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Introduction



Hi!

My name is Louise Fletcher and I am the Managing Editor and Co-founder of the [Career Hub](#) blog.

I founded Career Hub to provide job seekers with the best advice from experts in career counseling, resume writing, personal branding and recruiting.

The nature of blogging means that our experts can't always get into depth about their favorite subjects, and that's why I decided to ask them to contribute to this eBook.

"The Insider's Guide to Networking" is our fourth eBook (if you don't have "The Insider's Guide to Job Search," "The Insider's Guide to Resume Writing" and "The Insider's Guide to Interviewing" be sure to download them at www.careerhub.typepad.com).

This time I asked each writer to give their very best piece of networking advice, and once again we have some wonderful articles. We hope you find them helpful.

Please feel free to share this eBook freely and visit us at the Career Hub blog (www.careerhub.typepad.com). You can check in daily, subscribe to our RSS feed, or request daily email updates.

We'll see you there,

Louise Fletcher

Managing Editor
[Career Hub](#)



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Networking – The Core of Your Search

By Ford R. Myers, M.Ed.

After you've created all your "self-marketing documents" and verbal presentations, you're ready to take your job search "to the street" and begin networking. The goal is to contact people who can help you reach the hiring managers inside your target companies. Networking can be done on the phone, in person, via e-mail or even "snail mail." But no matter how you do it, networking should be thought of as the core of your entire search.

Who should be on your contact list? Who should you be reaching out to? The answer is: everyone you know. *Everyone?* Yes, everyone! Every single person alive who knows your name should be on your contact list! (The only exception is people who clearly don't like you)! It doesn't matter what these contacts do for a living, or where they live, or how much power or money they have. The key is not to pre-judge people or make assumptions about who can and cannot help you. After guiding thousands of clients through the networking process, I have learned that most new jobs are secured through people who were least expected to be of help!



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Networking is a lot simpler and less scary than many people think. You do not need to be a great “schmoozer” to network effectively. In fact, the best networkers are often great listeners, as opposed to great talkers.

And no matter what happens, never let-up on your networking efforts. Keep building your network all the time – every day, every week and every month – for the rest of your career! Ninety-five percent of my clients land great jobs through their networks. It's not worth risking those odds to NOT be continually networking! Remember: If you're in career transition, networking IS your job. It should be the primary focus of everything you do during your search. The level of professional satisfaction you'll have in your career and your next job is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of your structured networking interactions!

Let's “de-mystify” the networking process, so it won't seem overwhelming or confusing to you. What follows is a highly-structured and purposeful approach that consistently produces excellent results! Here are the basic networking steps you'll need to follow:

1. Build Rapport. State, “I was referred by (give name of mutual friend/colleague),” or “I was referred by our mutual colleague/friend (give name), who suggested that” (Find some area of common interest to discuss). I'm contacting you about a career matter, but let me assure you that I am not calling to ask you for a job – nor do I expect you to even know of any job openings. Let me start by telling you a bit about myself and my professional background

2. State “where you've been” by using a *Positioning Statement*. This is a succinct, pre-prepared verbal statement that explains “who you are” professionally. Example: “I am a senior Financial and Operations Professional with more than 15 years of experience in the Manufacturing and Services industries. My strengths include analysis,



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problem-solving, communication and innovation. I have specific expertise in Financial Analysis and Reporting, Cash and Risk Management, and Productivity Analysis. I am seeking a leadership position with a focus on Financial Reporting.”

3. Share “what happened” with a *Departure Statement*. This is a concise explanation of why you’re no longer at your previous position, or why you’re interested in leaving your current employer. Example: “As a result of a merger between two business units, more than 1,500 positions have been affected, including mine. I now have the opportunity to explore other career options in Financial Services that will leverage my proven strengths in analysis, problem-solving, communication and innovation.” The Departure Statement must be expressed in positive terms, so there will be no suspicion that you “did something wrong” to lose your job.

4. Ask for help. “Would you be willing to help me?”

5. “Decompress” – take the pressure off – reassure your contact again that you are not asking for a job. Reiterate, “As I said, I am not asking you for a job, nor do I expect you to know of any appropriate positions. However, I am interested any advice or guidance that you could offer, in addition to any networking contacts you could provide. (Give name of mutual friend/colleague) told me that you’d be a great person to talk to for this purpose. Would you be willing to review some of my credentials, and give me candid feedback? I could send the materials right over.”

6. Ask again for help – i.e., expanding your contact network; asking for guidance, advice, and feedback. Leverage the notion of “six degrees of separation” – ask for contacts from your contacts! And always “come from generosity.” This means you should be on the lookout for opportunities to offer something of value in return.



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7. Share your initial documents, and set a time to re-connect. State, "I'll e-mail (or fax) a one-page *Professional Biography* and list of *Target Companies* to you. Then I'd like to follow-up and have another conversation – when would be better for you, Wednesday afternoon or Friday morning? I know your input will be of great value, and I really appreciate your willingness to help." Follow-up after your networking meeting and keep the conversation going with two-way value exchange. Note: if the contact is a "center of influence," try to have your follow-up discussion face-to-face instead of on the phone, unless the contact is outside your geographic region.

It's a smart career move to *always be networking*, no matter what's going on for you professionally. If you don't need help at this time, build-up your networking power by helping others. In general, people will *want* to help you. It makes them feel good about themselves. It boosts their self-esteem to be considered "a connector" of people with opportunities and information, and it makes them feel important.

Networking is a great investment in your future, and over the long-term, it always pays big dividends! So, keep networking right at the center of your career management and job search experience.

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Deb Dib, America's Power Coach for Corporate Leaders, empowers CEOs and very senior executives to build great careers, mold great companies, have some fun, and even change the world a bit! A career professional since 1989 and a pioneer in executive branding and branded resumes, Deb holds eight certifications, is a contributor to 30 career books, and serves on the BOD of Career Masters Institute. Visit www.executivepowercoach.com; www.executivepowerbrand.com, or www.advantageresumes.com.

Five Ways to Jump-Start your Network When your Network is Nowhere

By Deb Dib

IS THIS YOU?

You know networking works. You know everyone says networking is the best way to get a job. Maybe you even got a job from a lead a contact gave you. But you've been too busy doing your job to keep your network alive, or maybe you've never networked.

And now your network is nowhere.

You keep meaning to get out there and get started networking. When you have time. When you need to. When it feels right.

Now you're afraid you waited too long.

You're afraid that your job may be in jeopardy, or that you are being passed up for a promotion, or that you are stagnating where you are, or that you need more professional visibility.

Or maybe, the worst has happened—you've lost your job and you need a network NOW.



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JUMP-STARTING IS YOUR ANSWER

Building a vibrant network of professional and personal contacts doesn't have to take years. You CAN jump-start your network—even if you've not networked for months or years. Even if you have *never* networked.

Using just five simple steps you can create an action plan that will get you out there, get you known, get you traction, and get you set for a lifetime of powerful and satisfying networking. Follow these five simple steps to jump-start your network and create career momentum:

- Be your own advertising agency
- Be your own PR organization
- Become visibly involved in industry groups
- Get personal with one-on-one calls and meetings
- Go virtual to get personal

The steps are not hard, but you will have to *work hard* to make this happen in a compacted timeframe. Remember—you likely have a lot of catching up to do! But with a plan and with passion, you can make it happen, and make it happen faster than you think.

USE THESE FIVE STEPS TO JUMP-START YOUR NETWORK

1. BECOME YOUR OWN ADVERTISING AGENCY.

Successful networkers project clarity, emotional appeal, and ROI value, just as great ads do.

People respond to clarity. Employers respond to ROI value. Before you jump-start your network, you need to know your personal brand, your fit for your target audience, and your value to that audience. You need to prove you can pay your own salary and make some profit, too.



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- Determine your top selling points. You need to be able to say what you do, for whom you do it, and what you deliver (the classic branded elevator speech). Until you can do that, you are not ready to network.
- Think carefully about your top personal and business attributes. Get feedback from trusted friends and associates. Choose the top-five or so to guide you in determining your professional persona—your personal brand.
- Consider your best successes—write at least five for your personal use (these will be very helpful later in interviews), and do so in classic CARS format—Challenge faced, Action taken, Results delivered, Strengths demonstrated. Analyze them as representative of your body of work. What strengths do they show? What impact to they present? What do they say about your ability to produce meaningful, profitable work for your current company or next company?
- Finally, get strategic. Decide what you are going to “advertise.” All products have many features (what they do) and benefits (what they provide). People buy benefits not features. They buy differentiation. What is your benefit? What is your differentiation? Prove it by describing three top-benefits (value propositions) that you provide. Then go even deeper and *prove it* with *just one irresistible benefit*. The single most important thing that would cause you to be hired by the right company.

Then, and only, then, will you have the mental magic needed for jump-start networking (or any resume writing or job search activity). In jump-start networking there is no time to course-correct, or reestablish first impressions. You need to know who you are and why you’re hireable from your very first contact.



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Jump-Start Tip:

Don't be tempted to skip this first step! Do your brand homework and create powerful a powerful brand statement and/or 30-second elevator speeches.

