

## Networking & the Job Search

### What is Networking

#### *Planned Process*

Networking for your career is a planned process in which you will interact with and become known to people who can provide information about job openings, leads, personal contacts, employers that are hiring, etc. Building your network is simply a process of contacting people who are in a position to give you information and advice about the work in which you have an interest. It means embarking on a deliberate effort to contact individuals at every level who can help you.

#### *Why is networking important?*

The best source of information about any given career is the currently practicing professionals. Since they know the "reality" of the career, they can give you the most up-to-date information. You will be able to obtain only a finite amount of information from printed materials such as books and directories. It will be well worth your time to talk with people who are involved with the field daily.

#### *Identify your Potential Network*

Before you make the first phone call or knock on a door, be sure you know why you are networking and the purpose of wanting to meet with someone.

A common first question is "*Who do I know?*"

Start by listing anyone you know who could be a potential networking prospect for you:

- q Family members
- q Past employer/co-workers
- q Supervisors
- q Faculty or administrators
- q Alumni
- q Friends and neighbors
- q Church/community contacts
- q Members of professional organizations

#### **Your Contacts – Think of your Contacts as Mentors**

- § Don't ask for a job
- § You are there to obtain information
- § Make it a two way interaction

## Prepare to Network

### 1. Assess the Market - Look for Jobs that Interest You

- Look in the United Way Directory of Social Services - in Career Services
- Check for leads through professional journals
- Check the web for company annual reports
- Libraries offer:
  - ☐ Job openings in local papers
  - ☐ Directories about various companies
  - ☐ Information on new trends & issues in your industry in various periodicals
  - ☐ Industry journals and magazines
  - ☐ Business publications

### 2. Assess Yourself

#### Think about your:

- ~ Abilities
- ~ Skills
- ~ Needs
- ~ Motivations
- ~ Interests
- ~ Values

#### Consider your:

- ~ Personal relationships
- ~ Spiritual life
- ~ Leisure activities
- ~ Health
- ~ Goals and priorities
- ~ Financial responsibilities

### 3. Assess the Occupation & Your Market Value

- Occupation
  - ~ Rewards of the Job
  - ~ Job Setting
  - ~ Geographic Location
  - ~ People & Culture of the Organization
  - ~ Requirements of the Job
- Market Value
  - ~ Look at your personal inventory of abilities, skills, education, and qualifications
  - ~ Match them with the qualifications of the job and abilities & skills needed to do it.

## How To Network

### 1. Start with your list & contact your network

### 2. Join at least one Professional Association

- § Meeting professionals in your field provides you the opportunity to develop a list of contacts that will come to know you on a first-name basis.
- § Get involved. Your participation exposes you to important role models and allows you to demonstrate your skills and abilities.
- § Additional member benefits include newsletters, job listings, and more.

### 3. Join a Listserve

- § An electronic mailing list, typically representing many and diverse people, that you can subscribe to online.
- § Participate in "conversations" on topics that interest you and are related to your field
- § Professional listserves are often used by people to advertise job opportunities.

### 4. Follow Up

- § As you contact new people, mention the name of the person who referred you.
- § Cultivate relationships so they can be mutually beneficial to both parties.
- § Keep your networking contacts informed of your progress in the job search.

### 5. Evaluate Networking Information

The information you obtain from other people through networking will assist you as you define and redefine your career goals. It can help you confirm or reject job targets and generate new career possibilities.

## Your Job Search

### Getting Noticed

#### 1. Try the Want Ads

- § Concentrate on publications most likely to yield openings & prioritize
- § Customize your letters and resume to the ad

#### 2. Job Hunt On-line

#### 3. Do a Targeted Mailing

#### 4. Check with Temp Agencies or Recruiters

### Make Career Decisions

- Have a proactive attitude and do some work
- Do some organization and planning of your job search
- Weigh your goals against the reality of the job market and available jobs
- Be flexible and ready to make a few changes in direction
- Be creative - don't give up