NETWORKING

Making use of personal contacts, or networking, is the most effective way to find a job, and essential for learning about your options before you begin a job search. The key to successful networking is recognizing that all of your relationships can help you in your career search. You have many more contacts than you are probably aware of, and many yet to be developed.

STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL NETWORKING

A network is like a spider web—a complex interweaving of relationships that all connect back to the spider in the middle. The trick is to delve beyond the first layer of contacts.

Expand the list beyond family and close friends: Ask professors, classmates you don't know so well, even your dentist or hairdresser—anyone you meet in your daily routine. Of course you can't expect strangers on the street to refer you to friends of theirs, but you'd be surprised at how the most tenuous of acquaintances will help you.

Sources of Contacts: Until you've spoken to everyone on this list, you haven't made the most of networking:

- Family/extended family
- Friends/acquaintances
- Co-workers and employers past and present
- Teachers and professors
- Alumni of your school(s)
- Counselors/advisors at your school(s)
- Clubs and organizations you belong to
- Your health club or sports teams you play on
- Churches/temples/other religious organizations
- Your doctor, dentist, hairdresser, and anyone else who takes care of you and a network of other people
- People you don't know but who do work that interests you. Write a letter to someone you read an article about or whom you found in a directory of organizations. Follow up with a telephone call.

Pay Attention to Both Quantity and Quality: The number of connections you make is important, but the quality of contacts is also important. Always have specific questions to ask each person—they can best help you if they know what you need. Don't expect your contacts to give you a job; it is more realistic to ask for advice, referrals to other contacts/resources, and suggestions on conducting an effective job search in their field. Keep in touch with your contacts, thanking them for their assistance or updating them on your plans. By doing so, you give something back and also develop relationships.

Find Your Own Style of Networking: Those who are shy may find networking daunting, but it need not be—all you need to do is find your own style. If calling someone cold on the phone seems overwhelming, consider writing an e-mail first, then following up with a call, or have the person who gave you the contact's name let the contact know you will be calling them. Consider how you prefer to meet people. Some enjoy networking by meeting strangers at meetings or other gatherings. Others may prefer to cultivate contacts on a more one-to-one basis, such as being introduced by a mutual acquaintance. Find the best method for you.

NETWORKING USING ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA

WHY NETWORK ONLINE? Using online social media is a great way to make connections with people who share similar interests or goals. You can meet contacts you would have never had the opportunity to meet otherwise and it is a great way to find out insider information (e.g.: occupation, company, job leads) from people in the know. Even better, little effort or time is required to produce a great amount of information

PAY ATTENTION TO ETIQUETTE! If you're not with someone face-to-face, there is a huge opportunity for disaster and miscommunication. Every method of networking online has its own etiquette and rules. For example, if you are using LinkedIn to network, a cardinal rule is not to "add" someone to your network if you haven't met them or had a conversation with them previously.

BEST NETWORKING SITES TODAY: These are just a sample of the networking sites that we have seen used in successful job or internship searches. But, beware—each of them has the capability to derail your search if used inappropriately!

> **LINKEDIN:** LinkedIn is the most popular professional networking site. You can connect with people you know, post your resume, identify what sorts of opportunities you are considering, join groups of like-minded professionals, and even ask your contacts to "recommend" your work. Make sure you only ask to connect with someone if you actually know him or her. The biggest mistake LinkedIn users make is requesting to connect with a hiring manager that they do not know! LinkedIn also works hard to make sure that your profile will be one of the top results of any search for your name online.

> **FACEBOOK:** The "pros" of this most common social networking tool is that it is virtually ubiquitous. With over 500 million users, you can find almost anyone! Make sure you join group pages for things like "Young Professionals for NonProfits in NYC" if that's what you're interested in. "Like" companies and organizations that you'd be interested in working with. The "cons" of this site is that most students use it for personal networking and the content on their pages may not be appropriate for employers to view. Be careful of "bashing" any employer on your Facebook—some folks have gotten fired for that!

> **TWITTER:** Many companies today are posting job opportunities using Twitter. Whether it is their full company's hashtag, or if they create a separate handle for jobs (i.e. "PepsiCoJOBS"), you will want to your favorite companies carefully. This is also a great way to stay up to date on events and happenings in your industry of choice. Also think about what you're putting out there—many HR interviewers will look you up on common social media sites to gauge your personality. Consider using your Twitter for professional purposes to highlight your interests and depth of knowledge within a field.

THREE CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVERY JOB-SEEKER:
1. "Google" yourself every month to see what information about you is available online (you might be surprised)
2. What email address are you using? Is it professional? hotgurl14@gmail.com vs. john.jay@gmail .com vs. Jane.Doe@jjay.cuny.edu makes a big statement
3. What are you posting on blogs? Facebook? Comments? Keep it professional!

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