Here are two examples to get you started:

- Within traditional financial services firms people know me as visionary and ethical rainmaker who gets great satisfaction from conceiving ideas for new businesses and new products and then making them happen. I'm a bit of a rebel when it comes to ideas, but I always use them to produce. It's not unusual for me to propel triple-digit advances in growth and revenue from a concept that did not have a lot of early support. Most effective in a core leadership role (VP or above)—in growing, forward thinking financial services firms—I'm at my best creating or revitalizing products, client relationships, and internal groups.
- Crisis leadership is where I do my best work. I'm never more energized than when I'm called upon to profitably meet challenges that baffle the experts or must be tackled yesterday. My best fit is with companies struggling in downtrending markets. In fact I recently revitalized a failing \$27 million organization, taking it from a \$9 million loss to a \$1 million profit within just twelve months.

2. BECOME YOUR OWN PR ORGANIZATION.

People won't know who you are or what you want unless you tell them!

You know more people—far more people—than you realize. People who, if they know you need help, will want to help you if they can.

Once you commit to jump-start networking, immediately get the word out to as many personal and business contacts as possible (don't forget your alumni



association, your doctor, accountant, lawyer, real estate agent, baby-sitter, hairdresser, and myriad other connections you might not immediately think about as part of your network.).

Use phone calls, letters, e-mail, or a combination approach—whatever works best for you.

- If you are in active job search, make this your first step, and do it fast.
- If you are in a confidential job search, be very careful to contact only highly trusted associates and family members, and to emphasize the confidential nature of your search.
- If you are networking for career management, use this step to bring your contacts up to speed with where you are, what you've been doing, and where you are going.

Jump-Start Tip:

Good networking is about healthy reciprocal relationships; it is not about grasping, needy relationships. No matter what you need, whenever you contact your circle of friends, family, and colleagues, offer to be a helpful resource in your area of influence. People remember generosity far more than they remember need.

3. BECOME VISIBLY INVOLVED IN INDUSTRY GROUPS.

People don't know who you are unless they can see you!

Run, do not walk, to join relevant professional organizations involved in your current and/or target industry. But don't stop there. Just because you are a member doesn't mean anyone will know you. Remember, this is jump-start networking!

Networking wisdom: *Be useful to be known.* Jump-start networking wisdom? *Be useful FAST, to be known FAST!*



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- Be active—join a committee and actually work in it. Be sure to attend the committee meetings (the members will get to know you and will become part of your PR machine.). Volunteer for the jobs nobody wants. Do what you can to get visible and to get known.
- Get to meetings early. You'll be able to meet other early arrivals and have less competition for their time. Early arrivals are often movers and shakers who hate being late, or who are just staying for networking and skipping the rubber-chicken dinner.
- Volunteer to be a greeter at the meeting registration table. Everyone will have to stop at your station and get a nametag. You will have an opportunity to shake hands and introduce yourself to almost everyone. Be sure the delivery of your 30-second elevator pitch is fluid, offers value of some sort, is memorable, and is completely natural. You may want to shorten it a bit for this situation, but make sure you don't lose your impact.
- Write by-lined thought leadership articles for the organization's newsletter and post to on-line bulletin boards, user groups, blogs etc. Do this soon and do it consistently. You'll quickly be noticed as a new expert in the organization. If you can't write well, hire a journalism student or a free-lance editor to help you.

Jump-Start Tip:

One of my executive coaching clients, I'll call him Jim—had a family emergency and, after 20 years away (with no job, a family to support, and a very ill widowed mother), had to quickly move from the West Coast back to his home city in the Midwest.

Jim needed to get a job fast and he needed to ramp up a new local professional network, fast. He used steps one and two immediately (defining his brand and value



and then announcing his new status and needs to all his contacts) and then he joined his local professional association.

Arriving early at his very first meeting (always a good strategy) Jim met and conversed with another early arrival—the president of the association. Later, the president said to him, “Jim, I wonder if you might do me a huge favor? The head of our programming committee has moved and we need someone to fill that gap right away. We need someone who can speak to the leaders of our local companies and persuade them to come and speak at our meetings. Would you be interested?”

Jim jumped at the chance to hold a leadership position in the organization and to interface with exactly the people he’d be targeting in his job search. His work with the organization did not result in a job, but did result in the type of networking contacts who could supply the internal intelligence Jim needed when interviewing for a position he found on-line. The information helped him ace the interview and get the job. And having a leadership position on his resume didn’t hurt!

4. GET PERSONAL.

One-on-one calls and meetings make a difference.

Get gutsy and get going on creating opportunities for personal calls and personal meetings with contacts who are in the know about what you need to know.

As Jim did, if you need information on target companies, trends in your industry, people whom you should get to know, or all of the above, use your network to make introductions to people who can help you with these things.

These contacts don’t have to be people who can give you a job. They can be people who know people who can give you a job, or people who know the inside track on trends, corporate culture, possibilities of movement, etc.



Your job is to create their desire for a meeting with you! Use your contacts to help with introductions. Have a strong value proposition that will capture their interest. Offer to share network contacts or industry intelligence that you have gathered during your job search or networking efforts. Be sure to say thank you and to ask your new contact if he or she knows anyone else to whom you should speak to or who could use your information.

Jump-Start Tip:

Contacting speakers whom you have heard at business events or seen profiled in the business news or professional journals can be a great way to establish a relationship and get referrals to other contacts.

One of my executive clients, we'll call her Samantha, is in the early stages of jump-starting her network. She recently heard a speaker discuss the challenges of accelerated growth for technology organizations—an area absolutely relevant to her area of expertise. Her question—should she contact him, and how? We worked on an approach e-mail and he replied to Samantha within hours. They had a 30-minute conversation, he asked her permission to distribute her resume to his network, he gave her the names of three people he thought she should know (and made the introductions, as well), and Samantha is scheduled for lunch meetings with each of the three new contacts in the coming weeks.

5. GO VIRTUAL TO GET PERSONAL.

On-line networking, on-line portfolios, and blogging may seem new, but they are proven and they work.

On-line networking sites are where industry experts, entrepreneurs, executives, recruiters, and employers are hanging out, making connections, and sourcing candidates. As a jump-start networker, you need to be there.



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- A few of the most trusted and noteworthy sites are www.linkedin.com, www.ecadamy.com, www.ryze.com, www.zoominfo.com, and www.ziggs.com. Even Facebook is becoming a networking tool for business, not just for students.
- These sites offer the chance to build your own network and connect with others—sharing network contacts and making virtual introductions.
- Most sites allow you to look for industry experts, search for people who work in your target companies, join special interest groups, get testimonials, etc.
- You can create a profile that allows others to see as much of your professional background as you care to share.
- You can ask references, associates, previous employers, vendors, etc. to post testimonials about you and your work.

Recruiters consistently say that they use Google and other search engines as well as these networking websites for sourcing passive (ideal) candidates. In addition, recruiters like bloggers. Recruiters look for passion because passion typically accompanies excellence. And bloggers have passion.

- One of the best ways to manage your on-line presence so that you have control of your brand and employment messages is to create an impressive, tech-savvy on-line portfolio that clearly delivers your brand and value.
- Such portfolios tend to be listed on the first pages of web searches about you and are quite useful in creating the chemistry needed to capture interviews. For this, they work far better than on-line resumes alone, and in fact, the URL to an on-line portfolio can be included in your resume.



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- Two of the best portfolio development services I've seen are Kirsten Dixon's www.brandego.com and Louise Fletcher's www.blueskyportfolios.com.
- If you choose to blog, be sure that you have a point of view, commitment to posting regularly, and an expertise in / passion for a particular niche when you begin. Your blog needs to be a platform for your thought leadership. It's a place to build community—and community equals visibility and networking.

Jump-Start Tip:

Join an on-line networking group and immediately send your trusted friends and business associates invitations to your on-line network. Keep in mind that your name is attached to the contact and they reflect on you. You need to be sure that these people are people to whom you could give a strong recommendation of competence should someone want to meet them. Virtual networks are built upon this concept.

The faster you build your virtual network, and the more you encourage your invitees to build their networks, the faster your network will expand—it's an exponential thing. For instance, someone with only 40 direct first-level connections will have a second-level network of about 1,300 connections and a third-level network of over 130,000 connections. Some sites can go to six levels. That's a lot of contacts!

NEXT STEPS

Once you've jump-started your network, you must continue to build it and keep it vibrant for the life of your career. The services of a good coach or a mentor who is an experienced networker can be invaluable in helping you with ideas and in keeping your enthusiasm high. These books from leading experts can also help.



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- *Dig Your Well Before You're Thirsty*, by Harvey McKay
- *Professional Networking for Dummies*, by Donna Fisher
- *The New Job Security*, by Pam Lassiter
- *Make Your Contacts Count*, by Anne Baber & Lynne Waymon
- *How to Work a Room*, by Susan RoAne
- *Masters of Networking*, by Ivan Meisner
- *Networking for Job Search and Career Success*, by Michelle Tullier.
- *Never Eat Alone and Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship at a Time*, by Keith Ferrazzi, Tahl Raz
- *Career Distinction*, by William Arruda and Kirsten Dixon.

