

Networking

One of the most effective job search strategies is networking. By using and building relationships, developing contacts and exchanging information with people connected to your career of interest, you'll increase your chances of landing a job. Only 20% of job openings are filled through job boards / online - the other 80% are filled through the hidden job market, which is accessible through networking.

Advantages

- It works - 60% of people report getting a job through networking
- You learn about opportunities earlier, before they're posted
- You learn about organizations, positions and industry trends, all of which can help when you get an interview
- Many people want to help you find work! They've been there themselves and they are always looking for new talent
- Allows you to test your communication skills and gain confidence
- Your connections may get you introductions to people who may control job opportunities
- Adds to your credibility because a trusted source referred you

Challenges

- Requires time and effort to make contacts and follow up
- Can be difficult at first if you are shy or nervous meeting new people. Start small by talking with a few people individually, and then expand to meetings, informational interviews and larger networking functions

Guidelines for networking –setting up and managing contacts

- Develop a target list of people to contact and establish a timeline
- Determine a comfortable place to start in order to build your confidence
- Send a networking e-mail and request a time to talk
- Attend professional organizations, community groups, alumni events, etc.
- Keep a record of all your interactions with each contact
- Brainstorm with others to expand list of contacts
- Let others know you are looking for work
- Talk to people who know many other people
- Keep contacts / mentors informed of your progress, send thank you notes

Getting the most out of professional networking events

- **Research**—Learn about the event (who will be there, opportunities for connections)
- **Set Goals**—Determine what you want to accomplish
- **Build Relationships**—Identify the people you would like to meet
- **Prepare**—Rehearse your 30-second personal commercial about yourself and communicate your value
- **Help Others**—Consider volunteering to work a registration table or assist in some other way at an event



Identify your personal network

List names of potential contacts and identify those who seem the best for getting your message out and researching the job market.

- Begin to seek out people who are involved in areas about which you would like more information
- Call and/or email contacts to request a brief meeting / informational interview to learn more about what they do
- Let your contacts know you are looking for employment
- Ask your contacts for names of other people that would be good to contact
- It's important to make your network as far reaching as possible and continue to network (by building and maintaining relationships) even after you've found a job

Friends, relatives, neighbors	Instructors, teachers, alumni
Former bosses, managers of other departments & divisions, co-workers, suppliers, customers	Personal business connections (banker, doctor, dentist, barista, babysitter, book club, sports, clubs)
Professional associations/organizations, community/faith-based/political groups	Your parents/spouse/partner/kids networks