

Networking is crucial to building a support system in your career as well as a mechanism to help you find a new job. Making genuine contacts and building long term relationships is a key component in networking. They can help you directly or connect you with others who can.

Solid networking can lead to referrals, advice, connections, recommendations, and professional support. At can also lead to future jobs and opportunities that may not otherwise present themselves.

Okay, you know you need to network but you don't know how or you absolutely hate the idea of attending a huge networking event which can sometimes feel impersonal and overwhelming.

Here are some tips for you.



NETWORKING FOR THOSE THAT DON'T LIKE TO NETWORK

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Reach Out

- Ask your personal network for career or job search assistance.
- Ask them who you should be talking to; most are happy to help!
- Reach out to relatives, classmates, alumni groups, neighbors, church members, sports clubs, community organizations.
- Veterans should connect with the variety of veteran support organizations.
- Initial reach outs are an excellent way to ease into a new job search or career step.
- Conversations can be in person, on the phone, web based call and even messaging through social media.
- To get the initial conversation started you can simply say "I've just started my career search and would greatly appreciate your help."

Connect

- New connections can be established in just about any situation – coffee shop, restaurants, grocery store and church.
- Seek out those in the job area or industry you are pursuing.
- Find the Thought Leaders and Influencers in your profession. Join an association that supports your career (e.g. Project Management Institute, Society for Human Resource Management, National Association of Sales Professionals).
- Connect on LinkedIn with those in your profession and industry. Join a LinkedIn group related to your field.
- Being active and engaging in a group whether in person or via LinkedIn helps build your visibility.

Prepare

- Research the person you are meeting with and jot down basic questions to get the conversation started. This is especially helpful when meeting someone new.
- Most people enjoy talking about themselves.
- "How did you get into your role?"
- "What do you love most about your job?"
- "What do you find intriguing about your industry?"
- "Who are your key competitors?"
- "Who should I be talking to?"

Appreciate

- Treat all networking contacts with genuine appreciation and professional respect. Ask how YOU can assist THEM.
- Most importantly, pay it forward. Be a resource for others when it's their turn to look for employment or for help.
- Say THANK YOU! Appreciate the time someone spent with you. A personal note to say thanks sets you apart. Someone who feels appreciated will want to help you. In turn, someone who doesn't feel appreciated may not help at all.

Cultivate

- Keep your network updated on your search; let them know how it's going. If you're still having trouble finding employment, a short update might spur them to provide more assistance.
- When you get a job, inform your network and thank those that helped you along the way!

It's natural to get off to a slow start but each discussion you have is building a pyramid of people who can help support you and your career.

Good luck! You've got this.