



Hidden market: 5 people to approach: Pluses, Minuses and Recommendations

PRINCIPLES

Unless you are 100% sure about the best person to approach, choose the “least worst” person.

Approach your network.

Do not ask for a name.

Do your homework first. Find 2 potential names, and ask your network: “If you were in my case, which one of these two people would you choose to approach for a meeting (not for a job!!!) ?”

1. PERSON # 2: THE CEO, NUMBER 1, PRESIDENT, B.U. MANAGER, SUBSIDIARY’S MANAGER

As the proverb says: “Approach God, rather than His Saints”.

If you approach the top of the hierarchy you can only go downwards.

1.1. Advantages/Pluses/Positive points

- Enjoys and possesses a very diverse and/or strong network
- Has the ability to influence/Is one of the key decision-makers
- Is “the” ultimate decision maker
- Sees things with an eye to the global vision
- Works mostly with executive level positions

1.2. Drawbacks/Minuses/Negative points

- Has a strong network, and is more likely to go with people she/he already knows
- If something goes wrong, your opportunity with the company is over
- Is rather inaccessible (has time constraints)
- Is very busy and may not remember you
- Difficult to get their interest and/or time
- Suffers from too much disconnection to lower ranks

1.3. Recommendations for action

- Be yourself!! Don’t pretend to be what you are not!
- Bring industry insights
- Differentiate yourself in order to appear in a personal way (Articles, Twitter...)
- Disconnect your professional and academic interests
- Maintain a high-level interest in the business/industry
- Use class projects to open doors

2. PERSON # 1: YOUR FUTURE LINE MANAGER (BOSS)

Probably one of the best among the 5 persons.

However, remember that you may be the living proof of his/her inefficiency (the reason why he/she needs your talents)...

2.1. Advantages/Pluses/Positive points

- Understands the job criteria and can check compatibility match
- Is a key decision maker
- Is likely that you will be working together if hired
- Is more interested in your skills
- Knows a lot about the job



2.2. Drawbacks/Minuses/Negative points

- Doesn't always get the BIG picture
- Eliminates the options to network with alternative power centers
- May face a conflict of interest
- May not want to hire a capable person (if perceived as threat!!)
- Narrow scope, only expert in his/her division

2.3. Recommendations for action

- Do research on specific challenges the line manager faces
- Gather information on the company or department to align to the culture/style/dress code
- Research the details of the job and how you match
- Show link between your expertise/experience to the target role in the team
- Understand how the position was created

3. PERSON # 3: THE MAJOR SHAREHOLDER

This applies, in most cases, if you approach small or medium size organizations.

This major shareholder is not necessarily a person; it could very well be a financial institution.

3.1. Advantages/Pluses/Positive points

- Facilitates future meetings
- Has an industry level perspective vs. a company specific perspective
- Has broader perspective on company (problems, insights)
- Is eager to find solutions
- Is more open to sharing as is not in a position to hire (doesn't have to be the one to reject)
- May influence management team or board

3.2. Drawbacks/Minuses/Negative points

- May lack specific focus (Busy)
- Is difficult to approach – due to perceived alternative agenda (typically financial)
- May have difficult relationships with management
- May not have a good perception of current reality for the company
- Possesses no direct hiring power

3.3. Recommendations for action

- Discuss performance (past/present/future) relative to competitors/peers
- Focus on financial metrics (ROI)
- Identify your “added value” for the shareholder
- Easily identifiable who the major shareholders are through public information (Bloomberg) - double check everything
- Research key individuals both on business & personal levels
- Suggest initiatives/future industry challenges



4. PERSON # 4: A PERSON WITH "VISION"

It is THE person who can the most appreciate your uniqueness. This applies especially if you are anticipating/making a radical career change.

The word "Vision" is synonym of: dream, hallucination, apparition, mental picture, image, visualization, revelation, prophecy, foresight, farsightedness, imagination, forethought, prediction, eyesight....

4.1. Advantages/Pluses/Positive points

- Has unexpected outcomes, loves to brainstorm
- Inspires and provides additional ideas
- Is approachable
- Is open to crazy ideas
- Is willing to think outside the box
- Owns diverse networks

4.2. Drawbacks/Minuses/Negative points

- Focuses on the abstract, not useful if goal is specific
- Has lack of knowledge about key skills required
- Is unpredictable/lacks influence
- May have a limited decision power
- May refuse to see you on a whim
- Might seem crazy/unprofessional

4.3. Recommendations for action

- Be yourself
- Build knowledge before meeting
- Don't worry about outcomes
- Identify "added value" on your proposition
- Meet outside of conventional venues
- Research the person to understand her/his interests



5. PERSON # 5: YOUR AMBASSADOR (EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL)

This “ambassador” could be someone you know or an Alumnus.

He/she could be:

- *Internal (working for the organization you’re approaching);*
- *or external.*

5.1. Advantages/Pluses/Positive points

- Could help reach out to others in the company
- Gives you “overall” view of the firm (external)
- Has deep professional network
- Has expertise
- Is easily approachable
- Knows a lot about the company

5.2. Drawbacks/Minuses/Negative points

- May be lacking deep functional experience
- May be too generic/not specific enough/vague
- May not be aware of current situation (if away from the firm for a long time)
- May not be of much help (if external)
- May refer you to Human Resources
- Views may be biased about the firm (if internal)

5.3. Recommendations for action

- Check Linked-In before taking any step
- Gather information in your networks or through your contacts
- Investigate to see if the person is the right contact (internal/external)
- Understand role of “ambassador” within the company (internal)
- Use “ambassador” to reach out right contacts
- Use Career Services - they are often connected