

Networking and Information Interviewing

NETWORKING

Your Actual search for a job can begin in an obvious, yet not so obvious place... with the people you know. The concept of networking simply ties into a human trait – the desire to help others. Never underestimate the knowledge and influence of people you know.

- A network is a series of interlocking connections with people who may be helpful to you in your job search.
- Being building a network by first contacting members of your family, other relatives, neighbors, personal friends, general acquaintances, professors, work associates and service activity colleagues. Do not set limits on who should or should not be part of your network.
- Let everyone know that you're looking for a job and what type of job you're looking for.
- Determine if they can provide you with information about a certain type of job, provide you with information about a particular organization or refer you to others who know about a career field or specific organization.
- Maintain these contacts by checking back them periodically.
- Follow through on any suggestions offered.

New Age Networking

- Everything happens for a reason, the good and the bad, you simply have to look to see how the pieces fit with your life and your direction.
- You are never a victim of life... attempt to progress beyond those situations in the direction you are meant to go.
- Learning to listen to and trust your instincts will be the greatest business skill you learn.
- Follow through on any suggestions offered.

Networking Etiquette

- Thank people for their ideas and suggestions.
- Keep them informed on what came of their suggestions, comments, ideas and referrals
- Use thank you cards to show your gratitude and as further opportunity to restate your career goal.

DEVELOPING A 30 SECOND COMMERCIAL

- A 30 second commercial is a tool that markets a product – YOU.
- Spend time developing a response to address the question “What do you do?”
- A well thought out response makes you come across positive, poised, and professional.
- If you represent yourself in a positive professional manner, so will your friends when they speak of you to others.
- Remember proper communication skills:
 - Good eye contact
 - Well articulated
 - Clear and concise

INFORMATION INTERVIEWING

While the goal of interviewing is to obtain a job offer, the goal of information interviewing is to gather information. Like networking, information interviewing is based on the premise that people are a tremendous source of information. Its purpose is to gain information about a career field upon which to base some career decisions and to put you in touch with possible job leads.

- Begin with people you know (your network contacts). Choose from this group those who are in career fields to which you aspire or people in related career areas.
- What about people you don't already know? Identify them through newspapers, telephone books, professional association directories and professional counselors.
- If you have located an office name, but don't have the name of an individual, call and speak with the secretary or receptionist.
 - Explain politely and succinctly why you are calling (for information, not employment) and ask if you can be directed to an appropriate person.
- Schedule an appointment for a specific amount of time (30 minutes maximum).
- An alternative is to send a letter ahead of time stating what you want, indicating you will be telephoning and asking that the secretary or receptionist be alerted to your call.
- Be prepared! Take an active role to get the most out of your information interview.
- Review in your mind what you want to learn from an individual.
- Have questions prepared ahead of time.
- Following are some sample questions you might wish to choose from.
 - What credentials (education degrees, licenses, etc.) are required for effectiveness in this occupation?
 - How much variety would you say there is in the type of work you do?
 - Is there much opportunity for travel?
 - What types of employers hire people in your line of work?
 - What kinds of work values attract people to your occupation? (security, income, prestige, etc.)
 - What do you find most rewarding/least rewarding about this career field?
 - What is the typical entry level salary range for positions in this field? What is the potential?
 - What is a typical career path?
 - What is the future job outlook in this field (increased or decreased opportunity, etc.)

FOLLOW-UP

- Always ask for a referral to someone else. Ask the person with whom you are speaking to refer you to others who would be good sources of information.
- Evaluate what you have been told critically. Are there trends developing from one person to another? (In the end – you'll have to make your own judgments about the validity of the information.)
- Make sure you have the correct name and title of the person with whom you've spoken. Write a thank you note!