

## Land a New Job, With Help From the Inside

### Insider's referral after layoff can make you stand out in a sea of applications

By

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Many workers who have been laid off in tech and elsewhere [are landing jobs at new employers](#) with an effective tactic—getting a company insider to vouch for them.

In the age of automated hiring systems, having the endorsement of someone on the inside can help candidates stand out from the dozens, if not hundreds, of applicants for the same job.

Many people who [have advertised their layoffs](#) on LinkedIn and [other online networking forums](#) say it can quickly lead to job referrals from recruiters and employees at other companies and, soon, actual offers. In a study of recruiting practices at more than 1,000 mid- and large-size companies by talent-management software firm SilkRoad Technology Inc., employee referrals accounted for more than 30% of all hires.

Yet asking for a referral often takes strategizing and the willingness to accept potential rejection, veteran job seekers and career coaches say.

Whether asking someone to put in a good word for you with a hiring manager, forward your résumé to a recruiter or endorse you on LinkedIn, lean on someone who is at the company—or has ties to people who do. Always give your referrer an out in case they don't feel comfortable.

"You need to give the other person a lot of space and make them not feel like you are pressuring them," says Dorie Clark, who teaches executive education at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business and Columbia Business School.

If it is someone you know professionally but aren't close to, tell them at the outset that you are sending your application to their employer, she says. Then be direct and say, "I don't know if it would be appropriate for you to put in a word for me, but if you feel comfortable doing that, I'd really appreciate it."

If the person you are asking knows you socially, not professionally, explain that just vouching for your character would go a long way, but give them an out and say you understand if they feel they can't. Acknowledge that you are asking for a favor, she says.

"Sometimes you just need to lean into the awkward," she says.

If the person you were hoping could refer you politely declines, know that they might have good reasons for their decision. Professionals tend to make connections that make sense and will enhance their own reputation, says Alisa Cohn, an executive coach and author. They might know more about the position you are applying for, and why you aren't the right fit. They might also feel they don't know you well enough to refer you, and some will say so.

If your referrer agrees to help, be proactive and send along a paragraph of your accomplishments they can simply forward, other career advisers say.

A [strong professional network](#) is helpful in these situations. Check your LinkedIn network for anyone with a connection to your target employer, advises Faye Liu, who says she sometimes uses the tactic to make connections with potential new business leads for her chemical-fingerprinting technology firm, RevoChem LLC, in Houston.

“It has to be a client I’ve known for a long time and a person that’s very willing to help,” she says.

Some professionals say they have had success making referral contacts on the fly. When Deekshit Bonthala Nagendra looked for a product manager job in 2022, he says he researched the teams he was applying to join, then messaged those team members on LinkedIn. He cited his internships and graduate engineering studies at Duke and said he wanted to learn what it was like to work at their company.

Once he made contact, he says he asked for advice on scoring an interview and whether they could connect him with the hiring manager. If he got a no, he would ask if they could refer him to a recruiter for the team or another team member who might give advice.

Mr. Nagendra says the approach helped him land a job at a San Francisco technology company where he is starting this month.

“One thing I’ve learned is people are always willing to help as long as they see there’s effort from the other person that they really want this job,” he says.

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