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Contact her via her at www.careerdirectionsllc.com

Networking for Introverts

by Louise Garver

Michael Jordan, Queen Elizabeth II, Warren Buffet, Albert Einstein, Charles Darwin, Steven Spielberg, Mother Teresa, and Mohandas Gandhi all have something in common and it's not just fame. Along with 30% of the population and 60% of gifted people, they're all introverts. Are you?

The terms "extravert and introvert" were originally conceived by the psychologist, Carl Jung, but have been largely misunderstood to mean the simple difference between loud and shy. Rather, extroverts derive energy from the outside world while introverts have enormously rich interior lives. Introverts are abstract and intense. They have a public and private self whereas extraverts have one face for all. This doesn't mean introverts lack confidence or despise people. What it does mean is that social activities can cause anxiety for introverts. Bottom line, networking can seem like an introvert's worst nightmare.

Many job seekers view networking as a frenzied process involving hundreds of phone calls, trolling for job leads. Networking isn't about asking favors or begging for a job—or misrepresenting yourself by saying that you're "not looking for a job." Of course you're looking for a job—it's just that you **don't expect** your contacts to know of (or have) any open positions at that time.

Networking is about building and maintaining relationships. It's an evolving process, and you don't have to be extroverted to be good at it. Whether you're aware of it or



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not, you're developing relationships all the time. When you seek information or ask for an opinion, it's technically networking. When you ask for a recommendation or information on a vacation destination or anything else—you're actually networking.

It's a major misconception that an extroverted personality is a prerequisite for success. Shyness and discomfort are sentiments germane to most job-seekers and career-builders. Extroverts and Introverts experience these same feelings, but handle them differently. Rest assured that Steven Spielberg didn't get promoted from un-credited Assistant Editor to one of the wealthiest filmmakers in the world. He had to get noticed. Getting noticed and getting remembered requires networking. There are aggressive and there are subtle networking techniques. It's best to let your personality determine your style.

Understand Your Personal Style

Successful networking doesn't require a personality makeover. Being a perceptive listener is both an introverted quality AND an essential relationship building quality. Case in point: Some introverts are very successful in sales because they are superb listeners; they have an ability to understand needs and develop relationships with customer, rather than trying to sell them a product or service. In fact, understanding your personality and communication style will improve your approach toward career conversations with people in your network

Networking Backdoors

Don't Cold Call!

Introducing yourself with a letter and mentioning the person who referred you will create an immediate connection. Your letter's already broken the ice when you call and say: "I'm following up on the letter I wrote to you last week;" then proceed from there. Make your calls when you feel upbeat. Perhaps, plan on making these phone calls after exercise.



Play-Write!

Write a script and highlight key words to prepare for a networking phone call. Practice with a tape recorder, but don't memorize each word. You want to have a conversational tone.

Action Speaks Louder Than Words!

Volunteer your time and skills at professional, recreational, community or other organizations. This will help you gain visibility while fostering new relationships more naturally and comfortably for your personality style.

Get Published!

Draw on your expertise and write articles for your association's newsletter or other publications in your field. This will help you to establish name recognition that can lead to new relationships—and possibly job leads.

Cheers to Networking!

Join a Toastmasters group. This organization offers a non-intimidating avenue to meet and interact with others while enhancing your presentation/communication skills. Bring a buddy if you're anxious. Or consider practicing career conversations with trusted people that you know rather than strangers. This may not only help keep your jitters in check, but can also teach you to be socially adaptable.

Online Net-works!

Join an online discussion group. There are special-interest groups, news groups, chat rooms, web-based networks, forums and electronic mail lists on virtually every topic you can imagine. A few of the websites you can check out include: liszt.com, LinkedIn.com, deja.com/usenet, corporatealumni.com, industryinsight.com and sixdegrees.com. While joining an online discussion group is a great way to



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supplement your networking effort, remember that there's no substitute for good old fashioned face-to-face exchanges.

Most of all, remember that you are not alone in your discomfort--no one enjoys searching for employment and having to contact people. To help, think of networking as a series of one-to-one career development conversations--conversations familiar to other people who have lost their position or have searched for a new one voluntarily. So, you are likely to meet many empathetic people who understand and share your feelings--and are inclined to help. Keep in mind that you don't have to perfect it; you only need to learn how to network properly.

To quote Harvey Mackay, author of *Rolodex Network Builder* and other books: "We don't have to do it alone. Wherever we're going, we all need the help of others to get there. Don't ever be afraid to ask for what you need. That's what your network is for? There are plenty of people out there waiting and willing to help. All they ask is that some day, some time, some place, you find a way to pass it on."

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Are you ready for your next big gig? Wendy Terwelp, President of Opportunity Knocks™ (www.knocks.com), partners with entrepreneurial executives and business owners in transition. In addition to personal branding and career marketing tools, her innovative Rock Your Network® program helps execs network effectively – without begging. To date nearly every person attending her live events has landed a new gig. In career management since 1989, Wendy also possesses a degree in Journalism along with 4 career management certifications. Email Wendy at wendyterwelp@knocks.com.

Top 10 Secrets to Turn Networking Pain to Career Gain

By Wendy J. Terwelp

It's not what you know; it's who you know that gets you hired. We've all heard this phrase so many times our ears are bleeding, right? Here are the facts: **61% to 85% of people land new careers through networking.** With that in mind, here are 10 secrets to help turn your networking pain into career gain:

1. **Know yourself and your personal brand:** Are you hip, trendy, and cool? If you are, then the networking group you join should match your style and your attitude. Sure, you want to meet different types of people to successfully manage your career, but you also want them to "get you." And you want them to be fun to work with, right?
2. **Know what you want:** when you attend a networking event, what is it you want from the event? Contacts? Referrals? Ideas? Notice I didn't say "job." Unless of course you're networking at a job fair. The objective for effective networking is to create relationships that can help you propel your career in the direction of your overall goals.
3. **Know what you bring to the table that no one else does** – what makes you or your qualifications unique among your competitors? "I'm a people person" is not a unique skill set.



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4. **Know your audience:** who needs to know about you to help you reach your goals? Does this networking organization serve your audience? Does it have members who are your audience? If not, it's probably not the group for you. What groups should you join? Join at least three types of groups. 1) A peer group for brainstorming, education, and commiserating; 2) Prospects: a group that is your ideal target market or knows your ideal target market; 3) A professional business group. Hiring decision-makers often Google your name before meeting with you. A professional organization can boost your online presence.
5. **Know that the more you give, the more you get.** It's not all about you.
6. **Know how to start a conversation.** Develop at least 3 open-ended questions you can ask a person in your new networking group. And it's not: "Hey, know anyone who's hiring?"
7. **If you're shy, know that it's A-OK to team up with a friend** to attend events and meet new people. Networking becomes much easier when you can introduce your friend as well as yourself when meeting new people.
8. **Know when a group's a great fit for your career or business** – and when it is not. With some groups you'll know after the first meeting it's not a good fit; others take time to gel. For example, if you're active in the group and meeting the right people, it may be a good fit. The goal is not to collect business cards; the goal is to build relationships that grow with you, your career, and your business. It comes down to this, if you are not building relationships in the group, and you're just going for the food, it's not a good fit. Follow up on those business cards.
9. **Know that in order to make the most of a group you've got to take an active role.** Networking is more than just showing up. Joining a networking group is a commitment.



10. Know that networking is simply having a conversation with friends.

Following these steps takes away the pain for your career gain.

Keep in mind, networking is a two-way street. A good networker gives to their network, maintains their network, and builds a positive, ongoing business relationship. Enjoy building your network and taking your career to the next level.

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Networking in the Digital Age: Online Tools for Lifelong Career Management

By Laurie Smith

Much of your network will be built in traditional ways such as cultivating personal, workplace, professional association, and industry relationships. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that to stay ahead in the employment search and career management game, you need to actively leverage online resources to build and maintain a dynamic network. The savvy individual in the 21st century will create a robust online presence by leveraging the networking and visibility-building potential of blogging, maintaining profiles on social and business networking sites, and joining web-based organizations (many of which offer both online and “brick and mortar” networking opportunities).

Blogging to Build Your Network

Blogging is rapidly emerging as a key strategy for those who want to build an extensive and rich network while increasing their visibility to search professionals such as executive recruiters, headhunters, and internal corporate recruiters. Blogging is also a relatively easy way to build your personal brand online, increase your industry standing, and position yourself as an expert in your fields of expertise. Contacts you make while maintaining a blog and monitoring/commenting on others' blogs will naturally and easily become part of your network.



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Your professional blog can be simply an online journal or diary where you express your thoughts on subjects relevant to your field of expertise and/or industry, or it can be a full-fledged web portfolio and platform for your online identity including your résumé, bio, white papers, etc. However simple or elaborate you make your blog, it is important to post regularly and respond to comments and questions. Your posts need not be long, and it is far more advantageous to post often than that your posts be highly polished, definitive topical statements!

