

# NETWORKING TECHNIQUES

## **Networking is Key**

Did you know that 70% of jobs are obtained as the result of some sort of networking? There is some truth in the old cliché, "It's not what you know, but who..."

Networking is key to your career success. Once you begin making connections, you will be able to tap your network to verify data, solve problems, find potential employers, and get sound career advice.

## **Know Yourself**

After meeting with your networking contacts, you will learn more about your career values and goals. Eventually, you will be able to quickly communicate to network contacts who you are and what you want.

## **Organize Your Current Network**

You already have a network of family, co-workers, friends, and faculty. Take time to organize these resources in one place. For each contact, record their name, address, telephone numbers, email address, and notes on how he or she assisted or may help in the future. You may want to create an Excel spreadsheet in conjunction with an online tool like LinkedIn, or keep a notebook of business cards.

## **Utilize Internet Resources**

As more employers seek multiple avenues to attract potential qualified candidates, many companies are establishing a social presence on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and their own sites. Remember to check for company information on these sites. In addition, you may want to consider establishing a professional profile on LinkedIn or Twitter. If you choose to engage through internet resources, ensure your social media presence is professional (for example, by maintaining separate personal and professional accounts).

## **Who are Your Professors?**

Get to know your faculty outside the classroom by attending meetings, participating in their research, or asking to meet with them about their field. Many have valuable experience and contacts in your field of interest. Some professors are consultants in the industry. If you're sincerely interested in a professor's research, volunteer to assist. They can potentially open up many doors for you.

## **Increase Your Contact Base**

It's not enough to send out résumés and wait for the phone to ring. Having a network is good, but you should be continually expanding and contributing to it as well. You can do this by:

### *Getting Involved on Campus*

Become a leader on campus by getting involved in organizations. Help solicit and arrange for speakers a club might bring to campus. You will gain valuable skills and practice engaging professionals.

### *Joining Professional Associations and Attending Professional Conferences*

Every field has several professional associations, some of which hold national or regional conferences. Many also have discounted student/recent graduate membership fees. By reading news and attending functions of these organizations, you'll discover hot issues and potentially make yourself more visible by volunteering your services on committees and participating in discussions within an association.

### *Completing an Internship/Work Experience*

Make sure your internships and other work experiences reflect your career interests. Get to know your supervisors and colleagues. Work hard to make a contribution and gain valuable new skills. Make an effort to stay in touch after the experience has ended.

### *Meeting Alumni and Classmates*

You may want to conduct an "informational interview" to learn what it's like to work in your field. You may request information on a particular company or seek job search advice. Networking should never be a means to an end, but sometimes alumni can be potential employers and mentors as well.

Don't forget about those people that you sit in class with daily. Not only is it important to make friends in college, it's crucial. Discuss your career plans with your classmates. You'll never know "whose parents work where" if you don't speak up. Maintaining a long term relationship with your classmates will help grow your network and create positive professional relationships.

## Contact Rules

Reaching out to peers, alumni, faculty, or employers can be nerve-wracking and requires professional etiquette.

When you make contact, be sure to:

- Establish why you are reaching out early on, whether it is to request an informational interview, ask about their business, etc.
- Give them a copy of your résumé.
- Ask them about their career path. Make a positive impression.
- If someone gives you a name, be sure to make contact and then get back to the source.
- Don't think about a contact as a way to get a job - think of it as a way to learn.
- Send thank you letters within 24 hours of all meetings.
- A good wrap up question is: "If you were in my position, what would you do next?"

When you accept a job and are settled, let your network know where you are and what you are doing. For closer contacts that may have helped you, a phone call is appreciated. For others, updating your LinkedIn profile is sufficient.

### Books Available at D'Amour Library for further Networking Information

*Jeffrey Gitomer's Little Black Book of Connections: 6.5 Assets for Networking Your Way to Rich Relationships*

By Jeffrey Gitomer

*Savvy Networking: 118 Fast & Effective Tips for Business Success*

By Andrea R. Nierenberg

*How to Work a Room: A Guide to Successfully Managing the Mingling*

By Susan RoAne

*Work the Pond! Use the Power of Positive Networking to Leap Forward in Work and Life*

By Darcy Rezac, Judy Thomson, Gayle Hallgren-Rezac

## Questions You Can Ask

Below are good questions for a preliminary meeting. For more information, see the guides for Informational Interviewing and Questions to Ask Employers.

### PREPARATION

1. What credentials, educational degrees, licenses, etc., are required for your field?
2. How did you prepare for this career?
3. Which of your experiences during or after college have best prepared you for this position?
4. What other work experiences have you had either related or unrelated to your current one?

### EMPLOYER INFORMATION

1. Would you please describe your employer in terms of its culture?
2. Are employees organized by departments or in a team environment?

### PRESENT JOB

1. How would you describe your current position?
2. What skills or talents are most essential for this job?
3. What do you find most rewarding about your work?
4. What do you like most about your job? Least?
5. Is there such a thing as a "typical day?" If so, could you describe it?
6. Is there on-the-job training or professional development offered, or required?

### SALARIES AND PROMOTIONS

1. What promotions or advancements exist in this field?

### SUPPLY/DEMAND

1. What types of employers hire people in your line of work?
2. How would I best be able to find out about these kinds of jobs? Are they advertised in the newspapers, word of mouth, employment agencies (if so, which ones)?
3. What is the job market like for people in this field?
4. What other fields or positions might a person be able to move into from this one?

### ADVICE TO ME

1. How can I best prepare for a position in this field?
2. How well suited am I for a position in this field? (show them your résumé or tell them about yourself)
3. Could you suggest other companies or organizations that I should contact?