



NETWORKING

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

By definition, networking is the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions. A subset of networking is **Informational Interviewing** (which will be explained in detail later). It is important for people to know that only **15%** of available jobs are advertised through online resources, newspapers, and trade journals. That means that the other **85%** are found by being in the right place at the right time, through word of mouth...-also known as **Networking**. So, the saying “It’s not what you know, but who you know!” takes on new meaning.

Your actual job search can begin in an obvious, yet not so obvious place...with people you know. The dynamics of networking are manifested in a trait that is common in almost everybody- the desire to help others. So, you should value the influence and knowledge of people you know.

As you build your network, begin by first contacting family members, other relatives, neighbors, personal friends, general acquaintances, professors, and work associates. **Let everyone know that you are looking for a job and what type of for which job you are looking.**

Networking Tips

- **Be a “joiner”:**

Join a professional organization and attend conferences and meetings with the goal of meeting at least one new person at each function that you attend.

Utilize Contacts:

Tell everyone you know that you are conducting a job search and what type of job you are looking for. Once again, include relatives, friends, professors, previous employers, etc.

- **Be Assertive:**

When at a function, whether social or professional, take the initiative and introduce yourself to people; don't wait for people to talk to you. Ask them about themselves and what they do. (If you are shy, take it one step at a time. You don't have to overwhelm yourself.)

- **Write Thank You Notes:**

When you have the opportunity to talk with people either over the phone or in person, write a thank-you note. Let them know that you appreciate the time they gave you and the information they shared. Also, ask them if they know of anyone else who would be able to provide you with more information.

- **Be Organized:**

Keep track of who you meet, where they work, and what they do. If you have a meeting with someone, be sure to write down the date, time and directions.

- **Update Contacts:**

Stay in touch with contacts. Send them interesting articles or invite them for coffee. Make sure they know that you are available to assist them too. Networking is a 2-way street.

*You can share an updated resume with network contacts. It is okay to say you are conducting a job search and are asking for advice and information about how to do so-**do not ask for employment**. Use the contacts as a reference pool only. Network members should be kept abreast of any changes in status or qualifications. Continuous contact increases a network's effectiveness. When a job has been accepted, contacts should be notified and thanked for their help.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Informational Interviews are one of the easiest and most effective ways to meet people in a professional field in which you are interested. Once you have made contact through your **networking**, you want to make maximum use of the time the person is willing to spend with you. Read up on the career in which the person you will be interviewing is engaged. You can also look up the position in the government's Occupational Outlook Handbook, The Dictionary of Occupational Titles or Guide for Occupational Exploration all of which can be found in the NSU Career Resource library. Once you have the knowledge of your interviewee's occupation and of your own interests, abilities, and values, you will be better prepared for the interview.

What motivates professionals to grant informational interviews?

The reasons are varied. One thing that most people like to do is talk about themselves. Most people enjoy sharing information about themselves and their jobs and, they love giving advice.

How do I setup an informational interview?

- Send a letter requesting a brief informational interview, clearly indicating that it is for information only and that there is no job expectation.
- Follow up with a phone call to schedule an appointment.
Hint: The best way to obtain an informational interview is by being referred from one professional to another, a process which becomes easier as your network expands.

How do I prepare for an informational interview?

- Prepare just as you would for an actual job interview. Polish your presentation and listening skills and conduct preliminary research on the organization.
- Outline an agenda that includes well-thought-out questions. Begin the interview with questions that demonstrate your genuine interest in the other person such as:
“Describe a typical day in your department.”
“What kinds of problems do you deal with?”
“What do you find most/least satisfying about your job?”
- You can proceed with more general questions such as:
“What are the employment prospects in this field?”
“What are the “hot issues” in this field?”
“What are typical entry level jobs?”
- If appropriate, venture into a series of questions which place the employer in the advice-giving role such as:
“What should the most important consideration be in my first job?”
“What skills, education and experience are required?”
“Can you suggest anyone else whom I could contact for additional information?”
- The idea is for you to shine, to make an impression, and to get referrals to other professionals.

*Always remember to send a thank you letter to every person who grants you time, as well as to every individual who refers you to someone.

Additional Informational Interviewing Questions

- “Which part of the job is most challenging for you?”
- “Do you think there is enough growth in this business that you would advise someone like me to get into it?”
- “Is there anyone else who I should speak to for additional information?”
- “What do you wish you had known before you entered this field? What kinds of preparation do you wish you had?”
- What kind of job hunting strategies would you suggest to enter this field?”
- “How much work do you take home? How many work hours do you work each week?”
- “Would a geographic move affect your career in any way?”
- “How much do you travel? How often and for how long?”
- “Who do you supervise and to whom do you report?”
- “What do you think of the experience that I have had so far, in terms of getting into _____?”
- “As far as you know, which companies hire and train the most recent college graduates?”
- “Which professional journals and organizations should I know about in this field?”
- “How did you become interested in this field?”
- “What else do you think I need to know in order to make an intelligent decision about this as my career?”
- “If you could do it all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why? What would you change?”
- “What is your response to my resume? How would you suggest that I change it?”
- “What training opportunities do you think I should expect in an entry level job?”
- “Have you noticed that it is necessary to change companies in order to advance?”

RESOURCES

To find more information on **Networking** and **Informational Interviewing** the following books are among the resources available in the Career Resource Center at Nova Southeastern University.

Information Interviewing What it is and How to Use It in Your Career, Martha Stoodley; Garret Park Press, 1990

Network Your Way to Job & Career Success, Ronald L. Krannich Ph.D. and Caryl Rae Krannich Ph.D.; Impact Publications, 1989.

Super Job Search, Peter K. Studner; Jamenair LTD, 1995.

The 1996 What Color is Your Parachute?, Richard Nelson Bolles; Ten Speed Press, 1996.

(It is important, in Networking and Informational Interviewing, to know what kind of career in which you might be interested. If you are unsure, make an appointment with a Career Advisor to help you get started in the right direction.)