

Career Networking Tips

Who to Include in Your Career Network

Your career network should include anyone who can assist you with a job search or career move. It can include past and present co-workers, bosses, friends with similar interests, colleagues from business associations, alumni from your university, or acquaintances you have met via online networking services. Your network can also include family, neighbors, and anyone who might have a connection that will help.

What Your Career Network Can Do For You

Over 80% of job seekers say that their network has helped with their job search. Networking contacts can help with more than job leads. They can provide referrals to or insider information about companies you might be interested in working for. They can provide information on career fields you might want to explore or what the job market is like on the other side of the country. Your network can give you advice on where to look for jobs or review your [resume](#). The possibilities are endless.

Keep in Touch - Work Your Network

Don't just contact those who can help when you have just been laid-off from your job or decide you want to look for a new position. Keep in touch with your network regularly - even if it's just a brief email to say hello and to ask how they are doing. People are more willing to help when they know who you are.

What You Can Do for Your Career Network

Networking shouldn't be a one way street. If you come across an interesting article or a relevant job listing, share it with your network. The point of having a career network is to have resources who can help, but, you should reciprocate, whenever you can.

Keep Track of Your Network

Keep track of your personal career network somewhere. Whether it's electronically or on paper, make sure you know who is who, where they work, and how to get in touch.

Online Career Networking

Online job searching networking does work. Sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, and a variety of other [online networking websites](#) can help you get in touch with other networkers at specific companies, with college affiliations or in a certain geographic area. In addition, if you're a college graduate, your institute may have an alumni career network you can access.

When networking with people you don't know, make sure that you know what you want. Are you looking for company information? Do you want to know about job opportunities? Be specific in what you ask for.

Networking Events

Networking in person works too. If you belong to a professional association, attend a meeting or a mixer. You'll find that many of the participants have the same goals you do and will be glad to exchange [business cards](#). If your college alma mater holds alumni networking events (many schools hold them at locations across the country) be sure to attend.

Career Networking Examples

Here are few examples of how career networking can help:

- Susan noticed a help-wanted ad for a job at a local veterinary clinic. She called a friend who happened to use that vet. Her friend called the vet and recommended Susan. Susan got an interview and got the job. The vet was glad to hire someone who came highly recommended by a good client.
- John was interested in pursuing a career in medicine. He mentioned his interest to a family friend who happened to be a doctor. The doctor arranged for John to spend a day shadowing him at the hospital and provided an excellent recommendation for medical school.

- Angela was interested in changing careers and moving from public relations to publishing. Even though she graduated more than a few years ago, she tapped her college career network and came up with a contact at a top New York publishing firm. In addition to being sent new job postings, her resume was hand-delivered to Human Resources when she found a position she wanted to apply for.
- In casual conversation at the orthodontist's office, Jeannie, the assistant, just happened to mention to a patient's mom that she was interested in horses and in a part-time job working with them. The mom had horses and a bunch of contacts. Jeannie had a part-time job working on a local horse farm by the end of the week!

Career Networking Works!

As you can see, career networking really does work and it's importance to have a viable network in place throughout your career and to use your network to your advantage when job searching or exploring career options.