There are various free and low-cost sites where you can create your blog, with no need to know a thing about programming or website development. Free sites include:

<http://www.blogger.com>

<http://www.spaces.msn.com>

Sites that incur a small fee but do tend to have more flexibility in format, etc., include:

<http://www.typepad.com>

<http://www.blogharbor.com>

Once you have established your blog, be sure to make it visible by submitting it for inclusion on the major blog search engines, and include a list of these engines on your blog:

<http://www.blogarama.com>

<http://www.blogtree.com>

<http://www.blogsearchengine.com>

<http://www.bloguniverse.com>

<http://www.daypop.com>



You will want to regularly visit other relevant blogs and respond to the posts you find there (they are also a good source for post topics on your own blog). You can partially automate the blog monitoring process by subscribing to an RSS feed (Really Simple Syndication) that will periodically download recent blog posts to your computer for review without the necessity to individually visit each of your favorite blogs. Some resources for RSS feeds include:

<http://www.bloglines.com>

<http://www.feedreader.com>

<http://www.feedburner.com>

<http://www.feedException.com>

A side note on blogs: They can also serve as a potent secret weapon in the competitive career intelligence area. Major companies often host blogs authored by key employees that can provide invaluable insights into the corporate culture and challenges the company is currently facing. If leveraged well, they can even serve as an access point to the inside track on opportunities within that company.

Leveraging Online Networking and Profiling Sites

A relatively easy way to build your network is by utilizing online networking and profiling sites, and while doing so you will also be increasing your visibility to recruiters. This is because of a new wave that is increasingly gathering momentum: the use of business, professional, and social networking sites in recruiting. Recruiters and employers actively access these sites to identify potential candidates, as well as to learn more about candidates who are under consideration. As of last year, a [Herman Trend Alert](#) noted that while referrals still ranked as the most valuable recruiting resource, social networking sites had surpassed employment websites, ranking as the #2 recruiting resource. This was based on hard numbers: the number of new hires recruited as well as the budget allocations of employers (results from a Direct Employers/Booz Allen Hamilton study).



Some of the major players in the online networking and digital profiling world are:

[Zoominfo](#) – aggregates data found on the web to create a “picture” of people and companies, and claims to have profiles of over 38 million individuals and 3.5 million companies.

[Ziggs](#) – exclusively features profiles of professionals.

[Blue Chip Expert](#) – digital online community that focuses on top echelon talent, invitation-only site.

[Spock](#) – a search engine designed to aggregate information about people. by searching through various social networking sites as well as more general websites. Spock had over one hundred million people indexed as of September 2007.

[Linked In](#) – social networking site that allows you to create a profile, collect endorsements, and build your network online. In a recent study, LinkedIn was shown to be one of the fastest-growing Web 2.0 sites. (“Web 2.0” refers to a new breed of interactive websites that allow users to create their own content.)

[Ryze](#) – business networking site with more than 500,000 members in more than 200 countries.

As a September 2007 [CIO.com](#) article observed, online networking is “... becoming a value-added feature of the corporate landscape. Although social networking has raised security and liability concerns, members of the CIO Executive Council are embracing it, even leveraging it, for its attendant benefits of collaboration, enterprise knowledge management, and brand and mission extension.” The takeaway from this? Not only can you build your network by using online networking sites, you can also provide great added value to your current company.



Web-Based Networking Organizations & Associations

In addition to the conventional local, regional, or national business networking organizations to which you may belong, there is a new breed of networking organizations whose primary interface or membership-building channel is through the Web. The distinction between a digital and a traditional networking organization can be a bit fuzzy, but you would likely never identify many of these organizations except via their web presence. Networking within some of these organizations is exclusively “virtual,” but many do also have local chapters that offer substantial calendars of meetings and activities in locations that may be accessible to you, particularly if you live in a large metropolitan area.

To give you an idea of the diversity of web-based organizations to be found, I have highlighted a few examples below.

[ExecuNet](#) and [Netscape](#) are two of the most well known and reputable web-based organizations. They both cater to executive-level candidates commanding salaries in the \$100K+ range.

[Business Networking International](#) claims to be the world’s largest referral organization. While its stated purpose is to provide a structured and supportive system of giving and receiving business (which will help you to perform well in your current position), the contacts you develop there will of course become part of your network and dramatically expand your resources when it comes time to enter the job market.

[The International Mentoring Network Organization \(IMNO\)](#) describes itself as “the hub for the ‘open source mentoring’ movement.” They are an official 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that makes professional mentoring available to everyone.



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What a great way to build your network while enjoying the mentorship of successful professionals and/or serving as a mentor yourself.

Industry or expertise-specific networking organizations can also be an invaluable resource. One example is [The Financial Executive Networking Group](#), which is a 24,000+ member international organization. Primarily based in the United States, they also have members in over a dozen countries spanning 4 continents.

There are a number of sites which feature directories of organizations that have a strong Web presence. Two of these are:

[Associations on the Net](#) – A service of The Internet Public Library, this site provides an extensive guide to websites of prominent organizations and associations.

[Gateway to Associations Online](#) – The ASAE (American Society of Association Executives) offers a comprehensive directory of business and professional association websites.

It will be to your advantage to browse the Web and identify, evaluate, and join one or more web-based networking organizations. Then you'll want to actively utilize both the online and offline resources they offer throughout your career.

Summing it Up

Statistics consistently show that the majority of positions are filled through networking and referrals (which, of course, are generated by your network). Estimates range anywhere from 50% to 80% of hires, depending on the survey. For executives in particular, the figures indicate that most positions are filled in this manner, with reported percentages between 70 and 80%.



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Online networking gains more traction as a key tool in successful career management with each passing day. Don't miss the boat!

Top 5 Tips for Effective Networking

Whether you are networking in cyberspace or at your local Elks Lodge, there are some foundational principles of effective networking that I believe are critical to your success. So I close this article with my Top 5 Networking Tips:

- 1) **Make networking an ingrained, daily, lifelong habit**, building your networking relationships on an ongoing basis before you are actively in the job market.
- 2) **Think outside the box** when populating your network. You never know where the lead for that fantastic job offer could come from—maybe even from your barber!
- 3) **Be an active volunteer**, both in your community and professionally. While serving others, you will effortlessly build a strong network.
- 4) **Keep in touch regularly**. Maintain a directory of all your contacts and strive to communicate with them at least annually, preferably quarterly.
- 5) **Provide solid value and cheerful assistance** to your contacts for which no reciprocity is expected. Networking should become a lifestyle in which the giving far outweighs the taking.

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Social Networking and LinkedIn Tips

By Susan Guarneri

Networking has been the number-one way to find jobs – and good ones – for years. In fact, for the past 20-some years I've been in the careers industry as a career counselor/coach and outplacement specialist, it has been the first strategy I've recommended to my job-search clients. With the advent of Web 2.0 and social networking, this strategy now makes it possible to connect with vast networks of professionals and peers for information interviewing, job leads, company information, and more.

But this globalization of networking has also led to dilemmas like what social networks to choose, the netiquette of social networking, and how to optimize networking time and tools. The following list is a heads-up on where to begin:

1. ["The 15 Top Social Networking Sites"](#) as compiled by Selfgrowth.com contains what it describes as the 15 most important websites primarily for people running self-improvement, business or health-related sites. I would expand that statement to include job seekers and career changers, career professionals seeking promotion and career development, recruiters, and HR folks too. The bonus here is that even more sites are listed beyond the top 15; check them out as they may be just the "niche" where you want to stand out with your personal brand.
2. ["LinkedIn Tricks for Networkers, Job Hunters and Hirers"](#) by Lisa Takeuchi Cullen of Time Magazine offers tips anyone on LinkedIn can use for research, connecting with



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those in the network, getting answers to specific questions, people and company background info, and raising your search-engine ranking if you have a website (such as a website portfolio) or personal blog.

Lisa's blog contains links to more postings:

["Ten Ways Journalists Can Use LinkedIn"](#) by Penelope Trunk – again all of the tips could easily apply to job seekers, hirers, and anyone interested in developing and managing their career.

["Ten Ways to Use LinkedIn"](#) by Guy Kawasaki – which contains some fascinating statistics like "people with more than twenty (LinkedIn) connections are thirty-four times more likely to be approached with a job opportunity than people with less than five".

For job-seekers, I'd also like to add ["Join a Social Network Before You Need a Job"](#) by Penelope Trunk which reveals how gung-ho recruiters are about social networking candidates.

3. ["I'm on LinkedIn – Now What?"](#) – In this book preview, Jason Alba shares his rationale, chapter content and structure, and timeline for the upcoming book. Judging from the thoroughness of the book's content and knowing Jason's penchant for meticulous detail and strategic thinking – this should be a bestseller!

All in all, the tools are out there to make social networking work for you. Don't let the number-one way to find jobs go unused in your toolbox of job-search tactics. BTW, don't forget about face-to-face networking as well, with everyone you meet...you just don't know who others may know and what referrals they might have for you. Have you got your personal branding 30-second statement (elevator pitch) ready?

