

## NETWORKING

Many job seekers spend the most time with the least effective methods, such as responding to want ads or searching online, but they neglect the most effective technique - *networking*. Networking is seeking advice, information, and ideas from people who are working in the type of job or industry that interests you or who could put you in touch with such individuals, and it enables you to tap into the hidden job market through personal leads. As described below, it can be done through informational interviewing or by calling actual job leads.

Contacts for your network come from many sources. Friends, neighbors, relatives, colleagues, businesses you support, alumni associations, and the names of managers as seen in trade journals are good places to start. One contact can lead to many others. When calling your contacts, ask them for information about (1) people who have openings, (2) the names of hiring managers where you want to work, (3) companies who are hiring, or (4) people who might know other sources of job leads. Use page 3 to think of ideas for names of contacts.

### **Networking through Informational Interviewing**

The purpose of informational interviewing is to get advice about a career field and information about a company or organization. When calling your contacts, explain that you are in a transition and you are seeking information, ideas, and advice. In addition, be prepared with a short description about your background, and share information of interest to people in your line of work, such as information you've researched about the contact's company, job, or industry. Offering to share information you've researched shows your commitment to the field and might increase your contact's interest in meeting you. If you say you are calling for information and advice, do not ask for a job, and as a courtesy, ask the person you are calling if the present time is convenient for them to speak with you.

*Sample phone script: Hello Ms. Smith my name is \_\_\_ and Sue Davis suggested I call you regarding the field of \_\_\_. Do you have a few moments? I am not calling for a job, but Sue said you would be a good person to talk with about opportunities and emerging trends in this field. I have a background in \_\_\_\_\_, and I've been doing research about \_\_\_\_\_ that I would like to discuss with you. Do you have 10 to 15 minutes within the next week when we could meet?*

Always have a list of questions prepared ahead of time (see page 4 for sample questions), and bring your resume in case the contact is interested in your experience and they mention they have an opening. If the contact does not have time to meet in person, ask if they have a few moments to speak to you by phone, and ask if you may send them your resume. Whether you meet in person or by phone, ask for the name of at least one referral and get permission to use the contact's name when you call that person. Finally, write a follow-up letter to thank them for the time they took to meet or talk to you, and include a copy of your resume if you did not give it to them previously.

## **Networking for Actual Job Leads**

Your research and your network of contacts will probably lead you to people or companies who have openings. Unlike informational interviewing, networking for job leads is calling to apply for a job and request an interview. To increase your chances of being interviewed, express knowledge of and interest in the company's mission or product and how you obtained the name of the person you are calling (such as the name of the person who referred you or the source where you found their name). As with informational interviews, ask the person you are calling if the present time is convenient, and be prepared with a short description about your skills, experience and training. If the job lead does not have an opening, ask if they know someone who might be able to utilize your skills get their permission to use their name as a referral.

Example phone script for job lead: *Hello Mr. Jones, my name is \_\_\_ and Bob Smith suggested I call you about my interest in the field of \_\_\_; do you have a few minutes? I am exploring opportunities in \_\_\_\_\_ (type of dept or work, such as marketing). I have extensive experience in \_\_, specifically \_\_\_\_. I am strongly interested in \_\_\_ (name of company and their mission or product), and Mr. Smith suggested that you might be able to utilize my skills. Could we get together for a brief meeting?*

**NETWORK CONTACTS LIST**

**Family Members**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Businesses You Support (e.g., barber)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Neighbors**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Names from Journals/Annual Reports**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Friends**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Professional and Alumni Associations**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Former Co-Workers/Current Colleagues**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Community (e.g., clergy, librarian)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Sample Informational Interviewing Questions**

1. On a typical day in this position, what do you do?
2. What training or education is required for this type of work?
3. What personal qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this job?
4. What part of this job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?
5. How did you get your job?
6. What opportunities for advancement are there in this field?
7. What entry-level jobs are best for learning as much as possible?
8. What are the salary ranges for various levels in this field?
9. How do you see jobs in this field changing in the future?
10. Is there a demand for people in this occupation?
11. What special advice would you give a person entering this field?
12. What types of training do companies offer persons entering this field?
13. What are the basic prerequisites for jobs in this field?
14. Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?
15. What do you think of the experience I've had so far in terms of entering this field?
16. From your perspective, what are the problems you see working in this field?
17. If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why? What would you change?
18. With the information you have about my education, skills, and experience, what other fields or jobs would you suggest I research further before I make a final decision?
19. What do you think of my resume? Do you see any problem areas? How would you suggest I change it?
20. Whom do you know that I should talk to next? When I call him/her, may I use your name?