

JOB SEARCH SERIES



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Networking

JOB SEARCH SERIES:

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What is *Networking*?

Networking is often considered **THE MOST EFFECTIVE** method for career exploration or for finding a job opening (or internship) in your desired line of work.

In a nutshell, networking refers to the *development of contacts with others in your field* for helpful information, advice or additional contacts, any of which may lead you to a job. The process may take place in a myriad of ways. During your everyday activities, you are probably networking without even being aware of it! Many of the ways in which we connect with others each day could be considered networking. Here are just some examples:

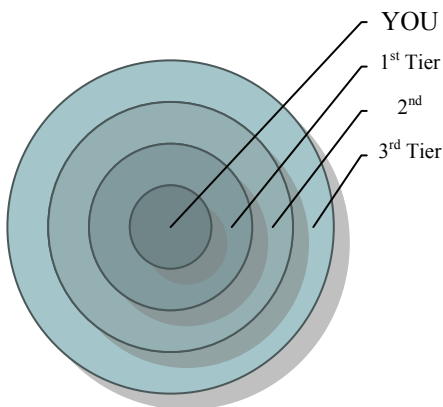
- offering assistance to others while in a part-time job or internship
- joining an on-campus activity such as the campus newspaper; attending meetings
- asking for career advice from people who work in a field in which we are interested
- exchanging information with other people for the purposes of building a business

To begin the process, you need to identify just who is in your network?

Parents, friends, relatives and professors come to mind.

But your network doesn't stop there.....

Former co-workers, faculty members, neighbors, academic advisors, coaches, former employers, your parent's friends, your friend's parents, your internship advisor, fellow alumni that you have met through your alumni association at your 'alma mater' (the university at which you earned your degree) well, you get the idea. Your network is *much larger* than you think. Conscious attempts to expand your network may lead you to join clubs, volunteer organizations, or professional organizations (most have student memberships).



The main purpose in connecting with each person is to see if any of them **can share information** regarding your field of interest. Perhaps more importantly, even if they can't give you first-hand information about a field, these individuals **may direct you to a second contact...** someone they know who can provide you with some advice or leads.

In many cases, in order to expand our network, some of these secondary contacts can actually lead us to a third contact who can provide you with career information. This is what's known as the "Multiplier Effect," which is illustrated here.

**Statistics show that
more than 70% of jobs
are found through networking.**

Building Your Network

When searching for a job, it is helpful for you to talk to many people, set up an Informational Interview (see pgs 3 & 4 in this booklet), and gradually **get the word out** that you are currently in the job market. If others are made aware of your current status and the field(s) for which you are suited, they can keep their eyes and ears open for interesting opportunities. Not every person with whom you speak will know of a job opening, but ALL will have some information you can use!

Identify what you are looking for. Are you interested in a specific position? Maybe - in the short term - you are trying to find out more about a particular profession. Your long-term goal, however, may be to pursue an occupation for which you need special training or skills. It's important that you be able to tell the person what exactly you are looking for at this time.

Think of the people most likely to be of help. Identify people who are already doing what you want to be doing. Do you have relatives or neighbors who work in that field? If they themselves do not, can they refer you to someone that they know who can help you? Don't limit yourself... talk to past employers, your friends' parents, your local congressman, professors, college administrators, current supervisors, guest lecturers at your university. Each of these has a 2nd tier network.

Talk to the people with whom you interact every day. No doubt some of the people you come across, or those with whom they interact, can help you reach out and make further connections. If your interests and hobbies involve other people, (for instance you are on an athletic team, you have joined an extracurricular club, you participate in fundraising for a community organization, you volunteer at the local hospital, you tutor elementary school children in reading and math... the list goes on), you are making connections (with coaches,

teachers, businesspeople, nurses and hospital staff, etc.) every day. Let these individuals know that you would like to speak to them about their professions.

Use your creativity to think of networking opportunities. Make an appointment to talk with the faculty advisors in your academic department, the counselors in the Center for Career Development, and administrators in the Alumni Services office who may help you build your network. Alumni are usually more than happy to talk with current students from their alma mater. Prepare a list of questions prior to your meeting.

Approach others with a smile. Make a good first impression. If you present yourself well, your contact will be more likely to refer you to additional contacts. Don't be afraid to talk with others about your interests and/or goals, even people that you have met for the very first time at a social gathering or while traveling. You never know what a chance meeting can bring. Be sure, however, to make your conversation a two-way street - avoid talking only about yourself. Show interest in the other person and ask questions politely about what they do for a living. Most people are happy to reply to a question if you show genuine interest!

*"If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track, which has been there all the while, waiting for you."
~ Joseph Campbell*

*"Life shrinks or expands in direct proportion to one's courage."
~ Anais Nin*

Meeting Your Network

While it would be ideal to meet in person, your contact may not be able to meet you face-to-face, depending on both of your locations and/or their time constraints. However, mention some options with your contact. Here are some guidelines for **setting up an Informational Interview**:

By Phone: It's ok to set up an informational interview over the phone. It will be helpful to have notes in front of you so that you remember the main points of what you want to say. For starters,

- Tell the person who you are and why you are calling.
- If someone has recommended this person to you, be sure to mention his/her name.
- Inquire as to whether he/she has time to meet for an informational interview.
- Discuss and confirm the date, time and place you will meet before you end the call.
- Thank the person and mention that you are looking forward to meeting with him/her.

