

NETWORKING.....

is not only an essential part of your **job search**, but can also be used for:

- seeking a promotion
- changing careers
- starting your own business

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Networking is defined as the ongoing process of building and maintaining personal and professional relationships through reciprocal communication and sharing information with individuals and groups of individuals that can give you a powerful advantage in any marketplace. But what does all this mean? Well, in a job market that is highly competitive, networking is a tool that can increase your chances of getting a job. **Networking is not about using people to find a job. It is about connecting with others to promote yourself.** Networking is building relationships before you need them. Networking is a source of gaining information. You may also obtain appointments for interviews or referrals from networking.

WHO ARE THESE NETWORKING CONNECTIONS?

The possibilities are endless, but here are some suggestions of connections you can make to begin your network:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| • Family / Relatives | • Counselors |
| • Friends / Parents of Friends | • Co-Workers of Family and Friends |
| • Neighbors | • Professional Organizations |
| • Supervisors from Jobs or Internships | • Your Co-Workers |
| • Alumni list in Career Center | • Faculty Members |
| • On-line Referrals | • Your Co-Workers |
| • The Community | |
| Church or Synagogue | Cultural Societies |
| Community Centers (YMCA) | Hairdresser |
| Scout Programs | Sporting Events |
| Homeowner Associations | PTA |

WHERE CAN YOU BEGIN?

You can follow any course of action, but here are some recommended steps for networking:

1. Know what you want and exactly what to say before you start contacting people. It is all right to write this down on a sheet of paper, just in case you get nervous when the contact person picks up the phone. Approach is important; don't appear desperate or fake.
2. Start thinking about whom you want to contact. Your list can be as extensive as you wish. Use the above list for suggestions. Start with your "primary network" of friends, family and neighbors and expand from

there. Make as many connections as possible.

3. Don't limit yourself to only professionals; everyone knows someone. Update your phone and address book on a regular basis.
4. Rank your list in the order you would like to call. This should be based on those people who are the most closely related to the type of job you are looking for.
5. Ask someone in your field for 20 minutes of time to talk, interview them and their background.
6. When you are ready to make contact, it is recommended that you do so by phone. Phone calls are more direct than writing letters; however, you may send a letter when you cannot reach someone.
7. When you call a potential employer, let them know how you got their name. Also, be knowledgeable about the basics of the company.
8. Know what you want to ask. It can be about the type of people the company hires, what type of experience is necessary, or if there are any job openings.
9. Ask your contact if you can send them your resume.
10. Make sure you get the correct spelling of the person's name, address, and job title that you spoke with.
11. It is best to keep the conversation brief and to thank your contact for their time.
12. Use the Internet; join discussion groups in your major area of interest.

5 STEPS TO BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

Once you know how to network, it is important to continue building your network. Following are 5 steps:

1. *Identify your existing network.* This includes anyone you can think of using the earlier suggestions.
2. *Expand your network.* When you speak to your primary contact, you may want to ask them if they have any additional contacts for you. Another way to build your network is by looking at directories such as the telephone book. This can provide you with many names and numbers of professionals in your field.
3. *Join organizations and participate actively.* Volunteer to become a leader. By doing so, you become more visible and known by others. Professional societies are good organizations to join because they encourage networking and some even have networking functions.
4. *Collect business cards.* Ask for the business cards from as many people as you can. Also, offer your business card if you have one.
5. *Learn to introduce yourself to strangers.* Meeting new people can be awkward. Being prepared can make things a little better. You can even practice what you are going to say before you attend a social event.

SOME OTHER NETWORKING TIPS

- Tell everyone you're looking for a job, no matter how unrelated their occupation may be. You never know whom they might know.
- Be friendly in public places; make small talk.
- Always send a thank you letter to those that have helped you.
- It helps to stay organized with your networking efforts. Know whom you have contacted, what the outcome was, and what your next step is. Be realistic; do not expect someone to get you a job. You can even organize your networking by making contact sheets. A sample is provided below.
- If you find a job, inform your main contact. You can thank them again for their assistance.
- Be available to reciprocate the help that you received. Networking is a two way process.
- Keep adding to and revising your list of contacts.
- Be confident and genuine in all your networking endeavors.

Contact Sheet

Date: _____

Name:

Company:

Address (Office):

Phone (Office):

Address (Home):

Phone (Home):

Referral Source:

Outstanding Feature(s):

Notes:

Referrals Received:

SAMPLE DIALOGUE

The following dialogue illustrates the process of effective networking. Although networking varies from one situation to another, the following may provide a useful framework to keep in mind.

Call a friend:

Hi Sally, this is Joe from your Statistics class. How are you?

