

Internet Job Networking

Minding your P's and Q's is important anywhere. If you are part of an online discussion group take some time to absorb and understand the way people conduct themselves within the group so that you do not commit a cyber faux pas.

Once you have identified a few people you would like to contact, correspond with them via email in the correct manner.

Do not post a general message to everyone in the group. Send a personal message to the person you would like to speak with.

Do not be long winded. Tell them as concisely as possible why you have contacted them.

At this initial phase it would be extremely opportunistic to send a copy of your resume. You are simply gaining information and introducing yourself at this point. Besides, the very art of networking involves a long term connection, which must be nurtured. It is not just a one time exchange. Allow yourself and your contact time to get to know each other before giving them your resume.

Request your contact for a follow up and give them a choice about how they would like to be contacted, via phone, mail or a personal meeting.

Contacting people via email is perhaps best for contacts you find online, but is not necessarily effective for people you meet in person. A phone call or letter to request an interview is perhaps the best way to catch their attention.

Contacting people over the phone

- When calling remember to cover this vital information
 - Your introduction
 - Your purpose
 - Request an appointment at a time suitable for both of you
 - Mention the name of the person who referred you, in case there is someone.
- Prepare yourself for the conversation by jotting down what you will say. This will help you stay calm and clear on the phone.
- Trying to get through to the person may be difficult as receptionists or secretaries may not put you through. Polite persistence can pay off and so can calling at a time when you the receptionist may not have arrived as yet or have left for the day.
- Try and request a personal meeting and find a suitable time for both of you.

Contacting people by letter

- Check the format, spelling and grammar of your letter.
- Mention clearly in your letter, in the conclusion, that you will call on a given date to arrange for a suitable time for a meeting.

The Power of Networking

- You never know how the person you met at a coffee shop yesterday could help you tomorrow? The power of and advantages of networking is remarkable. Your list of contacts could include anyone from your neighbors to your classmates to your boss's

cousin you met at the Christmas party! Continue to add to your networking list and you will be amazed by the opportunities it presents you with.

Corporate Culture

They say 'Face is the index of the mind.' Likewise, 'Corporate culture is the index of a company'. Every organization has a strong culture associated with itself in terms of protocols of dressing, demeanor in office, work timings, compensation and benefits, vision, core values and many more such parameters.

Level 1: What is Corporate Culture?

It is important for employees to be aware of the corporate culture of their organization as otherwise it could hamper the growth prospects of the employee within the organization. Consider the example of an employee coming late to office. Some organizations do not permit this and the conduct of the employee may be viewed seriously and it may even affect the employee's overall performance rating.

One might ask whether it is equally critical for prospective jobseekers to know the corporate culture of a potential employer. The answer is a big YES! This could give immense mileage to the possibility of selection. To cite the same example, if a candidate arrives late to an interview oblivious of the fact that the prospective employer is very particular about timeliness, the candidate may not even be considered.

Therefore, it is very important to be aware of the corporate culture of the company that you are associated with or are looking forward to get associated with.

Level 2: Understanding Corporate Culture

Following are some ways to go about understanding the corporate culture of an organization:

- Read the career section/ corporate culture section of the organizations' website.
- Read the corporate culture section in annual reports.
- Visit the organization and watch the way the employees interact with each other.
- Visit the organization and feel how the company interacts with visitors.

All the above methods will allow you to get a glimpse of some of the organizations' core values, such as behavior, customer service, timeliness of help and many factors, which are vital to the organizations' culture. The more aware one is about the corporate culture of a particular organization, the more is the possibility to strike the right chord with that organization, be it a job, a sales deal or a partnership.

How to network

Many people perceive networking as a new trend even though it has always been used. Every person has a network of friends, colleagues, teachers, managers, [career consultants](#), [business contacts](#), and more. We don't always think of it as networking although referrals stem from networking. The people that know how to network gain the most benefits in the long run. Apart from building solid relationships, it also enhances career possibilities, business expansion, and general goodwill. Even when you attempt to [build a career](#), you will notice how knowing the right people can be a benefit.

There are a few things that people assign to networking that are not true. Many persons regard networking as a work method when it is actually an integral part of our lives.

If you want to know how to network, you should start with who you already know. Make a list of people that you know and people you once knew. Include neighbors, school friends, colleagues, business owners, [teachers](#), lecturers, and people in your support group, the parents of your children's friends, suppliers, clients, and service providers. The list will get longer as you start to remember. Use your old address book, emails, correspondence, business cards, and greeting cards.

