



# **NETWORKING**

- **Networking 101**
- **Basic Networking Strategies**
- **Your Networking Campaign**
- **Networking List**
- **Contacting Your Network**

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### What is networking?

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Networking means developing a broad list of contacts – people you have met through various social and business functions – and using them to your advantage when you look for a job. People in your network may be able to give you job leads, offer you advice and information about a particular company or industry, and introduce you to others so that you can expand your network.

### Why do I need to network?

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About 9 in 10 job openings are never advertised. In essence, most new jobs are tucked away in what is defined as the **hidden job market** – a term used to describe unadvertised employment opportunities. Networking is a highly effective way to discover these jobs!

### Why is networking so important to my job search?

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Networking is important for a variety of reasons.

1. It can provide crucial job leads.
2. It is a preferred way for employers to recruit.
3. It can give you a competitive advantage.

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*Networking will enable you to find the jobs before they are advertised!*

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Many companies report that candidates referred by staff members fill 40 to 50 percent of job vacancies. Moreover, companies view such candidates more favourably than those brought in through other methods, because they already know something about the organization and have a personal connection with it.

Also, consider that effective networking results in you hearing about new jobs before they are advertised. This can allow you to apply before dozens or maybe 100s of hopeful applicants. This proactive approach will give you a competitive edge over others that are more reactive.

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<sup>1</sup> This information was taken from MSN Careers website ([www.msn.careerbuilder.com](http://www.msn.careerbuilder.com)) accessed August 2008. Some of the information has been slightly altered to improve readability.

## Basic Networking Strategies

Networking strategies range from basic to sophisticated. Here are some general networking ideas:

- ☑ **Initiate contacts** for the sole purpose of networking.
- ☑ **Develop a networking list.** Contact each person on the list. Add names of people you meet or are referred to by your contacts.
- ☑ **Set networking goals.** Write down specific goals for how many networking contacts you plan to make each week. Check your progress regularly.
- ☑ **Set goals for each meeting.** Don't just get together and see where it leads; meet with a purpose. Express this goal when you arrange the meeting.
- ☑ **Come to the meeting prepared.** Know what questions you want to ask. Take notes.
- ☑ **Always ask if the person knows anyone** else you should meet. Ask if you can use her/his name when contacting the person.
- ☑ **Maintain networking files.** Keep a record of the outcomes of each contact and important information about the person.
- ☑ **Whenever possible, meet in person.**
- ☑ **Let the person know you value** their information and professional opinion.
- ☑ **Plan your follow-up.** At the time you meet with someone, plan when you will contact this person again. Write it down on a follow-up calendar.
- ☑ **Remember to share information with your contacts.** They will value your leads and industry information and be more inclined to share with you when you are reciprocating.

## Your Networking Campaign<sup>2</sup>

There are four basic categories of networking contacts. Each has its own unique value and a good networking campaign will draw from each category.

### 1. People you know well: friends, family, neighbours and co-workers

These are the people who are close to you. They have the most interest in your success, are excellent networking contacts, and are the people with whom you are most comfortable. This is a good place to begin your networking campaign. It is important to set clear goals and acknowledge their value and to say “thank you”. This group is often the least utilized.

### 2. People you see occasionally: acquaintances, business contacts

More than 25% of the people who find jobs through networking receive a referral from someone they see once a year or less! These are people with whom you may be less comfortable, but they also have the greatest potential. Ask this group for ideas and referrals. When making contact you may need to reintroduce yourself. State your purpose, acknowledge their value, and request a meeting. It is a good idea to set reasonable time limits for the meeting. Let them know you only want 30 minutes of their time. Be sure you stick to your time limit. Come well prepared; be professional and organized in your discussion.

### 3. Referrals from your other networking contacts

Stretch your network by meeting new people who are the friends, associates and acquaintances of your networking contacts. At every meeting you should ask if the person knows of anyone else with whom you should talk. Sometimes these will be people with additional information, but they may also be potential employers. When approaching a referral contact, you should introduce yourself with a lead statement that will get their attention. It is very useful to use the name of the person who referred you. State your purpose and request a meeting. You should also limit the time for the meeting. Be well prepared and professional.

### 4. Cold calling people you do not know and to whom you have not been referred

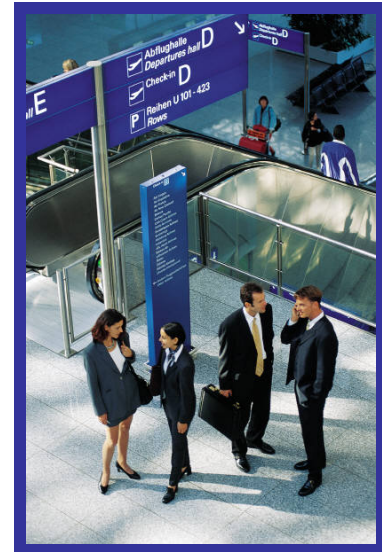
Through your employment research and networking you may discover the names of people with whom you would like to speak with. This type of contact takes another level of confidence, but the potential is great. Take the initiative and you will find that these contacts will pay off.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: MSN Careers Website ([www.msncareerbuilder.com](http://www.msncareerbuilder.com)) accessed August 2008. This information has been altered to improve readability.

## Networking List

- Employment Agencies
- Friends – look at your Christmas/Holiday card list
- Neighbours – current and past
- Social acquaintances – run club, softball team, poker buddies
- Health club members
- Speakers at meetings you have attended
- Classmates – from any level of schooling
- Chamber of Commerce Mixers
- Business Club executives – Rotary, Jaycees, etc.
- People you meet at conventions
- Teachers – your teachers, professors, your children's teachers
- Doctor, Dentist, Optician
- Professional Associations
- Lawyer, Accountant, Real Estate Agent
- Veterinarian
- Manager of the local branch of your bank
- Current and former co-workers and other business acquaintances
- Relatives – those in or out of town
- Politicians
- Religious leaders or members of your fellowship
- Your parent's friends
- People you meet on airplanes, riding the bus (you never know!)



## Contacting Your Network<sup>3</sup>

### By Telephone

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When calling to schedule an appointment, three points should be covered:

- Offer a personal introduction
- Identify your purpose for seeking an appointment
- Arrange a mutually convenient time

#### Tips:

- Write an outline or script of what you are going to say on the phone. This will decrease your anxiety and ensure that you will obtain all the necessary information. Additionally, you will be perceived as organized and professional.
- If you have problems getting “past the secretary”, call before 9:00 am or after 5:00 pm. The individual you are trying to reach may be answering his/her own telephone.
- If you are calling as a result of a referral, state that person’s name early in the conversation.
- Indicate how much time you will need (example: 5 minutes, 15 minutes, etc.) from the person and make sure you adhere to this timetable.

### By Letter

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As with phoning for an interview, a letter requesting an appointment should include:

- Personal introduction
- Purpose for seeking an appointment

#### Tips:

- Type all letters in business format and double-check for proper grammar and spelling.
- Always indicate in the concluding paragraph that you will be calling on a specific date (usually one week after you mail the letter) to arrange for a convenient appointment time. (Make sure you follow this timetable.)
- Maintain an organized file of all letters.

Networking is a proven way to locate good employment opportunities. Effective networking is a must in a solid work search strategy! For more information related to this topic, please see the “**Telephone Scripts**” and “**Informational Interviews**” handouts available in the resource library.

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<sup>3</sup> This information was taken from JOBTRAK: Job Search Tips website ([www2.jobtrak.com/help\\_manuals/jobmanual](http://www2.jobtrak.com/help_manuals/jobmanual)) accessed August 2008. Some of the information has been slightly altered to improve readability.