

Networking

Internet browsing is not enough to find a job in today's economy. While students must be attuned to the economy, read business and news publications, visit online job boards, and regularly read the newspaper classifieds, the old adage "It is who you know" is never so true as when jobs are scarce.

Networking for the purpose of finding a job is contacting someone in your field or someone who knows others in your field to uncover potential career opportunities and job openings.

Networking is a way to get to know others and for others to get to know you. It is a great way to enlist the help of others in finding the job you want.

Networking Tips:

- Begin the networking part of your job search by making a list of people who are in the field of interest to you or who may know of others in the field. As you speak with those on your list, be sure to ask them for the names of other people that you can talk to. By seeking and following up with referrals you continually grow your network. The larger the network, the better your chance of uncovering viable job leads. Always ask for permission to call those referred.
- Contact your internship/co-op employers if applicable. Generally, employers feel more comfortable employing people known to them who have performed well in the past.
- Career Fairs and company information sessions can be an important way to meet company representatives and gather contact information. These opportunities may often be your first chance to meet key company reps and you will want to make a good impression. Be prepared with extra copies of your resume, appropriate dress, good eye contact, and a firm handshake. Remember to collect business cards from all you meet and use them to follow up later and send additional copies of your resume. (Important note: If employer representatives at a fair or information session aren't from areas you are interested in or qualified for, be sure to ask if they can provide names of potential contacts in areas you are targeting.
- Expand your networking base beyond the college campus through attendance at local professional organization meetings; alumni club meetings, volunteer organization meetings, etc. These opportunities are an excellent way to learn about current issues in your field and to meet people. Many times job openings aren't advertised, but you can begin to discover this "hidden" job market through participation in organizations like these.
- If your first contact with an employer goes nowhere, try another avenue with a different person. Sometimes the Human Resources recruiter will only provide rote answers and little meaningful assistance. Dealing directly with line managers with jobs to fill can often be more effective. Always be thinking about your job search and don't be shy about letting people know your goals.
- People are more inclined to be helpful if you are asking for advice rather than for a job, so approach networking as an information gathering activity.
- Seek out informational interviews with those in fields of interest. These can lead to the real thing later on.

- Membership and involvement in professional associations is an ideal basis from which to approach people for information or advice.
- Since individuals will vary in how they can help you, write a script ahead of time of what you are going to say. This can ease any anxiety and make it easier for you to communicate your message.
- Make phone calls before 8:30 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m. to increase the chance of reaching busy people.
- Be succinct, pleasant and confident when contacting a resource.
- Do not "drop in" on individuals without their permission.
- If leaving a message on voice mail, speak slowly, spell your name if it is unusual and repeat your telephone number.
- If you are calling based on the referral of someone else, provide that person's name at the beginning of the conversation.
- Seek out informational interviews to gain insight into careers and make important contacts for the future.
- Keep records on individuals and companies contacted.
- Keep email messages succinct and to the point.
- Send a note of thanks to those that help you.
- Establish a routine that sets aside time for networking every day. Set a goal of growing the size of your network every day. Develop a system for keeping track of everyone in your growing network. Always thank those who provide assistance.