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Networking

Research reveals that approximately 50% of all job offers are a direct result of networking. Networking involves communicating your availability to as many people as possible – in person, in letters or via e-mail. Who should you contact? Everyone you know!

- Family members
- Friends of the family
- Neighbors
- