

NETWORKING

Purpose of Networking

Networking is the number one method of finding jobs. Approximately 80% of positions are obtained through networking, and only about 5 - 14% through advertised vacancies.

Networking is simply building mutually beneficial relationships with people. The more people who know your qualifications and your career goals, the better chance you have of landing a position. The purpose of networking is to build ongoing relationships, to meet people with hiring power, to enlist others' help in your job search, and to gather important information and advice.

Networking is NOT asking for a job or focusing on job openings, and it is not a one-time event.

Why Networking Works

Employers would rather hire a known quantity over reviewing hundreds of strangers' resumes. People place importance on the recommendations of people they trust. So, if a friend has already introduced to the hiring manager a qualified, talented person when an opening arises, they will consider them for the position, whether or not it is advertised. Employers often already have a candidate in mind before the ad is placed.

In fact, half of all advertised openings are filled by people who never saw the ad!

Most job openings are not publically advertised. Of all the jobs that will be available next year, only 25% of them (at most) will be advertised. You hear about the "hidden" job market, or the other 75% of the jobs that aren't advertised through the people you know and the people they know.

It opens doors when you would otherwise not be considered. When you meet a hiring manager in person, your professional impression and personality can cause you to be "ruled in" even if your qualifications don't meet their requirements. When you apply to an ad, you are "ruled out" by the qualifications that you don't have on your resume.

The Goal of Networking

In general, you want to make as many contacts as possible aware of what type of opportunity you are seeking and what qualifications you have to offer. Types of contacts include A (Anybody), B (Bridge), and C (Close & hire). You have the largest number of A contacts, the smallest number of C contacts.

Start with your current circle of contacts, then, broaden your connections by getting introduced to the connections of your current contacts. Meet in person as many people as possible, making a positive impression. Eventually, one of those connections will recommend you for an opportunity.

Specifically, the goal of networking is to **meet with** (in person if possible, otherwise over the phone) **the hiring manager** (not HR but the person who would be your boss) **BEFORE there is ever an opening** (once there is an opening, it is usually too late).

How to Network

Step 1: Have a very clear job objective. It is impossible to establish many relationships within several different industries, in lots of different occupations, and in multiple locations. Your chances of finding a satisfying job are best when you start with a focused goal. This should include your ideal job title or function, industry, location, company size, and/or possible employers.

Step 2: Develop your brief advertisement. Write out the best, succinct summary of what you have to offer professionally. Consider which of your qualities and experiences make you the most marketable for this position. Start with a draft, then revise and polish it such that the phrases flow easily and conversationally, but powerfully sell your worth to a potential employer. Practice your final draft enough that you can say it eloquently by memory without sounding rehearsed. This is your **"Brief Advertisement,"** or **"30-second commercial."**

Your brief advertisement should include your education, relevant experience, key strengths or personality descriptors, and career goals.

Your brief advertisement is most often used as your verbal introduction to your networking contacts, but it may also be used in an email or letter introducing yourself.

Step 3: Make sure all of your marketing materials are perfected. Your resume and sample letters should be approved by the University Career Center. Remove any negative online social media. Your LinkedIn profile should be top-notch.

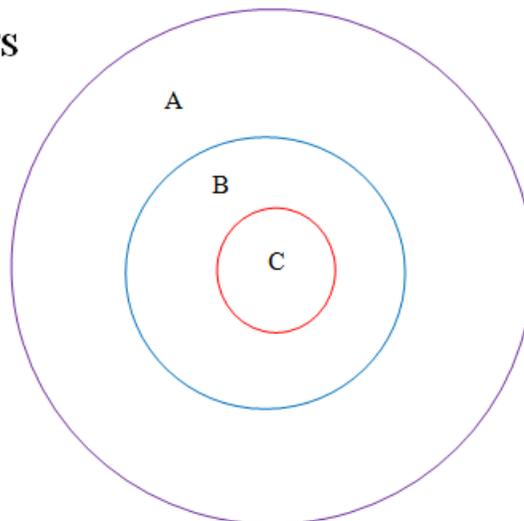
Step 4: Make a list of your contacts

Pat Winston

I am a senior at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, majoring in Psychology with a minor in Criminal Justice. My career goal is obtain a program management position with a nonprofit organization that serves underprivileged youth. My internship with One More Neighborhood as well as my Fundraising Chair position with my sorority has built my leadership, time management, and advocacy skills. My education has provided me with an in-depth understanding of the social and political ramifications of poverty and a passion for making a difference in this area.

TYPES OF CONTACTS

A = Anybody
B = Bridge
C = Close & hire



Begin with your “C” contacts. Brainstorm a list. All you need is 1 “C” contact because once you meet with him or her, you will ask for the names of 2 other people who you should contact. This process continues until your network has grown exponentially.

If you don’t have a “C” contact, begin brainstorming “A” and “B” contacts. Think of all the people you know who could be of help in connecting you with people in the company or occupation you are targeting. Think outside the box. Don’t forget: neighbors, previous coworkers, your family, your family’s friends, your doctor, dentist, hairdresser, alumni, student organization members, acquaintances from the church, gym, or any hobby, professional organizations, your friends, your friends’ families, etc. Tell everyone you meet what you are looking for and ask them for their suggestions of people you should contact.

Step 5: If your contact list isn’t stellar, identify “Cold Contacts.” Cold contacts are people you do not personally know or people to whom you have no personal introduction.

The University Career Center provides many opportunities for you to meet potential employers. Take advantage of these: career fairs, employer information sessions, employer resume critiques or mock interviews, and job shadowing. Some other main sources of identifying highly relevant or enthusiastic strangers to contact are alumni, LinkedIn or other internet networks, professional organizations, networking/job search groups, and volunteering.

Step 6: Begin making appointments with people. Develop a script that you could use verbally when making phone calls or that you could use as an approach letter or email. It includes who you are, who referred you (mutual contact), why you are calling, reassurance that you are not asking for a job, and asking for a meeting.

“Hello. My name is _____. I got your name from _____, who said that you would be a great person for me to contact to learn more about the field of _____. My career goal is to obtain a position in _____. I would like the opportunity to meet with you to get:

your advice on how to make myself most marketable in this field.
or
your perspective on the this field in (location) since I am new to this region.
or
your advice on how best to conduct a job search in this field.
or
some more information about your company in particular.

I wonder if I could schedule a brief appointment with you to get any advice, ideas, leads, and referrals that you might be able to share with me.”

Remember that you want to ask for information, their insight into this field, or their advice for your job search, not ask them for a job. Some tips:

- Do not appear to be looking for an opening from **them**. They will spend lots of time convincing you that there is no opening and there’s no need to meet. Also, you want them to consider openings they hear of **outside** of their organization as well.
- Try to accommodate their schedule. If they say they are busy, suggest speaking over coffee or lunch. Offer to come to them.
- Try to meet in person if at all possible; it makes a more memorable impression. If they start giving you advice, you might try saying something like, “This is exactly the type of information I was seeking. I find that I learn more when I actually get to sit down with someone in person. Could we schedule a time that I could come there?”
- Try to find a way to be of help to them as well. Remember that you may have some valuable information or a contact to share with them.

Step 7: The Networking Meeting. This is your opportunity to make a new acquaintance, gather some helpful information, and demonstrate just how capable and personable you are.

- Dress and behave professionally.
- Prepare good questions in advance.

- It is perfectly fine for you to take notes during the meeting.
- Get their business card.
- THE CARDINAL RULE OF NETWORKING: ALWAYS LEAVE WITH THE NAMES OF 2 OTHER POSSIBLE CONTACTS.

Step 8: Follow Up. Keep detailed notes in whatever job search system you might have, including who this contact recommended to you. Mail a handwritten thank you letter. In that letter, thank them for their time and courtesy, reference some things you discussed in your conversation, and add any brief information that you did not get to mention in the interaction, such as your career goals, particulars about your education, your interest in that industry or occupation, or what you learned from them.

Step 9: Keep in touch. The key to building a large and meaningful network is fostering an ongoing relationship and building new connections from your existing network's contacts. Approximately once every month or two, remind them of you through a brief contact. You can do this by phone, email, or US mail, varying your method of communication. Here are some ways to reach out:

- Ask more questions.
- Send them copies of anything you read that may be interesting to them, with a personal note attached.
- Give them updates on your career development.
- Tell them what you are interested in and ask them who they would suggest you speak to (if you haven't already done so).

Today's Date

Dear Ms. Bryant,

It was a pleasure to meet you today at the UNC Charlotte Career Expo. I learned a lot about Carroll County Public Schools and the characteristics you look for in the teachers you hire. Our conversation was very informative.

I enjoyed talking about our mutual experiences in rural public schools. It sure has fueled my desire to reach children with little access to resources!

As I finish my last year of college, I would like to keep in touch with you periodically if you don't mind. Your insight and perspective are very valuable to me as I continue to define my career goals.

Best wishes for a successful school year.

Sincerely,

Jordan Miller

- Inform them when you met with the person they recommended, what helpful information you got from that person, and thank them again.
- Provide them with some helpful information or a contact that might be useful to them, given your conversation. Networking is about helping each other. Find ways to give value to people you meet.
- When you have established enough of a connection that it seems appropriate, you might invite them to connect on LinkedIn.
- Remember: This contact may be in a position to hire you sometime or may know other hiring managers to which they can refer you. This is the number one way of landing a position.

Sample Thank You Letter (Immediately):

Sample Follow-Up Email (After 4 weeks):

Date: Wed, Dec. 14, 2015 at 3:00 PM
Subject: Follow Up
To: sbryant24@carroll.edu

Ms. Bryant,

I hope the academic year is going well for you. The newspaper has been covering the dramatic increase in student enrollment in your district, so I imagine that is keeping you busy with new challenges!

I just wanted to reach out to you again after our meeting at the UNC Charlotte Career Expo. Since then I have been exploring different aspects of a career in education in addition to teaching. I am particularly interested in learning more about administrative and counseling positions that help at-risk students within the district. I was wondering if you had any contacts you would recommend that I talk to in order to gather more information. Any names you could give me would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Best Wishes,

Jordan Miller

Staying Motivated

People can become discouraged and lose confidence during a job search, especially if they are using a job search method that is unlikely to succeed (applying for advertised openings on the internet). Try to spend at least 80% of your job search time networking. Anything that takes you AWAY from meeting people is working against your goal.

Make your goal be meeting as many relevant people as possible. You can tell you are making progress if:

- The number of people you meet with weekly increases.
- The types of people you meet with are becoming increasingly relevant to your ideal job.
- You are getting excellent advices about making yourself more marketable.