Ask for some help:

Sally, I need a favor. Could I possibly have the name and number of your uncle that works at Big Money Bank? I just sent a copy of my resume to the bank and would like to find out more information about the company.

Find out specific information about the contact:

Do you know the department your uncle works in, or what his position is? Could I have his complete name, address and telephone number?

Show your gratitude:

Sally, I really appreciate your help. I am just trying to find the best way to get an interview with this company and think your uncle could be of assistance.

Call the contact:

Hello, Mr. Jones. My name is Joe James, and I am a friend of your niece Sally from Canisius College.

State your purpose:

I am graduating this May and just submitted a resume to Big Money Bank for an entry level finance position. I was wondering if you might have any advice or information that may help me to secure an interview.

Be prepared with questions:

I was interested in finding out who would be the best person to follow up with regarding my resume. How many people are employed by Big Money Bank? Do you happen to know what areas they are hiring in?

Express your appreciation:

Mr. Jones, I really appreciate your time and all the information you have provided. It has been a pleasure speaking with you.

Follow up with contact:

Mr. Jones, this is Joe James. I wanted to thank you for your advice and let you know that I have an interview next Monday.

After the interview, call your friend and the contact to let them know how you did, and thank them again.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

Following are some of the personal characteristics of a successful networker:

- Committed - because networking is an ongoing process.
- Curious - about people and the companies you are inquiring about.
- Willingness to follow up - if you say you are going to do something, it is very important that you do so.
- Able to ask for help - because you cannot always count on the help coming to you.
- Able to brag - you know yourself and your successes and achievements better than anyone else.
- Knowledgeable - about your profession and your community.
- Courageous - because sometimes networking can be uncomfortable.
- Able to remember - especially the names of people you meet.
- Patient - because sometimes you may have to wait for the right opportunity.
- Involved - not with just networking, but with everything you do.
- Courteous - manners are very important in networking.

Networking can be critical to your job search. It is very easy to send resumes in response to want ads, but isn't that what everyone else is doing? An interesting fact is that 80% of all jobs are not advertised in the classified ads. Networking can help you discover all the other potential leads out there. Furthermore, an employer is more apt to hire someone that has come recommended to them. Networking isn't easy but remember, people may be more willing to give you their assistance than you think.

DOES CAREER NETWORKING REALLY WORK?

Several years ago a research study known as the "Small World Problem" demonstrated the extraordinary power of having and using your own personal contacts. The researcher estimated that any person of adult age has accumulated between 500 and 1,000 personal contacts, and he reasoned that each link between two individuals generates a total pool of contacts numbering between 25,000 (500 x 500) and 1,000,000 (1,000 x 1,000). Three links in a chain permit an astronomical number of possibilities. Therefore, he reasoned, anyone should be able to reach anyone else in a populated country simply by putting a few links together. The study tested this by asking a sample of people in Massachusetts to use only their personal contacts to reach a

randomly selected group in Nebraska within two links ("I know a plumber who has a friend in the target town").

What does all of this mean to job seekers? It means that you have the power to reach almost anyone by using your existing contacts. People are really networking all of the time, without effort. It actually takes a lot of restraint not to tell another person about your personal contacts. As soon as someone mentions something that triggers a connection, we naturally respond with "...Charlotte, my brother lives in Charlotte."

Networking for job information simply takes this process to the next level. This will obviously involve more initiative on the job seekers part. However, more people use this approach than any other job hunting method. A phone call or personal visit, asking for information or advice is the best way to start. Speaking with friends and family about professional opportunities should become a way of life.

Resources: Job Choices for Business & Liberal Arts Students: 2006; Managing Your Career, The Complete Job-Search Handbook by H. Figler, The Job Hunting Handbook

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

There are various book, journal articles, and web sites that offer information on networking. Web sites, especially, can help you network directly on-line. Here are some examples, however, there is much more information out there. Search and you will find!

Books:

- Darling, Diane (2003). *The Networking Survival Guide*. McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Hadley, J. & Sheldon, B. (1995). *The Smart Woman's Guide to Networking*. NJ: Career Press.
- Kramer, Marc, (1998). *Power Networking*. VGM Career Horizons
- Marler, P. & Mattia, Jan B. (1998). *Networking Made Easy*. VGM Career Horizons

Web Sites

- America's Employers-the job seeker's home on the internet-
[http://www. Net-temps.com](http://www.Net-temps.com)
- Networking-Open Virtual Doors of Opportunity with Online Networking-
<http://www.careermag.com/>
- Academic Employment Network-
<http://www.academploy.com/>
- Networking & Support Groups-
www.rileyguide.com/support.html

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