

Networking SECRETS

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I. Advice for everyone

These networking tips are applicable to everyone. You should read them if you would like to learn networking strategies that can help you improve your job search and develop your career.

- Around 80% of all jobs are obtained through networking. Networking is the #1 most important thing you can do to land a job. When a company has an open position, the hiring manager typically looks for someone within the company to fill the role first. Next, he or she will ask employees for referrals and search through his or her own network of contacts. The last step the hiring manager takes is posting the position online or on a job board. Understanding this process helps you think like a hiring manager by targeting your network of contacts first and online job sites last.
 - There are many hidden jobs that are never even posted online! Networking can not only help you secure a job, but also help you find an open opportunity as well.
 - Always carry personal business cards with you.
 - Have an elevator pitch prepared for networking events and any occasion where you need to make a professional introduction. An elevator pitch is a brief (around 30 seconds to a minute) statement of who you are (ie. your degree, most recent job), the type of opportunity you are looking for (ie. a managerial position, international business experience), your biggest achievements (ie. big projects you have accomplished, events you ran), and your skills (ie. fluency in a language, HTML knowledge).
 - Networking should occur whether or not you are employed. You never know when you will need help with what. Maintain your network by asking contacts how they are through social networking, sending birthday and holiday greetings, forwarding an article that might interest them, and inviting them to events.
 - Successful networkers are also active listeners, as networking is a two-way exchange, not a one-way channel. Remember that others are also looking to network and will often be more willing to help you if they think you would also be willing to help them in the future. To be an active listener, display attentive body language and ask questions.
 - When networking, try to establish a connection as soon as possible. Discovering a common interest helps strengthen the bond between you and someone else, making both of you more interested in getting to know each other.
- Elements of a good business card:

 - ✓ Your name
 - ✓ Traditional contact information
 - ✓ Social networking accounts
 - ✓ Your website(s)
 - ✓ A recent photo of you
 - ✓ Relevant logo(s)
 - ✓ Information on both sides
 - ✓ A fresh color scheme/design
 - ✓ White space for writing things down

- Use social networking to your advantage! Keep your Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, etc. accounts professional. Remain in contact with not just your friends, but people you encounter at meetings, workshops, and work.
- Your college provides numerous networking opportunities, so make the most of them. Join alumni associations, go to reunions, attend lecture series, and participate in networking events. Networking with fellow alumni can often be more fruitful than networking with strangers because of the shared college experience.
- Join trade associations and other professional organizations. These often run conferences and other events where you can meet others in your field.
- It helps to be an active member of the organizations you are in. Volunteer at events or lend a hand during fundraisers. You will probably make stronger connections with others similar to you. You will also be more visible to others in the organization and people will be more likely to want to get to know you.
- Don't forget vertical networking – networking with people who may not be your peers within a company structure. You might meet your future boss, customer, or employee this way.
- Arrive early to networking events. It's easier to make connections when there are fewer people in the room. It is far more daunting to network when you arrive at an event and everyone already seems to be involved in a conversation.
- Always have a couple of conversation starters ready.
- Know what you want and how others can help you. For instance, are you looking for a new job? A workshop where you can hone your skills? A new customer?
- Similarly, know what sort of help you can offer to others, whether it is advice on an industry or a referral to your company's hiring manager.
- Remember that networking is about the quality, and not quantity, of connections. Try to have meaningful conversations and don't appear to be in a rush to meet other people. Your goal is to meet people who could help you in the future, so give them a reason for doing so.
- Always make eye contact with the person you are talking to and don't let your eyes wander to other places.
- If you are trying to promote a service, product, event, etc, ask the other person if they are interested in learning more before telling them about it and trying to persuade them to use it.
- After each networking event, jot down the people you met, where they work, and a detail or two from your conversation. This will make it easier for you to talk to them in the future. Keeping track of this information helps you make efficient use of your contacts.
- Remember to help out others in your network of contacts with enthusiasm. Appearing eager and resourceful will earn you respect. Respond to any referrals you receive quickly and answer questions right away. If you know of any information that may help someone, let him or her know.
- If your company or organization is hiring, and the hiring manager is asking employees for referrals, sift through your network of contacts and see if anyone is looking for a job and is a good fit. Reach out to them and let them know. When contacting others, always remember to



Make yourself memorable. There are many ways to do this; you can, for instance, tell anecdotes or wear a bright color.

be inviting. Do this by saying things like “Let me know if you have any questions” or “Please call me if you would like to chat about this.”

