through non-conventional parts of my network. I would carry my business cards around with me. When I would get together with family friends, mentors and colleagues at social gatherings, I would make a point of mentioning I was looking for work in a few specific industries. Were these people in the industry I wanted to get into? Sometimes, yes. Most often, not. But many had connections in their *own* networks that could help me.

### Finding Shared Connections

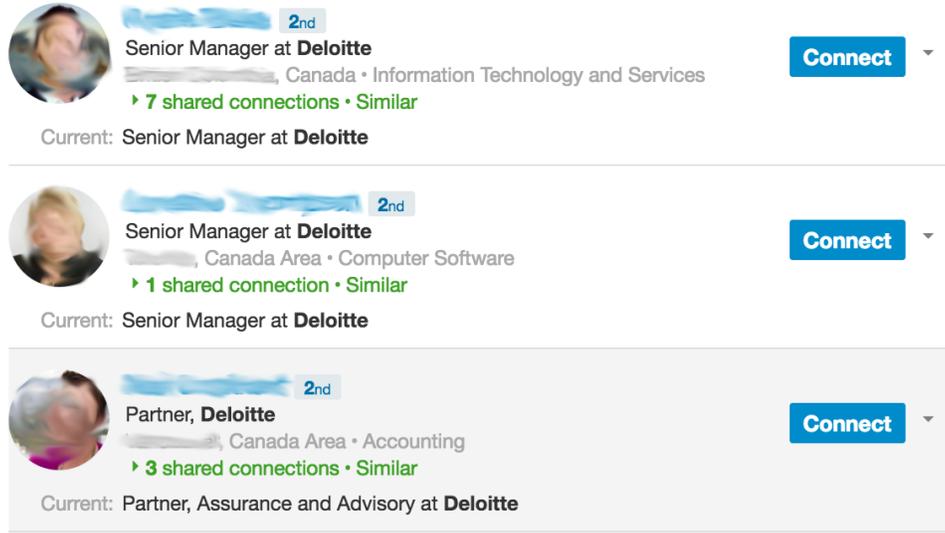
Harnessing the true power of your network starts with finding shared connections on LinkedIn. To do this, first search for a dream company that you want to work at in the top search bar. When you type in a company name, such as Deloitte, it will give you three options: *People who work at Deloitte*, *People who used to work at Deloitte* and *Jobs at Deloitte*. You will be using the first two selections to find people who either work or have worked at that company. LinkedIn automatically puts profiles that you have in your network, followed by profiles where there is at least 1 shared connection between you and someone in your network. You will write down these names and your shared connections with these people on your Networking Tracker.



Current Company: Deloitte x Reset

Some search results have been filtered to improve relevance.

[Show all results](#)

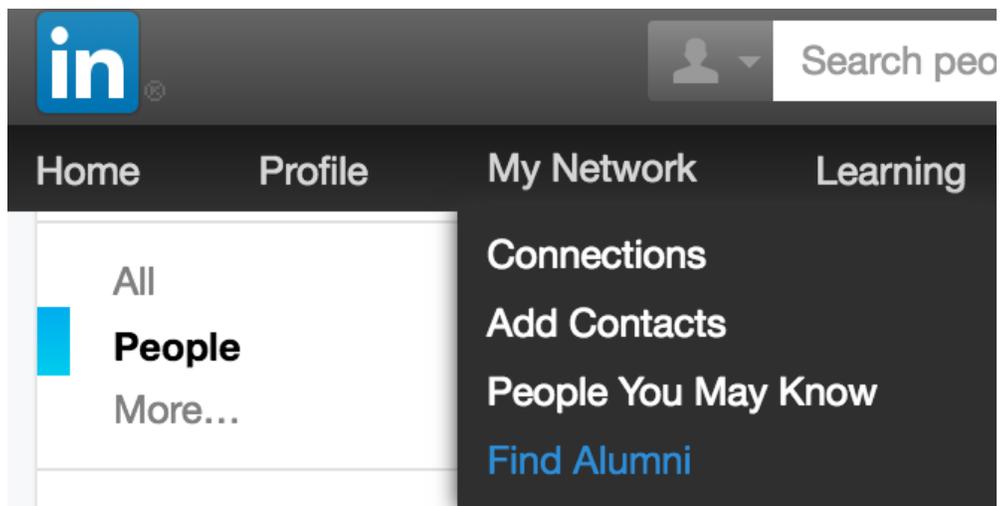


The screenshot shows three LinkedIn search results for employees at Deloitte. Each result includes a profile picture, a 2nd-degree connection badge, the person's name and title at Deloitte, their location and industry, a 'Connect' button, and a link to view shared connections. The first result is a Senior Manager in Information Technology and Services with 7 shared connections. The second is a Senior Manager in Computer Software with 1 shared connection. The third is a Partner in Accounting with 3 shared connections.

## Finding Alumni Connections

Another LinkedIn feature that goes unnoticed by many is the *Find Alumni* search tool under the *My Network* dropdown list at the top of the page. As long as you have listed all the educational institutions you have attended in your LinkedIn profile, you will be able to toggle between these networks to see who in your alumni has worked for a certain company or industry. Your alumni network is among your most powerful tools in your networking journey. I have found that fellow alumni tend to go above and beyond for me when I reach out to them on LinkedIn. It's very common to have shared connections with alumni so it serves as an excellent platform for making new networking connections.

