

Job Search Strategies

Networking

Networking is the most effective way to get a job. Simply put, networking means developing relationships with people. Experts estimate that 85% of jobs are acquired through networking. The purpose is to meet people who can give you information, contacts, and, possibly, leads on employment opportunities in your field of interest.

Networking expands your professional opportunities. If a prospective employer already feels comfortable with you, he/she might be flexible regarding hiring qualifications or willing to give you extra training.

How do you network?

Begin by discussing your professional interests with as many people as possible, whether or not they work in your field. Though not everyone will be able to help you, they may know someone who can.

Effective networking requires you to be focused on your goals. Do not indiscriminately distribute your resume or business card to everyone you meet. Rather, design a networking strategy that will lead you to your ultimate objective.

Alumni contacts and associations are especially valuable. Join organizations or associations specific to your profession, and attend as many meetings as possible. Volunteer for a committee, so people will get to know you. Professional organizations usually have either formal or informal methods of communicating job openings.

How To Network

Your network of professional contacts is a vital resource for helping you achieve your career goals. Susan Linn, an Orange County networking consultant, offers the following suggestions to maximize every networking opportunity.

- **Construct a "reality check".** First, look back on your own career path. How did you get the jobs that make up your professional history? Chances are connections played a large part.
- **Stretch beyond your comfort level.** Attend a conference or seminar, go to a networking group meeting, try a Chamber of Commerce mixer, or get involved in an allied or new professional association. Once you are there take the initiative to introduce yourself to people and strike up a conversation. Other people are there to network too, and will probably feel just as uncomfortable as you. Usually they will welcome your initiating a conversation.
- **Approach every conversation as a networking opportunity.** There is a saying that each of us is only two people away from anyone we would want to meet. Whether or not that is true, everyone does know someone else--a spouse, a neighbor, a relative or a friend, who might be looking for someone to fill a position or who might know someone who is.

- **Identify the most appropriate networking sources for you.** Professional associations that bring together people in your career or industry are an excellent source for contacts. Attend trade shows or job fairs in your area of search. These shows have exhibitor arenas full of potential contacts who may
- **Get rid of your job stereotypes.** "They only hire MBA's" or "you need manufacturing experience" are examples of preconceived notions we may have about certain positions. Try to overcome these preconceptions and pursue the organizations which you feel are a fit for you.

Informational Interviewing

The informational interview is a logical extension of your networking successes. Research the organizations in which individuals you have met through work, and select those you believe to be a good match for your skills, experience and future goals. Call these people, remind them of your meeting and request informational interviewing sessions. As indicated earlier, make clear that you are looking for information only; not a job. The fact that a job is your ultimate goal is self-evident.

It is amazing how much inside information and relationship building can be secured from this kind of networking. If you impress an individual during the informational interview and you maintain subsequent contact, you have successfully expanded your network. Additionally, even when you have not asked for a job, it is likely that if a job is available or upcoming, you will have unearthed it and put yourself in an excellent position to pursue it.

Examples of the types of questions you might want to ask.

Personal questions:

- How long have you worked in this job?
- What are your major responsibilities?
- How is your performance evaluated?
- What is your supervisor's job title?
- What do you enjoy most in this job?
- What are the major frustrations of this job?
- What job in this organization would you prefer to your own?
- What is the next step for you in your career progression in this company?
- What advice would you give to someone who wanted to do a job like yours?
- Do you know anyone else who would be able and willing to talk to me about this type of work?

Industry questions:

- What are the current trends in this industry?
- What are the current employment prospects in this industry?
- What are the long term trends in this industry?
- What special skills are required for success in this industry?
- Where would someone with my background start in this industry?

Self-Presentation on the Telephone

- Always identify yourself immediately.
- Have a positive attitude; if you think you will be successful, you probably will.
- Smile. The pleasant look on your face will translate into a pleasant demeanor on the phone.
- Use your most professional, affirmative, enthusiastic, and articulate manner.
- Keep your mouth about an inch from the mouthpiece, to avoid sounding faint or muffled. Do not eat, smoke, or chew gum while on the phone.
- Try to match the interviewer's voice tone, pitch, and delivery speed. Experiment with this through role-playing.
- Tape record yourself and listen to your voice. Do you sound upbeat, commanding and sure of yourself?
- Ask a friend or spouse to provide feedback on phone mannerisms, repeated phrases (such as ending sentences with "you know?" or "and that", starting sentences with "like" or "I mean", etc.), or nervous laughs.
- Some people find that they are more confident on the phone when they dress professionally as though the meeting were held in person. Experiment to see if this works for you.

Effective Networking Behaviors

- Carry copies of your resume and/or business cards with you at all times. Your card is your silent salesperson, reminding people of you after you are gone.
- Listen.
- Talk. Networking is interactive behavior.
- Volunteer your expertise to the group.
- Aim to be memorable. Think of a few conversation starters or comments that might help you to establish rapport.

Networking Resources

Professional Associations

Many directories of associations are grouped by trade, industry or service. Resources listing associations and other networking groups include:

- [Consultants and Consulting Organizations Directory](#)
- [Directory of Orange County Networking Associations](#)
- [Encyclopedia of Associations](#)
- [How to Get a Job in Southern California](#) (Camden and Palmer)
- [International Organizations](#)
- * [Minority Organizations: A National Directory](#)
- [State and Regional Associations of the United States](#) ("SRA")

(* indicates directories available at The career resource library at the Office of Career Services and Corporate Relations.)

Direct Contact

Another place to get information for networking is to directly contact organizations you find interesting. The following directories list information on companies or industries you might want to contact:

- Business and Industrial Directory (Orange and LA Counties)
- Directory of American Firms Operating in Foreign Countries
- Directory of Directories
- Directory of Leading Private Companies
- Dun and Bradstreet Business Library
- Foreign Firms Doing Business in the U.S.
- Peterson's Business and Management Jobs
- Social Service Resource Guide
- *Southern California Business Directory
- Standard and Poor's Register

(*This directory is available at the career resource library at the Office of Career Services and Corporate Relations.)

Additional Resources

MBAjobs-	www.MBAjobs.net
Job Web	www.jobweb.org
Bloomberg	www.bloomberg.com
Overseas Jobs	www.overseasjobs.co.uk
Hotjobs	www.hotjobs.com
Monster Board	www.monster.com
Honnold Library	http://voxlibris.claremont.edu/default1.html