

Unlocking the SECRETS of NETWORKING

What is Networking?

“Networking”: A word we often hear, but what exactly is it? And how do we go about doing it? There are numerous networks we can tap into, and, if we need to, we can create our own networks. Networking is an activity we take part in every day: each time we speak with our professors, or talk to a classmate about an exam or a project, we are networking. Any time we ask our friends if they know someone who can help us in some way-with a ride or minding a pet or anything-we are networking. And note that in these situations we often only want information: this is similar to the networking we do when we’re job searching.

Why is Networking Important?

A broad base of acquaintances is helpful to the networking process, because the “weaker” the tie you have to a person, the less likely you are to have very many overlapping acquaintances. A more developed relationship is beneficial when the help you need-such as a friend making an initial contact on your behalf, or a professor writing a letter of recommendation-is more than simply information. So cultivate the casual acquaintance and maintain good ties with friends.

What are the Purposes of Networking?

- To make others aware of your job search and your career focus
- To open up additional lines of communication in the job market
- To increase your knowledge about a particular field or industry
- To find out more about potential employers
- To discover hidden job opportunities
- To open up the possibility of creating a job where none currently exists

Preparing to Network

1. Stay in contact with your network. Send articles, notes, anything to keep connections open. They are your best sources for job leads when needed.

Core Networking Groups to use:

- Current or former co-workers
 - Clients and customers
 - Professional or trade organizations
 - People you meet in new settings-parties, trips
 - People whom consider YOU a customer-doctor, accountant, financial advisor
 - Family, friends, acquaintances, neighbors
 - Fellow alumni or faculty members
 - Members of church or volunteer groups
2. Remember the cliché, “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” Modify it to include who you CAN know. Think about who knows the people you know and how to include them in your network.
 3. Let your contact know of your successes in getting an interview or job based on a referral they gave. They will be more likely to do it again if they know you were well received.

Networking-Final Thoughts

“60 to 86 percent of people get their jobs by networking (prospecting) or through personal contacts.” Advertisements are generally for lower-paying jobs. So network! Let people know you are available for work. Consider the conversation as a mini-interview and put your best self out there for people to see.

