

## NETWORKING

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*Networking is the single most important aspect of job hunting!*

### **What is networking?**

Simply stated, networking is communicating with people and developing contacts in order to locate possible opportunities. This is the development and maintenance of mutually valuable relationships and this is the most effective way to meet potential employers and uncover unadvertised job opportunities. But, networking is also about taking the time to learn about the other person; in other words, it is about giving and taking. Simply put, it's making friends and keeping those friendships alive.

### **Why is it so hard for students to network?**

Perhaps, you do not feel comfortable in meeting new people and introducing yourself to strangers simply because you do not know what to say or how to start the conversation. Networking does not need to be difficult; in fact, it can be a very rewarding and enjoyable experience. This section will explain how the process works.

### **Why would anyone want to network with me?**

People like to help people, especially by talking about themselves, their jobs and contacts. Just remember, you are asking for information when you network, not a job. Keep in mind that networking often eventually leads to job opportunities.

### **Advantages of networking:**

- You will be exposed to the hidden 70-80% of jobs in your field. Moreover, networking allows you to avoid competition by uncovering job openings before they are advertised.
- You are less likely to encounter rejection since you are not asking directly for a job—instead, you are simply asking for information, referrals and to be remembered.
- You go directly to the people who have influence on the hiring process.
- You will get in touch with people who may be able to help you tap into new opportunities.
- You will be considered when a contact hears of a job, and may be referred as a result.
- People who make contacts through networking have a better success rate because employers are more likely to hire them through personal referral rather than a blind contact.
- Even though someone may not be employed in the field that you are interested in, they may know someone who is, or they may have some valuable life experience to share with you as well.

### **Before you begin:**

Professionalism and tact are vital if you want to get anywhere with networking. Here are some basic preparatory steps to begin building and using your network:

1. **Know yourself:** It may sound simple, but many people are not prepared to articulate their attributes in a way that will impress potential employers.
2. **Professional up-to-date résumé:** Always have your résumé current and ready to go to a contact; you never know when you might need it.
3. **Business card:** create a personal business card to give contacts
4. **Cell phone:** make sure your voicemail message and e-mail addresses are professional.

### **Networking tips**

- Begin networking early. Don't wait until spring of your senior year to begin networking.
- Always ask if the person knows of anyone else you should meet and ask if you can use her/his name when contacting the person.

- Maintain networking files. Keep a record of the outcomes of each contact and important information about the person.
- Get involved. The more clubs and organizations you belong to, job and internships you have, etc., the more contacts you have.
- Take advantage of networking events: attend networking events like Speed Networking and Network Nights, and career fairs like the Job and Internship Fair.
- Remember names.
- Plan your follow-up. Keep supporters informed about your progress and successes.
- Be flexible and open to opportunities you may not have expected.

Below is a sample for a networking log. This log is useful in building and maintaining your job search network. Use this form to record key networking and activity:

**NETWORK CONTACT FILE**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Cell phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Website:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Referred by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Referred to: (1)** \_\_\_\_\_

**(2)** \_\_\_\_\_

**(3)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Follow-up Thank-You Letter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments/Follow-up Plan:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

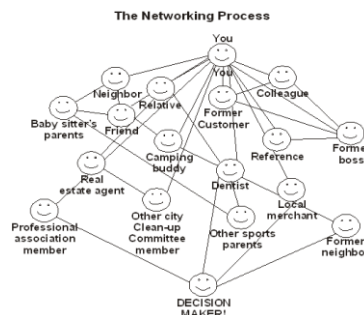
**Here is a “Brainstorming” list to get you started:**

- \_\_\_ Family/Friends – look at your Christmas/Holiday card list
- \_\_\_ Supervisors/co-workers
- \_\_\_ Past employers
- \_\_\_ Dentists/Doctors/Hairdressers/Bankers/Lawyers/Stock Brokers
- \_\_\_ Neighbors – current and past
- \_\_\_ Social acquaintances: clubs, association, athletic team, other group meetings etc.
- \_\_\_ Contacts you have made through sports (e.g., coaches, alumni, athletic boosters, media)
- \_\_\_ Recruiters at job/career fairs, employers conducting information sessions on-campus
- \_\_\_ Members from Church
- \_\_\_ Health club members
- \_\_\_ Classmates – from any level of school
- \_\_\_ College Alumni – get a list of those living in the area
- \_\_\_ Volunteer for a local fundraiser
- \_\_\_ Teachers – your teachers, professors
- \_\_\_ Clergymen/Politicians/Librarians
- \_\_\_ Small business owners
- \_\_\_ Anybody you wrote a check to in the last year

For instance, just because I don’t know anyone who works for a financial firm, does not mean that my friends don’t know anyone. Knowing that about 70% of jobs are never advertised, do not prejudge companies or your friends – it’s a small world after all! So, make a list of every single person you know, call every single one of them, and tell them what type of job you are looking for, and ask if they might keep their eyes open for you.

**How to network and where to network:**

- Everywhere!
- Conduct Informational Interviews
- Attend career/job fairs, career events and receptions
- Attend employer presentations and information sessions
- Attend conference, workshops, seminars etc...
- Join professional organizations, volunteer organizations
- Participate in community service activities
- Attend Chamber of Commerce meetings
- Attend alumni events
- Seek advices from a career counselor (call 305-899-4010)



**Networking email**

Practice your writing skills when communicating with professionals. When sending your first introductory email, introduce yourself in a clear and concise way and then quickly let the person know why you are contacting him or her. If someone referred you, use that individual's name in your introduction. Ideally, you want to arrange a time to meet with the person directly (or by phone or email, depending on the circumstances) so you can ask them detailed questions and gain useful information.

This email needs to include the following information:

1. Your name, college, major
2. Who referred you to this contact (either a person's name, found on a website/article, etc)
3. What you are asking for (i.e. informational interview)
4. How much time you will need
5. Days and times you are available
6. Phone and email
7. Thank you for time/looking forward to hearing from you

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

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Sincerely,

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**Sample:** "Mr. Kiselow, my name is Patricia Flood and I am a classmate of your son Lou. He suggested that I contact you. I am considering public relations as a career and I'm trying to learn more about the field and the type of opportunities that are available. Lou told me that you work for the public relations firm of Zambelli and Woodhead and have a great deal of experience in PR. I would like to sit down with you and talk at your convenience to get your advice. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you."

**Caution:** Be prepared to ask your questions when you call; they may want to talk right away.