



CAREER SERVICES

Networking

What is Networking?

Networking is developing and maintaining relationships with individuals that are engaged in work and life activities that interest you. Networking provides exclusive information on career industries and job leads. Becoming knowledgeable about careers from people who are actively in the field can open doors for finding employment. Many benefits of networking include increased visibility within your field, propelling your professional development, finding mentors, increasing your chances of promotion, and perhaps finding your next job.

Facts

Depending on the sector, at least 75%, and as high as 95% of all available jobs are never publicly advertised. These jobs are located in what is called the “hidden job market” and are primarily accessed through networking.

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Who is in your NETWORK?

- Family
- Friends
- Alumni
- Friends of Family
- Clergy
- Professors
- Neighbors
- Current and Past Co-Workers
- Career Services
- Volunteer Organizations
- Student Organizations

Who is in your NETWORK?

- Attending professional conferences/workshops in your desired field.
- Hang out at places where people in your field gather
- Take classes or courses with professionals
- Join professional associations. Get on mailing lists, read newsletters and journals

Networking Success Top 8

- 1. Be Prepared** Define what information you need and what you are trying to accomplish. Your purpose is to get to know people who can provide information regarding careers and leads. Second, know yourself—your education, experience and skills. Practice a concise, one-minute presentation of yourself so that people will know the kinds of areas in which you are interested. Your networking meeting should include the following elements: introduction, self-overview, Q&A, obtaining referrals, and closing. (See example of back)
- 2. Be Targeted** Identify your network. Start by listing everyone you know who are potential prospects: family members, friends, faculty, neighbors, classmates, alumni, bosses, co-workers, and community associates. Attend meetings of organizations in your field of interest and get involved. You never know where you are going to meet someone who could lead you to your next job.
- 3. Be Professional** Ask your networking prospects for advice—not for a job. Your meetings should be a source of career information, advice, and contacts. Start with a firm handshake, eye contact and a warm smile. Focus on asking for one thing at a time.
- 4. Be Patient** Heena Noorani, research analyst with New York-based Thomson Financial, recommends avoiding the feeling of discouragement if networking does not provide immediate results. She advises, “Be prepared for a slow down after you get started. Stay politely persistent with your leads and build momentum. Networking is like gardening: You do not plant the seed, then quickly harvest. Networking requires cultivation that takes time and effort for the process to pay off.”
- 5. Be Focused on Quality—Not Quantity** In a large group setting, circulate and meet people, but don’t try to talk to everyone. It’s better to have a few meaningful conversations than 50 hasty introductions. Don’t cling to people you already know; you’re unlikely to build new contacts that way. If you are at a reception, be sure to wear a nametag and collect or exchange business cards, so you can later contact the people you meet.
- 6. Be Referral-Centered** The person you are networking with may not have a job opening, but he or she may know someone who is hiring. The key is to exchange information and then expand your network by obtaining additional referrals each time you meet someone new. Be sure to mention the person who referred you.
- 7. Be Proactive** Stay organized and track your networking meetings. Keep a list of your contacts and update it frequently with the names of any leads given to you. Send a thank-you note or email if appropriate. Ask if you can follow-up the conversation with a phone call, or even better, with a more in-depth meeting in the near future.
- 8. Be Dedicated to Networking** Most importantly, networking should be ongoing. You will want to stay in touch with contacts over the long haul—not just when you need something. Make networking part of your long-term career plan.

Adapted from Thomas J. Denham, managing partner and career counselor of Careers In Transition, LLC/

Informational Interviews

Exploratory experience of career fields, discover what skills are needed for jobs of your interest and direct observation of the work persona can be done through informational interviewing.

Informational interviews can help you clarify and confirm your career objectives, discover additional possibilities or areas of interest, and to foster and develop relationships and potential mentors in your field. **NETWORKING!**

60 Second Commercial

It is key to develop a 60 second introduction when meeting employers and **NETWORKING**. Your introduction should include your educational background, skills and brief example of work history.

Sample Commercial #1

Hello, my name is James Shepard. I am currently a sophomore, majoring in psychology with a minor in communications. I am a summer eagle core leader. This role is enhancing my leadership, communication, and management skills. In addition, I had an internship in the Fall with the Environmental Protection Agencies Human Resource department where I worked on a variety of human relations and organizational development projects. I am interested in learning more about Human Resources, do you know anyone in this field?

Sample Questions to Ask

1. Can you tell me how you got to this position?
2. What do you like most about what you do, and what would you change if you could?
3. How do people break into this field?
4. What are the types of jobs that exist where you work and in the industry in general?
5. Where would you suggest a person investigate if the person were particularly skilled at (fill in the blank — quantitative thinking, communications, writing, advocacy)?
6. What does a typical career path look like in your industry?
7. What are some of the biggest challenges facing your company and your industry today?
8. Are there any professional or trade associations I should connect with?
9. What do you read — in print and online — to keep up with developments in your field?
10. How do you see your industry changing in the next 10 years?
11. If you were just getting involved now, where would you put yourself?
12. What's a typical day like for you?
13. What's unique or differentiating about your company?
14. How has writing a book (starting a blog, running a company, etc.)

<http://shiftingcareers.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/01/29/mastering-the-informational-interview/>

Sample Commercial #2

Hello, my name is James Shepard. I am currently a junior, studying Marketing and interning at NCCU's Public Relations department. This role has developed my strategic advertising and Design skills. I have been working to enhance the campus website and publish departmental brochures. I searched mentors on EagleTrak and am interested in learning more about how you transitioned from NCCU to a marketing specialist for Ebony Magazine.