



Career Services

The world awaits...

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Networking Basics

The vast majority of job openings, some say up to 75%, are never advertised. Instead, these positions are filled by people who hear about the job informally. Therefore, as a job seeker, the more opportunities you have to network, the better your chance of hearing about these unadvertised job openings.

Networking also helps you to receive referrals and gain contacts to hiring managers. This in turn leads to improved odds that your resume and application will be reviewed and seriously considered for open positions.

What is Networking?

Plain and simple, networking is talking with people about their job, future openings, the company they are employed by, as well as discussing how your background and skills might fit these settings. Networking can occur with individuals that work in a wide variety of positions, organizations and settings. Networking with others can provide insight on hiring practices, working environments and job titles which in turn will help you make good career choices.

How?

Networking can happen in casual environments such as family gatherings or social events. It can happen in professional settings such as club meetings or conferences. Or, it can be part of a structured event where the primary purpose is to offer participants the chance to network.

With Whom Should I Network? Former supervisors and colleagues, advisors, faculty, friends, family, friends of the family, members of your church, alumni from your college, presenters at conferences, or teachers. Ask for leads from everyone you know. You may also network by conducting informational interviews (see separate handout for more details on preparing for and getting the most out of an informational interview).

What Should I Be Asking?

It is important to be prepared with an introduction of yourself. Typically your name, major, year in school and interest areas would be included in your introduction. It is equally important that you prepare a list of questions to ask of your contacts. Following is a list of questions to get you started:

- What is your position and title?
- How did you get started in this field?
- Can you tell me a little about the organization for which you work?
- What is the employment outlook for this organization?
- What is the best way to apply for positions in this organization?
- Are there opportunities for part time jobs, summer positions or internships with your organization?
- How are full time positions typically advertised in your organization?
- Who would you suggest I speak with regarding the position for which I'm interested? May I use your name to contact that individual?

Maintain a List

As you become more involved in the process it will become necessary to stay organized. Keep a list of names, titles, employers, and phone/email for individuals with whom you have talked. Make note of the date you met and any referrals or suggestions you received from this contact.

Show your Gratitude

Send a thank-you note to those who have provided information or referrals. Send it promptly and personalize the comments.

Suggested Events

Many professional organizations offer the opportunity to network. Other organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club will likely offer regular networking events you can attend. Each spring semester Career Services hosts "Saints Helping Saints" which is a networking event designed to connect current students with alumni. Look for details on the Career Services' website.