

NETWORKING

for Career Opportunities

Many job offers are a direct result of networking. Networking involves communicating with as many people as possible – in person, by letter or via phone or e-mail.

Who should you contact?

- Family members, friends of your family, neighbors, your friends and their families
- Current and former bosses, co-workers, teachers, coaches, counselors/advisors
- Acquaintances from places of worship, gyms, volunteer agencies, activities
- Businesspeople and community members

Call, email or write your networking contacts and let them know that you are nearing graduation and looking for work. Provide them with a copy of your resume and the areas of work that interest you. Ask them for assistance, recommendations or referrals.

In most cases, email is the preferred method because the person you contact can easily forward your letter and resume to others.

Remember

You are not asking for a job; you are seeking information and advice. Your contacts may be aware of available jobs, but more often they will provide suggestions, referrals or “leads” that can result in an opportunity for employment. Provide your contacts with occasional updates – positions to which you have applied, and interviews you have scheduled or completed.

Important

Requests for advice are seldom considered inappropriate or an imposition. Instead, most contacts will be flattered that you sought their advice. Most working people have received helpful career advice in their lifetime and look forward to the opportunity to share their experience and knowledge with others. Always ask your contacts if they know someone you can contact. If, for example, your ten contacts each refer you to three people, your ten-person network has now expanded to forty!

Networking With Strangers

A stranger is just a person you haven’t met yet. While job searching, you should view all people you encounter as potential “networking contacts.” For that reason, you should make a practice of collecting business cards from others. Follow up each contact with an appropriate and professional note. Share with people your career interests and job availability. Possible “contact points” include parties, weddings, sporting events, golf courses and tennis clubs, libraries, professional conventions or conferences, philanthropic organizations, family and high school reunions – anywhere you come into contact with people and are willing to strike up a conversation.