Here is where you can locate the *Find Alumni* search tool:



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn navigation menu. The 'My Network' tab is selected, and the 'Find Alumni' option is highlighted in blue. Other options in the menu include Home, Profile, Learning, Connections, Add Contacts, and People You May Know. The search bar at the top right contains the text 'Search peo'.

Here is an example of search results for alumni connected to Deloitte:

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn search interface for 'deloitte'. The search bar contains 'deloitte' and filters are set to 'Attended' and '1900 to 2016'. The results are categorized into three sections: 'Where they live', 'Where they work', and 'What they do'. Below these sections, five profile cards are displayed, each with a photo, a name, a job title, and a location.

Where they live	Where they work	What they do
Canada: 236	Deloitte Canada: 51	Business Development: 79
Vancouver, Canada Area: 79	Deloitte: 46	Finance: 61
British Columbia, Canada: 49	PwC Canada: 4	Accounting: 46
Calgary, Canada Area: 36	TransCanada: 4	Consulting: 41
Toronto, Canada Area: 31	Provincial Health Services Authoritiv: 3	Entrepreneurship: 29

Profile 1	Profile 2	Profile 3	Profile 4	Profile 5
Senior Consultant at Deloitte Canada British Columbia, Canada	British Columbia, Canada	Deloitte Canada Vancouver, Canada Area	Deloitte British Columbia, Canada	Advisory at Deloitte Vancouver, Canada Area

## Outside of Your Network

If you are having trouble finding connections or shared connections with a certain company – fear not. More and more organizations have corporate directories on their website that include the names, positions, phone numbers and email addresses of decision makers. Look for the highest level contact in an area of interest to you (e.g. marketing, accounting, finance, operations) and take note of their name and contact information in your Networking Tracker.

Here are some examples of high level position titles that you can look for:

- C-level managers (e.g. CEO, CFO, COO)
- VP
- Director
- Manager
- Partner

I would not recommend HR personnel as the first point of contact when trying to reach out to someone outside of your network. HR personnel are more likely to direct you to the job board on the company's corporate website to apply and are unlikely to connect you with someone that you can make an impression with in person.

Outside of corporate websites you can take a look at industry association websites that sometimes list people and their contact details that are not available on corporate websites. Relevant names and contact information from these websites should also be added to your tracker.

Going back to LinkedIn, you can also find profiles in your search results where you have no common connections. If you lack a company connection or shared connection, you can add a few profiles from your search result based on job title and location.



Now that you have identified people in the organizations you want to connect with, it's time to tap into your network.

### Your Goal

Your goal is to land an *informational interview*. This is not an interview for an open position at the company your contact works at or a direct sales pitch. It's a meeting for the following reasons:

1. Gather information about the contact's industry and career progression
2. Generate leads to connect with other professionals in the industry
3. Seek guidance on how to break into the industry

This approach might seem counter-intuitive at first. You might ask *"Why spend the time meeting people when I'm not going to get a job out of it? Wouldn't I be better off actually applying for jobs online?"*

To answer the first question, you are not looking to get a job out of that informational interview directly. But you are from the overall networking system and the informational interview is a crucial piece of the process.

On the second question, I can say confidently that you are not better off simply sending your application through the proverbial black hole (aka job boards). At least not without starting conversations and making meaningful connections first.

The great thing about tapping into your own network (your direct contacts) is that you have people endorsing you when an introduction is made on your behalf. Because of this, you have already established a degree of social capital with the person to whom you are being introduced. This can go a long way in having that person take time out of their busy day to speak with you and possibly help you in finding a career opportunity. Does this always lead to an interview? No, but it's a numbers game and, through deliberate practice, you can become a Networking Master and turns the odds forever in your favour!

## How about if I don't know the contact that well?

Over the years I had been surprised by how I have found the best employment opportunities. People closest in my network that have even offered to help me network previously sometimes have stonewalled me. Conversely, there have been people I have been out of touch with for years that, when I came knocking, they quickly became invested in my job search and helped connect me with the right people in my preferred industry. I've learned that how close you are to a direct contact is not necessarily correlated with how willing they will be to help you in your search. So it is important not to shy away from contacting people you haven't been in touch with for years on the assumption they would be unwilling to help you out.

### Connecting with a Direct Contact

So how do you approach your network? There are a few different ways.

#### 1. In a social setting

This is the one I prefer. I had the opportunity to reconnect with family, friends as well as former classmates and coworkers when I returned from exchange in Costa Rica. The fact I was away finishing my degree and had stories (and photos too!) from the trip were great reasons to reconnect and catch up. In the process I would mention my next steps - finding a job in my desired industry and applying my education to good use. I would ask if they knew of anyone I could connect with to learn more about the industry or potential opportunities. I would also have my business cards handy so my contact information would be handy for my network to disseminate in the event an opportunity came to their attention.

#### 2. Through an email or social media message

This was another method I used that led to a few informational interviews with possible employers. I would write a short email to someone in my network I did not have the opportunity to connect with yet. I would send them an email along these lines:

“

*Hi [contact],*

*I hope this email finds you well.*

*It's been a while since we last spoke. I recently returned from an amazing adventure in Costa Rica on exchange where I finished up my MBA. I'm back in town looking for new employment opportunities. It would be great to catch up over a coffee - I would like to hear how you have been and tell you more about my time abroad.*

*Would Sunday at 11am or Tuesday at 2pm work?*

*Looking forward to catching up,*

*Phil*

”

There are a few things I did in that pitch to keep in mind when creating your own:

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