



Networking

Networking is making contacts, creating relationships, finding out about essentials, and making friends. Based in this is the premise that we are all human and need one another. This is true in business as it is in all areas of your life.

WHY DON'T PEOPLE NETWORK?

- Being introverted
- Don't have the time
- Fear of rejection
- Discomfort of talking about yourself
- Not developing a clear action plan

WHY SHOULD YOU NETWORK?

There is a hidden job market – more than 70% of job vacancies are NOT advertised.

*It's not **what** you know, but **who** you know.*

The majority of people find jobs by hearing about opportunities, being in the right place at the right time or by carving out a job when they have seen the need.

- To share information about opportunities, knowledge, & resources
- To build visibility
- To build a community around your research

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Tapping into the “Hidden Job Market” is a three step process.

STEP 1: SELF-EVALUTION

What are your skills, knowledge and attitudes? Graduates have excellent analytical and critical thinking skills. How does this apply to you? Try to answer the question: Why should someone employ me? What unique skills, knowledge and abilities can I offer an employer?

STEP 2: RESEARCH EMPLOYERS

Research companies and find out the skills they are seeking. Look in the business pages - which companies are expanding? Read articles about employment trends.

STEP 3: NETWORKING

Making your contacts work for you, as well as helping

out your contacts. Networking demands reciprocity, so don't ask for a favour if you are not willing to return in kind.

WHERE CAN YOU NETWORK?

- Conferences, seminars, workshops, professional association meetings, career fairs or Careers Office events
- Family events, social gatherings e.g. community, religious, sporting, arts groups and acquaintances
- Current and previous employers, work colleagues
- University connections e.g. academics
- Supervisors, others students, Alumni
- People doing a job that you'd like to be doing
- Online though [LinkedIn](#)

HOW BIG IS YOUR CURRENT NETWORK?

Make a list of all the people you know through your current job as well as all the people you know who are currently working. Next to each name, write a quick note about what skills they could speak to, who they know who could help you out, or any other ways they could ultimately benefit your career.

Sandy D., manager, understands my strengths and weaknesses as an employee

Danny Z., vendor, can put me in contact with recruiters as Company X, Business Y and Z Inc.

Rizzo L., co-worker, collaborated on multiple projects together

Vince F., client, closed a major deal in 2014 and left a good impression

Now list the associations you are involved with - student associations, professional societies, sporting groups, voluntary organisation, church/youth groups etc. Suddenly, your network is a lot larger than you realised.

By tapping into all these contacts you are establishing a 'network' of people who can help you find out about all the employment opportunities that are never advertised. Better yet, if you sustain this habit, by regularly adding new people to this list, you'll have a ready-to-go grab list of people you can reach out to the next time you need career pointers or are looking for a new job.

DO

- Network broadly. Include people from different disciplines.
- Make it easy for the other person to say yes.
- Maintain connections by following up with your contacts.
- Learn what the other person values.
- Be engaging, smooth off your sharp edges.
- Maintain and cultivate relationships in good times and bad.
- Make yourself valuable. Become a knowledge resource.
- Share information and contacts generously.

DON'T

- Equate seniority with successful networking.
- Confuse lunches and coffee meetings as networking.
- Confine yourself to people just like you.
- Be a fair-weather networker.
- Send emails en masse.
- Equate networking with collecting and distributing business cards.
- Don't underestimate yourself.
- Don't become too focused on just getting work.

TIPS FOR NETWORKING IN PERSON

- Smile, make eye contact and listen
- Ask open-ended questions
- Keep positive and don't talk negatively about anyone, especially old employers. You never know whom the stranger in front of you is connected with.
- Keep up to date with current affairs
- Don't fear silence in a conversation
- Try to talk to people about non-work related topics
- Concentrate on the person you are talking to rather than searching the room for the next encounter
- Be selective who you talk to i.e. do you research
- Speak with intent and purpose
- Give other people time to share i.e. attentive

listening

- Follow up with intent i.e. after an event, spend some quiet time thinking about how you and each person can bring each other value, then craft a personal note that reminds them of why your contact was worthy of continuing in the first place.

AT NETWORKING EVENTS

1. Manage your expectation - don't put pressure on yourself to meet a lot of people. One quality conversation is better than 20 superficial ones.
2. Plan some ice-breakers in advance.
3. Ask for an introduction - find someone who knows everyone (e.g. the host) and ask them to connect you with whoever you want to meet
4. Practice empathetic listening
5. Share personal stories - they make you interesting and memorable
6. Practice every day - start a brief conversation with co-workers, students, academics. Practice makes perfect.

Last tip: utilize LinkedIn (<https://au.linkedin.com/>) social networking site for professionals for your own research of individuals.

<http://theundercoverrecruiter.com/ultimate-guide-building-killer-linkedin-profile-infographic/>

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