



## HOW TO NETWORK AND CONDUCT INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

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Networking is crucial to the job search. It is the technique of utilizing other people to help find a job. Developing a list of contacts is as simple as one person referring the applicant to another person . . . who refers the applicant to another . . . who refers the applicant to another. Here's how it's done.

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### **FIRST STEP**

Determine exactly what kind of job the applicant is looking for so that the applicant is able to inform others of his/her goal. But the rule is to **never ask for a job; always ask for advice or information.**

### **SECOND STEP**

Compile a list of all contacts. Include friends, relatives, church members, co-workers, dentist, doctors, lawyer, accountant, hairdresser, teachers, and civic groups. These connections don't necessarily have to work in the target industry or field.

### **THIRD STEP**

Call the contacts to inform them of the job search campaign and looking for some suggestions. Describe the type of job wanted and background. Ask them if they know of someone who might be in a position to assist. Be sure to thank them for their time and send a written thank you note. In addition, periodically, send contacts a note with updates on job search progress.

### **FOURTH STEP**

Next, contact the referrals that were suggested to set up a face-to-face informational meeting at their place of business. Say something like, "Mr. Smith, I have decided to make a career change, and our mutual friend, Mary Jones, seemed to feel that you would be a good person to speak with. She said that you are very knowledgeable about your industry and may be in a position to offer some general advice and ideas concerning my career change. I would enjoy stopping by to see you for 20 minutes or so to discuss my career plans and to hear your thoughts and suggestions. If you are agreeable, when would be a convenient time for you to meet with me?"

## **FIFTH STEP**

After confirming a date and time for a face-to-face meeting, follow the recommended format for the actual networking interview:

- Go to the meeting well-groomed, smile, be enthusiastic, and maintain eye contact.
- Use a firm handshake and make introductions.
- Extend appreciation.
- Explain why employment is needed.
- Deliver a brief summary of career accomplishments and goals.
- Ask them about their occupation, the company, the developments and trends in this industry, the skills that are required in the profession in which you are interested, the education that is required, and the challenges they face in their industry .
- Get the contact's input on job hunting strategies.
- Ask for a few names of key contacts that may be able to assist.
- Ask for their permission to use their name as a referral when making these contacts.
- Thank them for their time.
- Send a written thank you note.

Document the date of the meeting, their name, address, telephone number, how contact was obtained, occupation, conversation summary, and their referral.

## **SIXTH STEP**

Now, start back at the Fourth Step by calling each of the new contacts to set up an informational meeting.