It would be wise to have a number of questions prepared ahead of time. (See page 5 of this booklet.) The person that you contact may, in some cases, be able to speak with you right then and there over the phone. In such a case, you would want to feel confident enough to take them up on that offer. You can see how important it is to have your questions prepared in advance. However, if you do not feel prepared, you can also say that you were simply calling to set up a time that you can either meet in person or to chat on the phone with them. Then see if you can arrange a mutual time to do so.

By Email or Snail Mail: A letter or email allows you to introduce both yourself and the subject of your inquiry. Some students also enclose their resume so that this person can learn a little about you. By sending a letter or email, you also allow the recipient time to consider your request. Be sure to follow your letter or email with a phone call about a week after your letter has been sent. Here's an example of a hypothetical follow-up phone call: "Hello, Mr. Smith. My name is _____ and I am a student at Adelphi University. I am calling to follow-up on my recent letter/email requesting about a half hour of your time to learn more about your position as _____. Have you received my letter?" Often, once he/she recognizes your name, they will be amenable to proceeding with a discussion of whether they will be able to meet with you in the near future.

Making Connections:

While asking questions is a good way to find out information, try to find out information **within the context of a conversation**. As opposed to just asking question after question, if you treat the experience more like a conversation, it will help to make the exchange more relaxing for you - and for the person with whom you are talking. On the next page, we provide you with a list of suggested questions from which you may choose the most appropriate. Keep a few in mind as you converse with the person - but don't interrogate them by asking one question after another. This can get tiresome for both of you.

Don't complain about the traffic, how you got lost on the way, or what a bad hair you are having. If he or she mentions something of interest to you, feel free to comment about that, laugh at their humor or inquire further about a point they made. *Act friendly; smile warmly; be genuinely interested.*

*Finally and most importantly: **express your thanks for their time!***

See page 6 of this booklet for a listing of Professional and Social Networking websites.

Possible Questions to Ask during Informational Interviews or when Networking:

Person-Specific:

1. What is your educational background?
2. Could you describe your career path? How did each job lead you to the next?
3. What do you like about your job and why?
4. Is there anything that you dislike about your job?
5. How did you decide to get into this field?
6. What skills and background are needed to be successful in this field?
7. What personal qualities do you feel are necessary in your work and why?
8. What should I do to prepare myself for a career in this field?

Responsibilities:

1. What are the characteristic responsibilities of your job?
2. What are the duties of others with whom you work?
3. Would you describe a typical day in your line of work?
4. Could you describe your work environment?
5. What types of stress do you encounter on the job?

Industry Questions:

1. Who are the most important people in your industry today?
2. What new developments could affect future opportunities in this field?
3. What is the employment outlook in your field?
4. Is there a busy season?
5. What related occupations might I explore?

Advancement:

1. What would be my earnings potential if I entered this field?
2. Are promotions handled from within? If not, where do most candidates hear about positions within your organization?
3. What is the background of the most senior-level executives?
4. What are the titles of others with whom you work?
5. Is advanced education beneficial in this field?

Training and Preparation:

1. What qualifications do you (or your superiors) seek in a candidate?
2. How do most people enter this profession?
3. Do you have any suggestions for improving my resume?
4. How can students find summer opportunities in this field?
5. Do you know of other professionals with whom I might speak for more information about this field? When I call, may I use your name?
6. What professional journals and organizations should I tap into?

KNOW YOUR NETWORK:

Become more connected to those in your professional field by joining one or more of these online communities. Professional and social networking websites can give your career and your job search the advantage of established relationships with one-to-one connections.

<http://www.linkedin.com>

<http://www.twitter.com>

<http://www.ning.com/>

<http://www.ryze.com>

<http://www.myspace.com>

<http://www.facebook.com>

<http://www.squidoo.com>

<http://www.digg.com>

<http://online-social-networking.com/>

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<http://www.bls.gov/oco>

The above URL is the link to the **Bureau of Labor Statistics** website. On this site, you can look up an occupational field in the **Occupational Outlook Handbook**. Then you can find out the names of organizations and associations, so that you can potentially network with people in those fields. [For example, if you are seeking information about Human Resources organizations, use the Search box to type in 'Human Resources.' Once on the Human Resources page, scroll down to: "Sources of Additional Information" (bottom of page). In this case, you would be given links and information to the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), the American Society for Training and Development and other organizations relevant to the H.R. field. Visit the websites to find out when and where each member organization meets and about what topics.]

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DISCLAIMER

The Center for Career Development at Adelphi University acts only as an information service. The office does not endorse any individual employer and cautions you to ask appropriate questions to be sure that the position is right for you. The Career Center makes no recommendations or guarantees about the positions or employers listed through our office or about those who visit campus to meet students or alumni. Students and/or alumni are responsible for verifying the credentials and integrity of the employer. Adelphi's Center for Career Development is not responsible for safety, wages, working conditions or other aspects of off-campus employment. These web sites may contain links to other web sites not under control of the University or The Center for Career Development. The University and The Center for Career Development are not responsible for any error or omissions, or for the results obtained from the use of this information. Students or alumni who discover any misuse or abuse of this website are encouraged to report the matter to The Center for Career Development as soon as possible.