

Networking Skills

Networking is the process of gathering helpful information from a group of contacts to assist you in planning your career and in looking for jobs. Studies indicate that up to 80 percent of all positions – the “hidden job market” – are obtained through networking and connections.

Here are some helpful tips:

1. Start making contacts and make a list of contacts you already know – friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, supervisors from past and present jobs, members from professional organizations relevant to your field or area of career interest, contacts through public service and volunteer work, alumni – especially recent graduates, people you met at on-campus information sessions and other presentations, school faculty and administrators etc.

2. Keep Records - Here are the important things to note for your records:

- Where and when you met
- Any personal details you pick up, such as hobbies, vocations, kids and even pets
- Potential links from names dropped in the conversation
- The next steps you both agreed upon.

3. Prepare your 30-second elevator pitch as a verbal business card. It will comprise three points:

- Who you are - Your name and general job function
- What you've accomplished - Three strong-points worth talking about
- What you want now - A 4 – 5 word description of your current goal

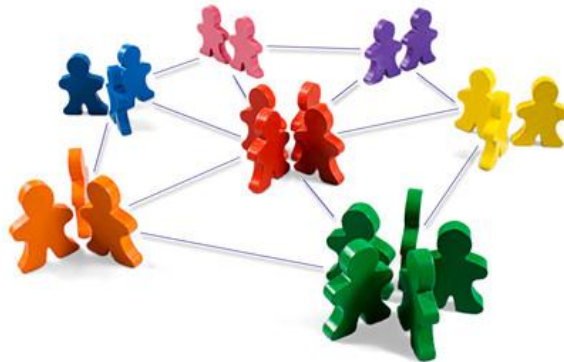
Also, you should ask a Bounce-Back question; this is a follow-up question that bounces the ball back into their court. “Whom do you work with?” Or, “what is your agency’s specialty?” These are open-ended questions that prompt an elevator speech from your partner in this conversation.

Remember to write down your elevator pitch, keep it simple and interesting, and practice it enough times to make sure you are comfortable.

4. Put your network into operation. Schedule and conduct information interviews. Call, write, or email the person you want to meet. Emphasize that you are not looking for a job, but researching an industry or position. Set up a meeting and have 10-20 questions prepared. Make sure you are familiar with the background of the individual, the company, and the industry, so that you are not wasting their time.

5. Maintain your network by sending a Thank-You Note. Once you achieve your goal, don't stop. Ask your contact for the names of two other contacts in the industry. Keep your network current. Remember to maintain your network even when you have found a secure job. You never want to have to rebuild, so stay in touch with those in your network and continue to add people to it.

Networking Do's and Don'ts



Networking is one of the most effective ways to land a job. As the old adage goes, “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” Below you can find networking strategies that will help you advance professionally.

Past and present employers and your alma mater

Do send a friendly email to your old co-workers or boss, asking them how they have been and how the company is doing. Not only will you be fresh in their memory, but if they hear of a new job opportunity, they will be more inclined to tell the hiring manager about you. Also, get in touch with the Career Services Department or Alumni Association at your alma mater or current school. They are always willing to help students with resume critiquing, job opportunities, and alumni groups in your area.

Don't cyber stalk potential employers or overdo your follow-ups with superfluous amounts of phone calls and emails.

LinkedIn and Facebook

Do make sure you set your personal page to the private setting.

Don't combine your personal page and business page. That picture of you at Señor Frog's in Cozumel is probably not going to go over well with a potential employer.

Business Function (party, meeting, etc)

Do have business or personal cards with your name, job description, and contact information on them. Also, make eye contact with the people you speak with and ask genuine questions. Your sincerity will pay off.

Don't pull a Melanie Griffith in Working Girl and end up passed out and well, you know...it's a bad idea.