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Debra Feldman, the JobWhiz, is nationally recognized for her expertise in designing and building connections for clients to Network Purposefully™, enabling senior executives to swiftly identify their next career challenge through warm personal referrals. As a candidate's personal talent agent, Debra introduces leading professionals to hiring managers at pre-screened target companies. Expedite your career ascent with the innovator Forbes Dubbed Part Sleuth, Part Networker, the industry's premier career matchmaker. Contact Debra at www.JobWhiz.com

12 Ways to Make the Most of Holiday Networking

By Debra Feldman

The holiday season holds great potential for job-hunters to expand their contacts and accelerate their campaign efforts. Spreading holiday cheer and New Year's greetings over the phone, via e-mail or with a card is a great excuse to reconnect with people you don't regularly see or with whom you correspond infrequently. And all the seasonal festivities—whether they be gatherings at your local community organizations, cocktail parties at neighbors' houses or concerts at your kids' schools—present ample opportunities to network in relaxed, convivial settings. It's so much easier to make small-talk about things like family, holiday plans, shopping and gifts at this time of year, and those universal topics help break awkward silences and warm up conversations that you can eventually direct toward your networking needs. What's more, holiday time is an ideal chance for job-hunters, especially those who find setting up networking meetings difficult, to make a connection with someone they want to get to know by offering them a ride to a party, providing directions, or giving them an admission ticket to an event.

Savvy job-seekers don't dread these social events; they embrace them. If you feel that your recent job seeking efforts haven't yielded enough results, taking advantage of all the networking opportunities that the season offers is certain to enhance the process. These positive networking experiences can help you rebuild your confidence, unearth unadvertised positions or leads on companies going through new



challenges that could use your help. In fact, many hiring managers are more receptive to job seekers' offers of pro bono or contract work (as a way to get their feet in the door) at this time of year because the managers are crunching to meet deadlines right when they and their teams want to take time off.

Here are some tips on making the most of the holiday season's many networking opportunities:

- 1. Be selective about which events you attend.** If you have multiple invitations for the same date or just don't want to spread yourself too thin, decide which events are worth your time based on the networking potential that each provides and/or the amount of fun you think you'll have.
- 2. Do your homework.** Before the event you're planning to attend, find out who is expected to be there. Politely ask the person organizing the event if they might tell you whom they invited. Then identify the individuals you want to meet. Learn about these people and the companies they work for so you can have an intelligent discussion with them and thus make a positive impression.
- 3. Plan ahead.** Consider what you might say to break the ice and keep conversations flowing. People are going to ask you what you do for work, so know how to answer that question: Come up with a succinct explanation that labels you as an expert and be ready with a few success stories that illustrates what you do and distinguishes you from the rest of the pack. Also think about what you might offer the people you meet in terms of advice, an introduction or a referral. Planning ahead will help you make the most of the event and will increase your confidence going into it.
- 4. Know what you want to accomplish.** When you finally get in front of your target contact, what do you want to get out of the interaction? Do you want



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their business card, a referral or permission to contact them afterwards to discuss your mutual interests?

- 5. Make a good first impression.** In the age of the Internet, a social event is an invaluable opportunity to speak with people face-to-face. So give the casual attire a break and look smart for the occasion. Also keep your business cards handy. Stay alert and coherent.
- 6. Have a friend introduce you.** If you're uncomfortable introducing yourself to someone new, find someone who knows one of the individuals you want to meet and ask that person to introduce you. Show your gratitude to your introducer by finding a way to help him or her. Never forget a favor.
- 7. Work the room with someone.** You'll be surprised how much easier it is to meet new people when you do so with another person by your side. Find someone with whom you're socially compatible, who brings out the best in you and vice versa, and introduce yourselves to someone new.
- 8. Stay focused.** Just as a job interview over lunch is not about the food, a holiday networking occasion is never about the libations. It's about expanding your circle of relevant contacts and learning and remembering as much as you can from your conversations. It's a good idea to take notes—either on the back of business cards or in a small notebook or your PDA—so that you can recall your conversation when you follow-up with people. But do it discreetly, when you're out of view, in your car or back at home.
- 9. Quality is more important than quantity.** It's better to spend your time having a meaningful conversation with a few carefully chosen contacts than to have a zillion superficial interactions. Don't break off a productive discussion to start another one, thereby leaving your first partner hanging. By the same token, don't waste anyone's time or prevent others from doing the



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networking they want to do. Be respectful and courteous. Your goal is to be remembered for the right reasons and to get someone to take action on your behalf. You need to be more than a name on a card or resume; you need be a resource they'll keep on their radar for appropriate referrals and recommendations.

10. Know when to hold your tongue. It's better to remain silent than to put your foot in your mouth, so if you don't have anything to add, don't feel obligated to talk. You can't hurt yourself by being quiet, offering a friendly smile, or nodding to indicate that you are listening appreciatively. It's better to leave a neutral impression than to damage your reputation by speaking out of turn or making a politically incorrect statement. Plus, you never know what others who are listening could be hearing and then later reporting.

11. Be gracious. Write timely thank you notes for invitations, assistance, introductions, referrals and advice. Not only does this show you have good manners and are courteous, it also makes someone else feel appreciated and reminds them of your interaction.

12. Follow up. To maximize the value of your networking efforts, be sure to follow up on the contacts you made in December early in the new year. Make keeping in touch regularly with your network your new year's resolution. You don't want to be 'out of touch; out of mind.' Persistence is a guaranteed advantage in the job market.

Happy holidays and happy networking!

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Key Tools for Effective Networking

By Jan Melnik, MRW, CCM, CPRW

Networking remains one of the best ways for individuals to “find their next gigs,” yet it can be one of the most challenging prospects for many people. Why? Despite incredible records of achievement and contributions, a number of people are uncomfortable promoting or selling themselves—which is how many view networking. Instead, I invite my clients to consider networking as collaborating and fact-finding. It takes away some of the angst. Here are some specific strategies along with useful tools for fostering the networking process that go beyond the resume and cover letter.

- **Personal Networking Cards ...** High-quality business cards are essential to job search. While they, of course, include your name, address, e-mail, key telephone numbers, they can be expanded (often on the reverse) to include your branding statement, ideal titles, and select keywords matching your key attributes. For instance, you might state Finance VP / Director / CFO – M&A, Capital Raising, Risk Management, Turnaround on the reverse of your card. These are great to augment typical documents provided in an interview (second copy of resume or leave-behind)—and are ideal for more social situations (running into someone at hardware store who may be influential, seeing someone at your daughter's soccer game, etc.). As with the tried-and-true American Express tagline, “Don't leave home without them,” it's good to



keep a small supply in your car for when you *do* run out of them in your planner/wallet.

What to say ... "Joe, I'd love to follow up on that—can I get your number? And here is my contact information. Certainly feel free to pass this along to anyone you think might be helpful in my information-gathering process." (You can feel free to give several cards.)

- **Single-page Bio ...** For some networked contacts, it will be more appropriate for them to have a single-page bio that professionally outlines your background than a fully developed resume.

What to say ... "Donna, while I'd be happy to e-mail you my complete resume, you might find this one-page snapshot useful in quickly seeing my range of experience and background." (These are also useful to give to recruiters in addition to your resume—helps them quickly see/recap your value when "selling" you to a client.)

- **Critical Leadership Initiatives Addendum ...** This tool (typically one or two pages in length) can be an effective companion document to the traditional job-search arsenal of resume and cover letter. It can also be used nicely as a standalone tool. The Critical Leadership Initiatives addendum amplifies key branding stories that are touched on in your resume—but can be expanded to demonstrate real value. They typically provide an in-depth look at how you addressed a challenge, spelling out key actions, detailing results, describing organizational impact, and revealing salient leadership strengths. Generally three to five CLI "stories" are used to provide the full spectrum of management skill and leadership talent in critical skill areas.



The most useful ways to employ the CLI addendum are:

(a) as a leave-behind document following a discussion with a recruiter and/or meeting with a board member or decision-maker.

What to say ... "You may find these additional details regarding several specific accomplishments relevant in assessing my candidacy and ability to make a difference in your organization."

(b) as a follow-up piece to a resume already provided to a recruiter, board member, or decision-maker.

What to say ... "In addition to the information already conveyed in my resume, you may find helpful the enclosed document that highlights several specific accomplishments relevant in assessing my candidacy."

(c) Of course, the addendum can also be used as a component in your complete resume/cover letter package.

- **Scripting for Networking Success ...** Finally, scripting makes good sense before you launch a series of networking phone calls. I also urge practicing before you begin making your spiel so that you are totally comfortable with highlighting your background and the purpose of your call. Prepare a brief script that covers the key points you hope to cover in your discussion. Be ready to delve directly into your prepared-but-natural script when you reach a contact that is available right then and there. Think about these kinds of questions (to stay away from the questions that could receive just a yes/no response):



- "Tell me about the business culture in Raleigh."
- "What's your take on how the new state regulations will affect the transportation industry?"
- "Who do you know at Johnson & Johnson?" (Not, "Do you know anyone at AIG?")
- "Who do you know who's involved in manufacturing in St. Louis?"
- "If you were in my situation, who would you talk to next?"
- "What are the most active professional associations you belong to?"
- "You know so many people in the broadcast industry, I'd really respect your suggestions about which agencies I should approach."
- "I'd value another opinion of my resume."
- "You're respected in San Francisco's financial community—what are your thoughts about the proposed bank merger?"
- "I know you're affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce—would you be willing to introduce me to the Manufacturing Division chairperson?"

