

The Process of Networking

Introduction to Networking

Networking is an important tool in the job search process. Networking is a way of finding out about jobs that may not be advertised. Some people refer to these jobs as being a part of the “hidden job market.” There is no secret to finding out about these positions. Everyone has access to the “hidden job market” through networking. Even if you are uncomfortable with the process, you need to include it in your job search as a major tool.

The first step in networking is to begin developing a list of contacts. Use the “Networking Contacts” worksheet to keep track of your contacts.

Networking is an informal process. The first people on your list should be family, friends, neighbors, friends of friends, classmates, and co-workers. This list may include your doctors, teachers, banker, or hair stylists. Also, add people from your religious or spiritual community.

How to Network

Networking is nothing more than asking for

Advice...
Suggestions...
Tips...
Leads...
Ideas...
Information!

Most people want to help you. Do not feel as if you are imposing on them. Ask for 20 minutes of the person’s time and stick to it. If he or she keeps you longer, it is all right to continue talking.

The best way to set up a networking meeting is via telephone. Call the individual and explain that you need some advice. Ask if you could meet for 20 minutes. You do not need to explain that you are networking; he or she will most likely know that.

You can also request a networking meeting in writing or through an email. However, after the initial letter or email, call the person to make sure that you have a specific date and time to meet.

Be sure to arrive on time and make certain that you respect your contact’s schedule.

Your goal during the meeting is to obtain job leads, but you may need to make small talk and talk about what you are seeking first.

When networking follow these simple rules...

Do	Don't
Be nice in your approach	Apologize
Tell them what you are looking for	Feel as if you are taking advantage of them
Be clear	
Always listen	
Be thankful	
Make a record of your contact	

Questions for exploring a new job through networking:

1. How did you get into your job?
2. What education and/or experience is necessary to get into this job?
3. Describe your average day.
4. What do you like most about your job?
5. What do you like least about your job?
6. If you had another chance, would you pick this job again?
7. What is your salary range? (beginning pay to promoted pay)
8. What is your future outlook on this job?
9. What are the most important personal traits for this job?
10. What advice would you give someone wanting this job?
11. Does the job involve travel or relocation?
12. Is there opportunity for overtime work?
13. What are the benefits?
14. What are the working hours? Is there flexible scheduling?
15. What are the major responsibilities and duties for this job?
16. What skills are required to start the job? What skills are learned on the job?
17. What is the workplace like?

Assignment for Networking:

- Use the "Networking Contacts" worksheet to list as many contacts as you can think of.
- Choose three contacts and call or talk to them to answer the questions above. Use the "Networking Conversation" worksheet to make a record of your meeting.