

NETWORKING

Keys to Mastering the #1 Job Search Strategy

THE IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING

A large percentage of jobs are found through personal contacts. Networking is simply about identifying opportunities by creating a web of resources and contacts. You can have many different networking groups that reflect your personal, professional, and academic interests.

Most employers would rather hire based on a personal recommendation rather than sort through a stack of resumes from strangers. Networking is a way of connecting with people and allowing them to get to know you, your values, and your aspirations, which can lead to great opportunities!

GETTING STARTED ON YOUR NETWORK

- + **Revise and polish your Positioning Statement:** a one minute verbal presentation about yourself. Reflect on your education, experience, skills, career interests, and professional goals when determining what to include.
- + **Identify mentors, supervisors, instructors, and professionals you admire** and request an opportunity to meet with them or have a discussion. Ask for their advice and insight regarding the industry you wish to work in.
- + **Show interest in others.** Ask a new contact questions that encourage them to discuss their experiences. Though it's easy to focus on yourself, learning about others in your network helps link you to individuals that share similar views, professional goals, and personal interests - which can often result in lasting connections.
- + **Networking is a two-way street.** Pass on contact information and refer others to your contacts. If you help someone, they are likely to return the favor.
- + **Don't abuse relationships.** There's no rule for how many phone calls/emails are too many; however, ensure that you are not coming across as always looking for a favor.
- + **Follow through.** Always thank those who help you and get in the habit of writing thank you notes (either emailed or handwritten; if you have any questions on protocol, contact Career Services!). Keep those you meet and those that help you updated on your progress or life updates.
- + **Connect, connect, connect!** When you start to expand your network, be sure to exchange and retain contact information. Ask for business cards and connect with those you meet on LinkedIn to solidify new professional relationships.
- + **Maintain your network.** Cultivate ties even when you aren't job hunting (holiday cards, happy hours, emails, association meetings, alumni gatherings, and more). Remember, the majority of jobs go unpublished or unadvertised, so you may hear of an exciting opportunity from within your network at any point in time.
- + **Be yourself!** Maintaining a professional demeanor is critical, but let your unique qualities and interests shine through. Most employers are interested in seeking out candidates that fit their firm or company culture, rather than simply finding individuals to complete the work. Leave a good impression - **someone may remember you above others when a new position becomes available!**