- Try networking with the goal of helping others. This will make you a more approachable person others wish to talk to. You will probably improve the quality of your contacts as well.
- Follow up! After meeting someone, send a quick email letting them know you enjoyed getting to know him or her. If you felt like there was a strong connection, don’t hesitate to ask the other person to grab a cup of coffee or meet at a later date to chat.

II. Advice for beginners

Do you think you lack experience networking? Do you rarely attend networking events? If you feel you are a beginner at networking, these tips will help you realize that you have been, in fact, practicing networking all your life, and teach you how to become an active networker.

- You might have more contacts than you know! Past colleagues, former classmates, professors, and acquaintances all count. To add a professional element to your relationships with people you are friendly with, you can start by looking for common professional interests and meeting to talk about them.
- Although you are probably in a hurry to expand your network of contacts, remember that it is far more important to get a few meaningful contacts that you remember (and will remember you) than many meaningless contacts.
- Get a LinkedIn if you haven’t already and professionalize your social networking accounts.
- Practice by attending networking events!
- Be prepared to answer the question, “What do you do.” This may include defining your current position (or the position you are looking for) and creating an elevator pitch.
- Going to a networking event for the first time is daunting and requires extra preparation. Research the event ahead of time and try to find out who will be going. Try to research these people as well. Prepare how you will introduce yourself as well as questions for others. Make a list of what you want to achieve at this event.
- Calm your nerves by remembering that you have networked before and probably still do daily. You have reached out to your classmates at school and kept in touch with family members. These experiences all provide you a basic set of skills for professional networking. Try not to turn networking events into a huge deal. Instead, relax and think of it simply as a way to meet new people and get to know them.
- Learn from your mistakes.



Keep a notebook or spreadsheet of contacts. Organize your information in a way that is useful for you. For instance, you can organize contacts by industry, company, or where you met them.

III. Advice for recent graduates

Recent graduates have many advantages, as well as some possible disadvantages, when it comes to networking. These tips will show you how to hone your networking skills as you transition from a student to a professional.

You may often add contacts as Facebook friends.

Remember that they will have access to your profile and pictures, so keep your image professional and play around with your privacy settings if necessary.

- Utilize all of your college’s resources. Visit the Career Center to find out about networking events with fellow classmates and other alumni. Join alumni clubs and associations in your area. Participate in social events. For beginners, networking with others from your school is often easier than networking with people you have weaker connections with.
- Your Career Center might also have advice and workshops that can help you hone your networking skills. Be sure to check these out as well.
- Keep in touch with the people you meet in your internships. This includes your supervisor, co-workers, as well as other interns. Chances are they share some of your interests.
- Keep in touch with professors you worked with, as well as teaching assistants and counselors who know you knew well. They could be a great source of opportunities and mentorship.
- Practice your conversation etiquette. Networking often involves more formal communication skills than those you use when simply hanging out with friends. Practice giving a firm handshake, making introductions, and asking others how they are doing even if you don’t know them. Try cutting “um” and “like” from your vocabulary. Display confident body language.
- Know how to write a professional email. Using “Dear ____” as an opening is usually a safe choice. Research the person you are writing to and know the proper prefix to use, especially if the other person has a Ph.D (in which case, it’s best to use “Dr.” or “Professor”). Cut all slang and Internet language.
- Learn proper telephone and voicemail etiquette. Remember to always say your name first and, if you’re leaving a voicemail, include your contact information as well. Don’t forget to thank the other person for his or her time. When setting up your own voicemail, keep it professional by including your number and cutting any background noise.
- You may be desperately seeking a job, but so are millions of other recent graduates. Stand out by being an active listener and eagerly helping others. Avoid asking for a job outright, especially if you have not taken the time to get to know the company or position. In the most ideal scenario, your contacts will let you know about opportunities without you having to ask.
- Networking events are not just places to look for employment – they are places to find advice as well. Even if the person you are speaking to works in a completely unrelated sector, you might still get good insight and job search tips from them, especially if they have many years of work experience.

IV. Advice for shy people

Shy people sometimes have difficulty networking or a mentality that prevents them from being an active networker. These tips will help you reposition your mindset and teach you strategies so you can master this critical skill.

If you prefer talking in small groups as opposed to large circles, arrive early to networking events. Fewer people will be there, so you'll be less intimidated.