Here's a sample opening script:

"Marilyn, I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me. I appreciate your willingness to share your perspectives and insights. Let me emphasize that my purpose in asking to see you isn't to request employment. Nor do I expect you to know of an opening for me. At this point, I just need information to help me focus my job-search efforts and broaden my visibility in the job market."



You can also try something like this:

"I understand you may not be hiring now-I'm interested in picking your brain: how you got into this line of work, what you like best, your ideas for someone with my background and skills, what trends you see."

Or this:

"Diane, several people have mentioned that the start-up of your new division might create a need for someone who can manage a full set of financial and accounting controls. If that's true, I'd like to express my interest. If my friends are mistaken and there's no prospect for employment here, then perhaps we could go to Plan B: that is, I'd welcome the opportunity to informally network about the market for controllers and CFOs in high-tech manufacturing in this region."

If you've been given a lead, always use that fact in your introduction. A third-party endorsement is invaluable and substantially increases the value and quantity of the information you glean in your networking and informational interviews.

"Steve Edwards from Tilcon suggested I give you a call."

Use the results of your own due diligence in opening a conversation where you offer to be a conduit to others:

"I read about the Jones Company's plans to open a new CRC in Las Vegas and have contacts that may prove valuable to you."

Be sure you follow up with all your lead-providers:

"Thanks, that contact was exceptional, we had lunch yesterday and I'm meeting with a few new contacts next week."



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And to provide updates on progress:

"Don, your referral to Margaret Evans was so helpful. She gave me some great insights into manufacturing trends for the Northeast and, as a result, I've identified two companies, Parker Jones and The North Group, that are a good fit for my background. Who do you know at those companies?"

You'll find as you begin to network more regularly, the process will become more natural and momentum will build. Good networking is a skill that's useful at any stage in a career and a key component to a successful job search. Be sure to maintain your network once you do land the perfect position—and continue to cultivate what you worked so hard to develop. In my practice, I see a very direct correlation between job-search success and people who develop strong networking skills (*note: it doesn't mean that everyone is born with them, most of us have to work at it!*). Good luck harnessing these skills in your own search.

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How to Act Like a Natural Networker

By Heather Mundell

- Does the word “networking” make you cringe?
- Are you wondering what networking exactly is and what you're supposed to be doing about it?
- Would you like networking to feel more natural?

If you answered “yes” to any of the above questions, you are not alone! Many of us struggle to make time for networking, and drag our feet the whole way. Networking is an activity we all know about, yet just a few of us engage in it with any real deliberateness, let alone passion.

Some people are natural networkers – they're outgoing, they connect easily with others and they seemingly know everyone. But you don't have to be born a networker to become really good at it. Here are the four keys to acting like a natural networker.

1. Remember that networking is simply building and maintaining relationships.

All of us build and maintain relationships every day. Networking doesn't have to be an intimidating new skill – think about it as putting more consciousness into how you are building and maintaining your relationships.



You put consciousness into your relationships by asking others what they need and want. And you do it by noticing what you need and want, and asking for those things as well.

Building and maintaining relationships has a myriad of benefits. You feel connected rather than isolated, you feel useful when you help others, you feel confident when you proactively ask for what you need, and you meet new and interesting people.

Relationship building challenges you always to be thinking about other people *and* about what you and your career want and need.

2. Network at your own pace, in your own style.

You get to decide how and with whom you will build and maintain relationships. You can start wherever you are, whether that means maintaining your current relationships and gradually broaden your sphere of influence, or deciding to become a keynote speaker at major conferences.

Making cold calls and working a room of 250 strangers may not be your style. If so, admit that and move on to other ways of building and maintaining relationships that suit your personality better. There are hundreds of different ways you can do it.

However, keep in mind that in order to grow and learn, we need to step out of our comfort zone frequently. Challenge yourself to do something a little bit intimidating (rather than completely terrifying) and notice what happens to your confidence.

3. Focus on the other person.

When you are talking to someone, be open, genuine and curious. Focus on listening to them and helping them. Remove the pressure you're putting on the situation by remembering that you are simply having a conversation.



Also if you're nervous or feel awkward, focusing on other people gives you a job to do. Assume they feel awkward as well and do what you can to put them at ease.

4. Network all of the time.

Networking isn't just something you hurry up and do when you need a job. True, you may turn up the networking volume when you are in transition. But when you regularly attend to a plan for building and maintaining your relationships, you then have a solid network to go to when you are in transition.

A networking plan may be as simple as committing to calling and having coffee with a certain number of people per week or meeting one new person each day, or it may be as complex as using a contact manager software program to track and plan your activities with each person you know.

Ask yourself both what you want to give and to receive from building and maintaining relationships. Do you want to mentor a young person at your company? Do you crave solid ties to your peers? Do you want to break into publishing? When you know what your goals are you can figure out the steps to get there.

We independent humans flourish when we band together in interdependent circles. To be a natural networker you don't have to become someone you're not – you just need to make building and maintaining relationships part of your everyday life.

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Seven Rules for Networking Success

Barbara Safani, M.A., CERW, NCRW, CPRW, CCM

Many people think that networking during a job search means calling everyone you know and asking them for a job. They associate networking with being pushy, overbearing, and an overall pest. People often shy away from networking because they don't want to be labeled as this type of person. But research shows that 70-80% of all jobs are filled through networking. How can this be so, if networkers are such an annoying, self-serving lot?

Successful networkers are not egocentric, aggressive jerks. They show a sincere interest in their networking contacts. They work hard to develop a relationship, establish their credibility, and share information. They follow the rules of the game where everyone has something to gain. Like the lottery, you have to be in it to win it. Below are seven rules to follow for successful networking.

Don't ask for a job...Ask for information.

Networking is not about asking everyone you know for a job. As a matter of fact, when you network you should never ask someone for a job...You ask them for information that will help you in your search. Your goal is to build a relationship and establish rapport so that if a potential opportunity becomes available in the future, they will want to refer you. Compare these two scenarios:



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Scenario One

"Joe, I've been out of work for six months and I'm really strapped for cash. Do you know of any open positions in your department?"

You've put Joe in a very difficult position. Sure, he can sympathize with your situation, but he may not be able to offer you a job. Perhaps he's not in a position to refer you, or there's a hiring freeze, or there aren't any openings right now.

Whatever answer Joe gives you, it's bound to be disappointing. So to redeem himself, Joe says, "I don't know of any open positions, but why don't you give me your resume and I'll send it to the HR department where I work." Bad move. Unless your skills match a specific opening in the company at that point in time, it's bound to never be looked at. Joe will feel that he's done what he can for you, but you will be no better off.

Scenario Two

"Joe, as you know, I most recently worked for a medical device company in their marketing group. I know that you've been in pharmaceutical sales for the past 15 years and I'm very interested in learning more about marketing roles within your industry" I don't expect you to know of any open positions in your organization, but I'd like the opportunity to speak with you briefly to learn more about your organization and the pharmaceutical industry in general."

Joe may think, OK, here's a friend that wants some information and sees me as some sort of expert on the topic. That's kind of flattering. I guess I could spend a few minutes with him. Does Joe know you're looking for a job? Probably. But you are not asking him for a job; you're just asking him for advice and insight. The stakes are low and the expectations are reasonable, so he is more likely to help you.

Don't take up too much of the other person's time.

Have an agenda and keep the meeting on track. Nothing scares people more than the prospect of someone eating up a lot of their time. Many people don't want to



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cram yet another meeting into their already jam packed day. Contrast these two situations:

Scenario One

You meet with Mary after a mutual friend has agreed to help you set up a brief 20-minute meeting. You neglect to prepare for the meeting, ramble, get off topic and spend an hour and a half with her. Mary feels that you have abused the use of her time and you haven't gotten to the critical questions you'd hoped to ask during the meeting. Mary feels burned and vows never to network again.

Scenario Two

You walk into the meeting with a prepared mental agenda that includes:

- A reminder of who referred you and perhaps some brief chit-chat about that mutual acquaintance.
- A statement up front that you have no reason to believe Mary can offer you a position and a reiteration of why Mary's information is of interest to you.
- An explanation of your agenda. "Today I'd like to tell you a bit about myself and get your perspective on the future of the high-tech industry." Remember to discuss your skills and accomplishments and show how you can add value to an organization.

By planning out your meeting ahead of time, you establish your professionalism, gain credibility, and cover all the critical agenda items.

Give the other person a chance to speak. Ask questions.

When you network it is imperative that you do not do all the talking. If you have asked another person for advice, make sure they have the opportunity to offer it. Also, when you do all the talking, the other person might feel confused and unsure of what they are supposed to do with the information you have supplied. Here are some questions you can ask to keep your exchange balanced and establish rapport.



- How long have you been with this company/field?
- What do you like/dislike about your job?
- What type of training do you need for positions such as yours?
- What is the culture of this company and what are its guiding principles?

Ask for suggestions on how to expand your network.

One of the main goals of networking is to tap into the network of the people you are meeting with. Each person you meet knows 200 or more people. If you can gain introductions to some of them, you quickly increase your network and your chances of finding the right connection. Ask your contacts if they can recommend a professional organization or the names of some other people you should be talking to.

