

# Developing Personal Networks

## Guidelines for Effective Networking

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### **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.

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### **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.
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### **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 reciprocity; 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.

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### 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.

<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep notes (i.e., a card file system, spreadsheet or database).</li><li>• Give as much as you get from your network.</li><li>• Report back to anyone who has given you a hand, and give thanks.</li><li>• Follow up on all leads.</li><li>• Take advice in the spirit it was intended. (Don't say, "I tried that and it didn't work." or, "You don't understand.")</li><li>• Pick the right people to talk to.</li><li>• Be prepared for a slump.</li><li>• Be patient. If they don't have an answer now, they may be able to get it for you.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask anyone for a job while networking.</li><li>• Be afraid to ask for what you need.</li><li>• Tell everything to everybody (i.e., why you left your last job).</li><li>• Pass up opportunities (i.e., social functions).</li><li>• Expect job offers or for others to make appointments for you.</li><li>• Be discouraged (if brushed off).</li><li>• Expect an instant, magic answer. Plant the seed.</li><li>• Complain about your situation or your last job.</li></ul>

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