

## **Network**

The first step to searching the hidden job market is to **network, network, network!** The majority of jobs are found by talking to people who may know about a job opening. By interacting with others, you are networking and learning about potential job openings. Make a list of people you know who may fit into your networking family. You may be surprised to realize how many possible contacts you really have!

## **Who is on your contact list?**

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Relatives & family friends (and their friends!)
- Acquaintances & friends
- Co-workers & former co-workers
- Neighbors (current & past)
- Teachers & professors
- Previous employers or those to whom you are applying
- Teammates from your athletic/sport teams
- Classmates or other students
- People from your church or community groups
- People with whom you volunteer
- Business people (e.g. bank manager, insurance agent)
- Professionals within your desired field
- Members of professional organization(s)
- Politicians

## **What exactly is networking?**

Networking is the art of building mutually beneficial professional relationships and alliances. It allows you the chance to access the knowledge and wisdom of others in your field. Remember, networking is a two-way street; a professional give and take.

## **Benefits:**

- As many as 40% of new hires come from employee referrals
- 80% of jobs are not posted in bulletins or classifieds
- Individuals who find employment in this manner tend to be more satisfied in their jobs and earn a higher income

## **Networking Dos**

- Meet people! Meet people! Meet people!
- Circulate when you meet a group at an official meeting or seminar

- Appear likeable and approachable
- Follow up with prospective contacts without hounding them
- Call your contacts at regular intervals once a week, once a month, or once every three months
- Consider preparing business cards
- Create a LinkedIn profile

### **Networking Don'ts**

- Presume or make distinctions while meeting people
- Ramble or go off on tangents when describing your career objectives. After a short prologue about yourself and your job, get straight to the point
- Let an unpleasant encounter get you down. Always be positive, clear, and attentive

### **General Tips**

- Valuable tools: Up-to-date resume, business cards with contact information, a phone or email address, a smile, and confidence.
- Know what you are looking for! Speak succinctly about your talents, skills, and goals. This will let the individual know you are serious about your future.
- Be assertive! Networking means that you are working toward your goals...do not be afraid to promote yourself.
- Curb desperation and start listening. Stress can make you appear pushy. Instead of asking someone for a job, listen to their advice! Start by asking about the person's background and professional choices.
- Stick with it. Networking can feel like a full-time job. Do not be discouraged if you are not immediately satisfied with results. Continue to expand your networking contacts; concentrate on new places and ways to network.

### **In-Person Networking**

- *Identify and Increase Your Network.* Develop a list of potential contacts: Friends, professors, parents, co-workers, past acquaintances, vendors, service professionals, etc.
- *Identify activities to increase your network.* Become a member of professional organizations; attend job fairs and collect business cards; make contact with the area chambers of commerce; contact recent alumni.
- *Prepare for the Event.* Ask yourself "What do I want to happen at this event?" Knowing what you want helps prepare and provides meaning for going. Prepare an "elevator pitch"
- *Watch Your Body Language.* Body language announces your feelings: smile and shake hands firmly, stand up straight, look the part.

- *Work the Room.* Walk around and talk to everyone. Seek openings in groups. Drink and eat moderately. Know what to say, use the elevator speech. Begin with small talk and try not to stay too long in one place. After eight to 10 minutes, excuse yourself with a pleasantry such as, “It was nice to meet you...” Make sure to listen and not just talk.

### **Emailing Relatives and Friends**

- Think carefully about how to title your email message.
- Using the content of your cover letter, let them know, in detail, what you are looking for, your skills and qualifications, your goals and areas of interest.
- Consider asking to meet with them face to face to discuss your job search.

### **Emailing Business Contacts (i.e. professors, employers, anyone you know professionally)**

- Think carefully about how to title your email message.
- Using the content of your cover letter, let them know, in detail, what you are looking for, your skills and qualifications, your goals and areas of interest.
- Take time to reacquaint yourself before discussing your employment intentions.
- Keep the focus on finding employment, but don't give up on the personal connection.
- Make certain they know you show interest in them as well as what they can do for you.
- Consider asking to meet with them face-to-face to discuss your job search.

### **Making Phone Calls to Either of the Above Groups**

- Use the same techniques as listed above. Be articulate and conversational in your tone.
- Consider asking to meet with them face to face to discuss your job search.