

Networking Works!

Learning networking skills in today's workplace is a must. Unfortunately, many students do not have a good understanding of when or how to network. Here is some basic information to get started.

Misconceptions about Networking

- ◆ A superficial connection or a brief encounter
- ◆ Bothering, pestering, or using people
- ◆ A contest to see who can collect the most contacts
- ◆ A one-sided, one-shot deal

What exactly is networking?

Networking is based on relationships that are cultivated and nurtured so that a mutual exchange of information, advice and support is given and received.

15 Reasons to Network

- ◆ Choose career direction
- ◆ Generate career options
- ◆ Obtain information about careers
- ◆ Make career decisions
- ◆ Find opportunities for trying out career options
- ◆ Uncover leads to obtain a job
- ◆ For help planning your job search strategy
- ◆ Find people to act as agents for you
- ◆ For guidance as you evaluate job offers
- ◆ For emotional support
- ◆ To help you manage your career
- ◆ Increase productivity and success on the job
- ◆ Make decisions about going into business for yourself
- ◆ Develop and grow a business, consulting practice, or other self-employment enterprise.

Creating a Networking Strategy

Having a well-crafted networking strategy is essential for reaching your goals.

A networking strategy consists of...

- ◆ Establishing well-defined goals
- ◆ Setting objectives to reach those goals
- ◆ Creating a plan to meet those objectives

Goals should...

- ◆ Reflect your own values and wishes, not those of other people or society at large
- ◆ Be realistic and attainable, not fantasies

Objectives should be...

- ◆ Measurable
- ◆ Realistic
- ◆ Logical means to a desired end, in other words, the goal

A plan should...

- ◆ Be systematic
- ◆ Balance quantity and quality
- ◆ Fit your personal style
- ◆ Fit your goals
- ◆ Be based on thorough preparation.

Expand your networking circle

Personal contacts:

Family, friends, neighbors and colleges; acquaintances from social clubs/organizations, community groups, sports teams, and religious organizations

Work contacts:

Coworkers, supervisors, and networking groups

Education contacts:

Alumni (high school, college, graduate school), classmates, instructors, guest speakers, mentors, advisors and coaches

Multimedia contacts:

Internet newsgroups/listservs/e-mail; newspapers and magazines; books; radio and television.

Where can you network?

One-on-one Meetings:

Engage in conversations through email, informal contacts, and formal appointments

Conferences and Conventions:

Attend local, regional, and/or national events

Career or Job Fairs:

Discover job openings, business opportunities, and meet new people

Academic/Training Settings:

Develop relationships with classmates, instructors and guest speakers through classes, short-term seminars, lectures, and workshops

The Internet:

Participate in one-to-one meetings, chat rooms, newsgroups, and seminars in web-site auditoriums

Social/Recreational/Community Settings:

Establish relationships with individuals at health clubs, social clubs, special interest groups, parties, and neighborhood events

Remember...

The Serendipity Factor

In addition to carefully orchestrated networking strategy, don't overlook the power of the Serendipity Factor. Impromptu encounters with people can become rewarding networking opportunities in ways you could never have anticipated.

A word of caution...

Networking is not something you can decide to start today and finish tomorrow. It is a process that you should begin slowly. Trying to begin every aspect of networking immediately will project the image that you are just a "schmoozer."

Additional Resources

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