Create a vehicle for follow up.

If you want to establish rapport with another person, you need to create ways to keep the relationship going. Ask the person if you may keep them informed of your search progress. If you read an article that pertains to a discussion you had at a networking meeting, cut it out and send it to them with a brief note. Try to find at least two to three opportunities per year to reconnect with members of your network.

Find ways to reciprocate.

Building a network is about creating a genuine, caring relationship. Thank your contact for the information they have supplied and see if you can help them in some way. Maybe your contact is interested in living in an area that you are familiar with or has a child interested in attending the same school you just graduated from. Share your knowledge of the school and your experience there as a way to help the other person. Keep notes on what you learn about your contacts so that future



correspondence can have a personalized touch like "How was Jane's first year of school?"

Send a thank you letter.

Always thank your contacts in person and follow up with a letter. If your handwriting is legible, the personalized touch is always appreciated

Networking is an ongoing process. It requires persistence, attention, organization, and good will. Incorporate the art of networking into your job search campaign now and you will gain opportunities and build relationships that will last a lifetime.

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Billie Sucher has an unwavering passion for her life-work as a career transition consultant, outplacement specialist, resume writer, speaker, trainer and poet. Since 1985, she has provided career services to individuals, executive-level to entry-level, coast-to-coast. Billie holds a Master's Degree in Counseling, industry certifications, and her resume / cover letter work is featured in numerous resume and cover letter publications. The author of *Between Jobs: Recover, Rethink, Rebuild* and *Baseball for Life*, she invites you to visit her website at www.billiesucher.com or e-mail: billie@billiesucher.com

WOW NETWORKING - Tips, Tricks & Tactics

by Billie Sucher, MS, CTMS, CTSB, JCTC

No matter where you've been, or where you're going, a network is one of the greatest gifts you'll ever know. It need not be vast; it need not be global; it need not be comprised of the most important or influential of persons. Start with one name, one contact and build from there. Simply stated, a network is a collection of human beings who know you, like you, and trust you enough to want to do something with you, *just because you are you.*

*If only for a moment,
You happen a glance my way
Stop by for a brief hello
Extend your hand to say.*

*If only for a moment,
I could catch your name
Perhaps I would come to know
A life not quite the same.*

*If only for a moment,
We could exchange a pleasantry
The next time we chance to meet
Possibly business friends we'd be.*



- by billie sucher 2007

It takes time and energy to develop and sustain a network. It can be done...and for sure, it is worth it. Network – a two-syllable word comprised of “net” and “work.” Does your net work? Listed below are A-Z tips, tricks, and tactics to help you build a strong and vibrant network for now, and into the future.

Act with consistency in all that you do and do not use, abuse, or take advantage of any person in your network.

Always have your antennae up and on – you may discover a contact, piece of information, or an idea that is perfect to share with someone in your network.

Ask questions. Sooner or later you will uncover the source, or resource, that you need. Just keep asking.

Be yourself. It's that simple.

Become an expert at something and then let others know what *that* is. Be able to verbalize *it* in no more than five words.

Build a relationship constructed upon a solid, durable foundation.

Cultivate connections with all types of people, from all walks of life, from a broad range of professions.

Details are a big deal when you are networking and details do matter. Details help you remember a conversation, a name, a thought that connects for a lifetime. People love to know



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that you care enough to remember the details. It says you're *different* than the rest of the pack.

Exemplify excellence and energy, and serve as an example to each and every network connection.

Foster friendships by freely sharing resources and ideas; have some fun while you're at it.

Give to others with a generous and happy heart; reject a "what's in it for me" mentality.

H-e-l-l-o: five letters of the alphabet that can forever change your life.

Help somebody succeed and as you do, you'll be more successful.

Investing time in the right relationship almost always produces a positive payoff.

Joy is the special surprise that comes with meeting a new person.

Kindness counts in developing and maintaining your network.

Lasting relationships are a by-product of listening, laughing, and learning together...maybe you know the Bill Withers' song, *Lean On Me*.

Listen more than you talk. You'll learn something and it could be the thing that changes the course of your life.

Little things count. And it's the little things that can make or break a relationship with someone in your network.



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Look for links and linkages. Who do you know that knows somebody that knows somebody that knows somebody?

Make *it* matter; make it count; make a difference.

Make time to meet new people.

Master the art of crafting relationships instead of perfecting the habit of gathering business cards.

Nurture your network; you will reap abundant rewards in so doing.

One, or offline, we still need each other to survive and thrive in today's competitive market.

Organization is crucial in maintaining your network. Tap into tools such as *JibberJobber* <<http://www.jibberjobber.com/login.php>> to support this endeavor.

Plant seeds of friendship. Tend them over time. Enjoy the harvest.

Preserve the confidentiality of your relationship with members of your network. Keep the private stuff private.

Purposefully strive to develop win-win relationships for the long run; not the short haul.

Quietly go out of your way to *be there*, especially when you know someone in your network is struggling or needs a helping hand...a few minutes of your time will mean so much.



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Reach out to others and your life will be richly rewarded.

Recognize the talents of others to build professional friendships based on mutual respect.

Referrals can be gleaned by asking your network for their recommendations.

Share what you know; seek out what you don't.

Stay in touch with a quick phone call, a brief e-mail, or a face-to-face chat.

Step up and serve others with integrity, ethics, and professionalism.

Surround yourself with people who *build you up* instead of *bring you down*.

Treat others the way you expect them to treat you.

Trust is the root of a long-lasting relationship.

Undergird your network with caring, character, and competence.

Value your relationships and work hard to keep them healthy.

Waste no time in offering support, help, and encouragement to members of your network.

Word-of-mouth can help build a winning network.

eXcel at inviting others to become a part of your network.



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You, your network. It all starts with *YOU*.

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Job Fair Survival 101

By Tanya Taylor, CHRP, CRS

From nervousness to excitement, frustration to anticipation, and desperation to hope... If you've ever attended a job fair, you will likely relate to the feelings of anxiety job seekers experience at these career events. If you are actively job hunting, you will also discover that job fairs are an excellent and fast way to build your career network. You will meet myriads of recruiters and employers who offer a wide range of employment opportunities. So, instead of stocking up on antacids to ease stomach tension, review the following keys to successfully surviving a job fair.

Top 10 Job Fair Tips

1. **Update or revamp your résumé.** Utilize the services of a certified professional résumé writer. This career investment is crucial and worthwhile in order for you to obtain professional, customized marketing documents that will ensure you stand out as the best from the rest. With a professionally written résumé, you are far more likely to quickly win interviews that can lead to job offers. Most certified résumé writers can easily be found on career association websites and in the Yellow Pages.
2. **Review and prioritize the list of exhibitors.** Make a list of who you will target at the job fair. Research the company websites in advance. Check out their



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career page, mission statements, and company overview to determine which exhibitors may be a good match for your career endeavors. This will allow you to visit those exhibits first and will help you to determine how many copies of your résumé you will need to bring with you. It is still important to visit the other exhibits but for these booths you can leave your personal career networking card instead of a résumé.

3. **Prepare, practice, and memorize your personal infomercial.** Create a 15-30 second description that you can use to introduce and sell your qualifications to every potential employer you meet.
4. **Bring a job fair kit.** At a minimum your job fair kit should contain: resumes (up to 20-30 copies), portfolio or folder, pen, notepad, and networking cards.
5. **Prepare a list of two to three questions to ask employers.** Write down questions that are company or job related. The employer representatives are often busy at job fairs. With line ups they can usually only spare a few minutes for job seekers. But also be prepared with rehearsed answers in case they show interest and ask you questions about your experience and expertise.
6. **Dress for success.** Ensure everything about you is fresh, clean, and business like. Wear business attire and dress the way you would if going to an interview: no jeans, t-shirts, or athletic gear. First impressions count.
7. **Arrive at the event early.** The early bird gets the worm. Speak to employer representatives while they are fresh and energetic which tends to be in the first few hours of a career fair. Arriving early gives you an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the event layout so you can relax as you tour the building without feeling rushed. You are also likely to get a decent parking spot and avoid traffic.



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8. **Ask the employer representative for their business card.** This will allow you to follow up after the event by e-mailing a personalized "Thank-You" letter to the recruiter within a week of the job fair. An email is preferred by most employer representatives. Only call if you've obtained their permission. Employers' are very busy in the hiring season and if they receive too many calls from various applicants they may become annoyed as they prefer to initiate calls.
9. **Be courteous and respect the employers' supply of samples and materials.** As a professional, always ask before taking what appears to be "give-aways" at exhibits.
10. **Smile, shake hands, and be confident.** Enjoy the career fair and the opportunity for career interaction. Gather information, practice your networking skills, and walk around with a smile on your face with the confidence that you will soon be among the "employed".

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Are you ready for your next big gig? Wendy Terwelp, President of Opportunity Knocks™ (www.knocks.com), partners with entrepreneurial executives and business owners in transition. In addition to personal branding and career marketing tools, her innovative Rock Your Network® program helps execs network effectively – without begging. To date nearly every person attending her live events has landed a new gig. In career management since 1989, Wendy also possesses a degree in Journalism along with 4 career management certifications. Email Wendy at wendyterwelp@knocks.com.