Function of the reference list

Update the list at least once a week. Note birthday dates, addresses, interests, business types, positions held, expertise, level of acquaintance, and names. You will use the list to bring people in contact with each other and you may sometimes have to make use of one of the contacts for something you need. It is however not always about what you can get from the contacts, but how you can assist people.

Expecting something in return

If you do something for another person, don't expect that he must return the favor. Refer people in goodwill and you will eventually reap the benefits. If you however need assistance, a product or a service, you must ask help. Others cannot be expected to know what you need if you don't ask for assistance. If you need assistance then ask in such a manner that it is possible for the person to say no without being embarrassed but also makes it a pleasure to say yes. This is what people who know how to network do.

Treat people as valuable and not merely as tools

Networking isn't a term for using people, but rather for assisting people. Persons, who know how to network, do it in a manner that enhances their relationships and brings advantages to all parties. Make two lists. The first list is for those you have done something and the second list is for those who did something for you. Most people want to return a favor and will gladly assist you when you call in the marker in a polite manner. Start returning favors, lunch, tickets, advice, or assistance, and referrals for those who already did something for you. Networking is about sharing and returning favors.

What do you have to offer?

We all have some knowledge, [skills](#), and resources that we can share with others. Make lists of the things that you can do for others. You may for instance be an excellent hostess and can host an event for a friend or colleague, or can do sign writing, build a website, take pictures, have an extra couch available, or can proofread a document. The list can become endless. The do's of 'how to network'

- Give recognition for assistance, gifts and referrals.
- Keep in contact with the people on your lists.
- Share your resources, skills, knowledge and ideas.
- Be someone who is involved.
- Deliver on your promises.
- Sometimes just surprise someone with a gift, note or even lunch.
- Recommend people and be sincere in your compliments.
- Keep your contacts updated on new events.

- Always follow up on conversations and referrals.

How to network - never:

- see networking as sales
- judge people too quickly
- name drop without the knowledge and permission of a contact
- force a relationship on others
- force your opinion on others when they didn't ask for it
- accept recognition for the work and ideas of other people
- just take without giving something in return
- blame others for your mistakes
- ask personal questions
- make a nuisance of yourself
- pressure people
- stand too close to people
- forget to admit when you are wrong
- tell lies or exaggerate
- discriminate on any basis
- fear to risk

These guidelines on how to network should help you in building a large network of reliable contacts.

Insider's tips for effective job search networking

So you ready to plunge into the business of building contacts, but don't know how to start. These insider's tips for effective networking should get you started. Networking is a system used for building a contact list of people that can aid your in your [job search](#) and is easier to use than you think.

What to say

You can start conversations in a number of ways. A really simple but effective networking method is to ask assistance or indicate that you would appreciate [advice](#). Most people love to share their knowledge and once the conversation is going, you can drop a comment about [finding a suitable job](#).

Whenever you can, you should include the word 'network' in your conversation. By stating that you would like to network with a person, you immediately get his attention. Remember, people always want to know what they get from a situation.

Prepare a very short summary of what type of job interests you as well as a description of your [skills](#), [qualifications](#) and [experience](#). Don't assume that since a person has known you for years, he would know what makes you tick or what your job aspirations are. Use your [CV objective](#) and personal profile to build the summary. Two to three sentences should suffice. If more information is required the person will ask.

There are instances when you need to provide more detail for example, when you meet someone for the first time. Keep the summary short even under such circumstances. Think about the time limit when you start a conversation with a person in a bank line. You need to get the message across in less than forty seconds and preferably within twenty seconds. Prepare your short and longer version for these occasions.

Make the most of the opportunity

Wouldn't it be sad if you created interest and left no contact details? The person may want to reach you or forgot the particulars of the conversation and has nothing to remind him. For effective networking, you should always have business cards to hand out. The problem with most business cards are that they don't provide enough information and people forget why they received them in the first place. Turn your business card into a compact résumé by adding a short summary of your résumé objectives on the back of the card. Even though you may not own a business or are not employed at a certain company, you can use a personal or network card for effective networking. They remind the person of your skills and don't land in the normal CV or business card pile.

You should include your name, surname, contact details, occupation or profession, and main career interest on the front of the card for effective networking.

Sign it for effective networking

Apart from the network card, you can also use e-mail signature as part of your effective networking strategy. Few people use the signature facility of their e-mail program for more than stating their names, contact details, and position at a company. You can easily include more information such as your qualifications, experience and tell people that you are looking for a job in a specific field. End it with an action statement such as: 'Please forward information on any related jobs.' If you are currently employed, you should however not include the end statement.