- It's okay to be shy, as long as it doesn't prevent you from networking! You can be reserved and humble without being disengaged or aloof. Sometimes, shy people assume they won't be successful at networking, or that others won't want to network with them, but this is not the case. Understand that being introverted and less talkative doesn't mean you're unapproachable or less friendly. Don't try to become a loud, extroverted personality if that makes you feel uncomfortable.

- Network with people who share your interests. To do this, attend conferences or events

that cater to a specific industry or group of people. When conversing with others, begin by talking about something both of you are interested in.

- Try to not speak to one person for an entire event. This limits your ability to practice your networking skills and prevents you from meeting others. If you think your conversation is going well, try asking the other person if he or she knows anyone else at the event and could introduce you to that person.
- If you have great listening skills, take advantage of them! Be an active listener and seem genuinely interested in getting to know the other person. You don't have to talk about yourself in order for others to form a good opinion of you.
- Find your best networking medium. If you're a better networker online, make use of social media. If you're more personable on the phone, call your contacts to keep them up-to-date.
- At events, look for people who are standing by themselves. They may be shy as well and are probably eager to have someone to talk to. It will be easier to approach them than a large group of people.

V. Advice for busy people

Don't think you have the time to network? Think again. These tips help you use the time you do have to network efficiently.

- Remember that most jobs are found through networking, so networking the most important and efficient you can do to find a job. If you are busy, make networking a priority over

responding to job ads or sending unsolicited resumes, as networking is more likely to yield results.

- Know who your most valuable contacts are. These are contacts who not only seem genuinely interested in what you do, but also often refer you to others as well. They can help you expand your network, so if you're busy, remember to at least devote time to these people.
- Be more targeted in the events you attend and the people you talk to. For instance, if you know you only have two hours to spend at a networking event, make a list of what you would like to achieve and who you would like to meet.
- It often doesn't take a lot of time to be a useful contact for others. For instance, introducing someone to another contact of yours may only take a few minutes. Other simple but meaningful ways to help a contact include forwarding an article that you know he or she will find interesting and offering a couple words of advice.
- If you are busy because of work, remember that it is very important to keep networking when you have a job. You never know what useful information your contacts can pass along. Having an active network also ensures people will be there to help you when you do need the help.
- If you have a social networking account, keep it up-to-date. Having an account that hasn't been updated in months looks unprofessional, especially if people are trying to research you and that is the first impression they receive. If you don't have the time to keep your account up-to-date, delete it.
- Even though you may be in a rush at events, don't seem like you are in a hurry to end a conversation, as this is rude and could negate any connections that were made. Don't look around the room or glance at your watch. Wait for the opportune moment to excuse yourself – for instance, when there is a lull in the conversation, or if you see somebody else you know whom you'd like to speak to. Always excuse yourself politely and exchange contact information with the other person before you leave.



Though you may feel “out of the loop,” stay up-to-date with industry news. This makes you a more engaging person to talk to during networking events and helps you develop a job search strategy for your industry.



II. Advice for unemployed people

Being unemployed poses some challenges for networkers. At the same time, networking is the best way to find employment. Here are some networking tips that can help you find a job.

- Try to remain positive. When networking with others, don't complain about your unemployment or the job market. This will only make you seem like a burden to others.
- While remaining positive, it's okay to let people in your network know that you are unemployed and are seeking a job. Be sure to give them a sense of what sort of opportunity

you are looking for. The people who may be of most help to you are those you have the strongest connection with and those whom you have helped in the past (and have probably displayed an interest in returning the favor).

- Remember that even though you are unemployed, you can still have valuable information to offer others. For instance, you may have been recently laid off, but years of experience in an industry may allow you to give insightful advice or make an important referral.
- Similarly, don't avoid networking with unemployed people simply because they won't be able to hire you. They too can be a valuable resource, just as you, though unemployed, can be valuable to your contacts.
- If you're not able to find a job, take up volunteering or join an organization. This can help you network with and get to know people who share your interests.
- Although you might be desperate for a job, remember that it is unlikely that you will find one if you just ask for it. You need to give your contacts a reason for helping you, so be sure to seem interested in what they do, forward valuable information to them, and let them know that you are willing to help them too.
- Even though searching for a job takes a lot of time, make sure to continue networking. Sending out resumes and responding to job ads may seem less time-consuming, especially if all you have to do is attach your information to an email and click a button, but these methods are also less effective than networking.