Networking 101 - Maximize Your Contact List

By Wendy Terwelp

Who is in your network? I think you'll be surprised, when you develop – and expand – your contact list, about who you actually do know -- and who they know. Recent surveys state that 61 to 85 percent of all jobs are found through networking. And with 80 percent of jobs not being advertised, it's important to build and maintain your contact list. With that in mind, let's see who you know:

1. Industry providers. Who buys from your company AND who does your company buy from? These contacts can lead to unadvertised openings with your company's clients or vendors.

Recently I received a call from one client who landed a terrific unadvertised position as a controller. She said, "I just started contacting my clients discretely. One of them passed my resume along to a company president on a Saturday. I got a call at 10 a.m. the same day! After four interviews, I was hired." Because she had such high recommendations from her own clients within her network, she also won a 17 percent raise, performance bonus after 60 days, and a clothing allowance.

2. Co-workers - past and present. Be sure you know who will and who won't keep your confidence.



3. Service providers. Who do you buy from? Think big. On your list, include people you see only once a year or infrequently: hairdressers, dentists, massage therapists, attorneys, homebuilders, physicians, etc.

This strategy proved extremely effective for one client. She used her teaching sound bite when talking with the contractor redoing her carpeting. He ran to his car, came back with a cell phone, and said, "Here. My daughter is the human resources director for that school district and she's on the line." My client landed an interview with her first choice school district for the following week.

4. Family members. List extended family members in addition to immediate family members. Yes, the third cousin twice removed may know someone you need to know.

5. Professional organizations and trade groups. All of them and their members.

6. Volunteer organizations (yours and your kids') -- including Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Church, Rotary, Lion's Club, etc. List them all and their members. You never know how talking with a parent while organizing the Girl Scouts' cookie drive can win an interview for an unadvertised position.

7. Personal sports teams and kids sports teams. Expand your idea of sports - bowling teams count here.

Bowling paid off for one client. She revamped her communication style to a focused, benefit-laden sound bite and used it during her bowling league event. Now her teammates knew what she did. And one teammate's son was able to help her land an interview with her first choice employer. She got the job.

8. Alumni - past, present, and future. Who doesn't want to help a fellow alumnus, sorority sister or fraternity brother?



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Another client found this strategy gave him inside contacts at his targeted companies. He networked his way in the door, and landed a position as product manager. He maintained these connections and has already been promoted to business director.

Now that you've made your list, "Who do you know who can help you get the job of your dreams?" Be specific with your request, share how your skills will benefit the contact OR the company, and tell your network how they can help you best.

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Paul Copcutt is the successful personal brand coach for professionals who are struggling with an action plan and the confidence to land the six figure job they deserve. His clients become "Square Pegs" who stand out above the competition by getting noticed for the right reasons to be hired for the jobs they've always wanted. A Certified Personal Brand Strategist and specialist for Higher Bracket.ca, Canada's only \$100k+ job board, also top global Career & Training contributor to the Knowledge Forum at Marketing Profs.com and an active member of the Career Professionals of Canada. Often quoted in The Globe & Mail he is an invited national speaker on the subject of personal branding and has appeared on Report on Business TV. Web site: www.personalbrandstrategist.com

What NOT to do When you Network

By Paul Copcutt

Over the past few years networking has been touted as the number one way to land your next job – but for many it's received more negative exposure and perceptions than positive – more often than not this is because people have been approaching it in the wrong way or doing the wrong things.

Here are five things you should avoid doing when you network and then the five biggest networking sins.

What to Avoid

1. **View the whole process as "What's In It For Me"** – it's a two way street and you should first be looking to help the other person. Show an interest in what they do and how you might be able to help them – ask that very question "How can I best help you?" Prove your value to them and then you can call on them to help you.
2. **Have no plan or way to measure.** If you have no idea what you want to get out of a networking interaction or meeting, how can you expect anyone is going to be able to help you? Set yourself some goals and expectations so



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- that you do not go back to a meeting that is not producing results for you or you miss an opportunity. Have two or three favourite opening questions that you can use to start up a conversation and then home in fairly quickly to establish how you might be able to help the person. Use open questions first of all to get information and then more closed questions to get to the specifics.
3. **Can't explain in less than 30 seconds what you do.** The elevator speech might be an over used expression, but in today's world where everyone is busy and used to making decisions based on sound bites its even more relevant. You must be able to clearly explain what you do, who your ideal target audience is and why you can make a difference to them, what added value can you provide. Then make sure you have well defined request if someone asks you how they can help. Ideally this should be actual companies that you are interested in exploring or at the very least some specifics around the types of company in a specific industry, location or vocation.
 4. **Relying on just one or two networks or play it safe.** Much as you should not rely on looking at just one job board or reading one newspaper the same applies to networks. In fact sometimes you are going to have better results by thinking out side of the normal approach that all your job seeking peers are doing. When companies are hiring, employees across all disciplines are aware of the vacancies, if you are in finance then go along to a marketing networking meeting – the marketing manager of ABC company is not going to be bombarded by all your competitors, chances are you will be the only finance person there and have more of their time and attention than if you were trying to talk to the CFO at a finance networking meeting.
 5. **Treat the event like a social.** Just because there may be drinks being served and a few nibblies does not mean it's a party. This is business and you need to be in the business of connecting, starting relationships and leaving



the right impression. Standing near the bar and talking to the same few people the whole night means you will come away disappointed and label the event as a waste of time. Having said that make sure you spend enough time with the people that you do meet to leave a good memorable impression so that when you follow up they remember you for the right reasons.

The Five Biggest Networking Sins

1. **Forgetting your business cards or pulling out the wrong one.** Have a set routine that you do before you step out of the door for a networking session – cards (always in the same pocket), pen, notepad (small pocket size one), plan. Always put others peoples cards in a different pocket.
2. **Asking for a job.** 99 times out of a 100 the person you are speaking to does not have a job and if they did what are the chances it's a fit for you. If you want to go to events to just ask for a job go to a job fair.
3. **Failing to follow up.** You did all the hard work, met the person, found something out about how you can help them, maybe even made a few notes on the back of their card. Then you forget to follow up – what does that say about your reliability?
4. **Being a wallflower or only networking virtually.** Networking is about interacting and building relationships, that cannot all be done via a computer, some people are still doing it 'the old fashioned way' and have never heard of online networks. When you are at the event don't get the label of being the one who blended in with the décor – you do not have to be life and soul of the event, or the social bore – but somewhere in between is where you need to be.



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5. **Stopping networking when you have found a job.** How many times do you hear about people having to rekindle their networks because they are looking for a new job? If you only call on your network when you need a job or a piece of business they will soon stop taking your calls or answering your emails. Be there for them when they need you– make a plan to stay in touch.

The saying that your network is a measure of your net worth is very true – but you are the one that can cause the value to rise or fall.

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Network When You Don't Need To!

By Louise Fletcher

This book has been filled with great advice – our experts have offered many different tips for developing a network and for utilizing that network once you need it to help you find a new job.

All that's left for me to say is this: The very worst time to start building your network is when you need it to help you find a new job. There's just too much pressure!

That's why, once you're settled into your next position, networking must become an ongoing career management strategy rather than a one-time job search activity. Too many people forget about their contacts once they secure a position. Then of course, 3 or 4 years later, they have to start all over again, making those dreaded phone calls.

The most successful networkers consciously and actively manage their network, staying in touch with key contacts and offering help or support even though they don't need anything in return. These professionals understand that when eventually they do need something, their contacts will be only too happy to return the favor.

Here are my 5 top tips for maintaining a great job search network even when you don't need one:



1. Become a resource for recruiters

If your job search put you in touch with recruiters, let them all know where you landed and offer your assistance with any of their future searches. First, it's polite to let them know you're off the market, and secondly, by offering to introduce them to others, you can build an ongoing relationship. (This strategy has the added advantage of letting you stay in touch with opportunities in your field.)

2. Keep notes on your contacts and stay in touch

While networking, you will meet a lot of people and you won't be able to remember all of them unless you keep notes. Some people use a database like Act, but you can also use Outlook or a simple address book. The key is to make notes that will help you stay in touch and offer future assistance. For example, you might note their personal or professional interests and then send them the occasional link to articles that they might find interesting.

3. Focus on others

Because you're not looking for a job, you can keep the focus on the needs and concerns of your network and not on you. Make sure that your communications are centered on offering help, information or support wherever possible.

4. Use online networking tools

Online networking sites such as LinkedIn allow you to stay in touch with your network easily and efficiently. Make the most of these tools when you're busy and don't have time to pay a lot of personal attention to your network.



5. Keep working on establishing a presence in your field

The preceding articles have included lots of great advice on increasing your visibility. You should keep working on these strategies when you're employed. Maintain your blog, keep attending trade association meetings, write more articles ... find as many ways as possible to keep your name out in front of people.

In Summary

By working on your network when you don't need anything, you can eliminate the pain of cold-calling and "forced" networking the next time you need to make a move.

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