Developing Personal Networks

Guidelines for Effective Networking

Understand what it is

Networking is an intentional process of developing relationships between individuals to exchange information, advice, resources, and support. It is a long-term investment - conscious, ongoing and reciprocal. Networking is not spontaneous, unplanned or manipulative.

Know your purpose

There are multiple benefits in having a well-developed network. Some key elements might include:
- Gain information on something specific.
- Obtain straight feedback.
- Demonstrate strengths.
- Find support for an idea.
- Develop new contacts.
- Gain visibility.
- Learn or develop a skill.
- Hear about specific opportunities.

How others can help

While your current focus might be on developing contacts to help you find a job, future efforts might be something else entirely. Keeping in mind your network is an ongoing endeavor, make it a practice to know the strengths and abilities of those in your network. Examples might be:
- Sponsor
- Teach
- Inform
- Support
- Advise
- Connect

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Guidelines for Effective Networking, Continued

**What you bring to relationships**
Networking is not a one-way street. It is a series of valuable relationships that require ongoing attention. A key component of networking is reciprocation; others help you, and you help them in return. Some ways you might help are:
- Providing valuable introductions
- Increasing the scope of other's networks
- Offering original ideas
- Teaching a skill
- Lending support to other's activities
- Reducing another's workload
- Contributing objective perspective
- Showing appreciation
- Making recommendations
- Providing feedback
- Sharing unique abilities

These are just a few ideas. Perhaps you can think of more.

**Keep in mind**
Remember this is a give and take relationship. Success in networking depends on personal commitment, dedication and follow-up. With that in mind, here are some important keys to creating successful networking relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Do</strong></th>
<th><strong>Don't</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Keep notes (i.e., a card file system, spreadsheet or database).</td>
<td>• Ask anyone for a job while networking.</td>
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<td>• Give as much as you get from your network.</td>
<td>• Be afraid to ask for what you need.</td>
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<td>• Report back to anyone who has given you a hand, and give thanks.</td>
<td>• Tell everything to everybody (i.e., why you left your last job).</td>
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<td>• Follow up on all leads.</td>
<td>• Pass up opportunities (i.e., social functions).</td>
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<td>• Take advice in the spirit it was intended. (Don't say, &quot;I tried that and it didn't work.&quot; or, &quot;You don't understand.&quot;)</td>
<td>• Expect job offers or for others to make appointments for you.</td>
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<td>• Pick the right people to talk to.</td>
<td>• Be discouraged (if brushed off).</td>
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<td>• Be prepared for a slump.</td>
<td>• Expect an instant, magic answer.</td>
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<td>• Be patient. If they don't have an answer now, they may be able to get it for you.</td>
<td>• Plant the seed.</td>
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