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# Networks and Job Search



By Andrew Shipilov , INSEAD

**The never-ending financial crisis has sadly cost many people their jobs. It is well-known that networking can help people find jobs, but what is the most effective way of networking?**

Are you likely to get better job leads from people whom you know very well (your close friends) or from people whom you don't know very well (your distant acquaintances)?

Conventional wisdom says that your friends should provide you with better job leads, yet just like many other conventional "wisdoms" it is wrong.

In an influential paper "The strength of weak ties" a sociologist Mark Granovetter showed that, at least in the Western societies, people are unlikely to get great job leads from people they know well. Your close friends are likely to know what you know, and these people are likely to exist within the same social spheres as you do. Hence, their job leads are likely to be those that you know of as well or at the very least are likely to be very close to what you already know.

The best job leads come from acquaintances, ties to whom Granovetter called "weak" (as opposed to "strong" ties to friends). People to whom you

have weak ties exist outside of your social sphere, you don't meet them often, they know things and people you don't know. Hence, these people have information about interesting job leads that you have never thought of.

So, what should be your job hunting strategy? Talk to acquaintances about your job search and sooner or later they will provide you with useful leads. This is where responding to the usual "Hi, how are you?" question from a person you last saw six months ago with "Great, I am looking for a job" might prove to be very useful.

#### **Find article at**

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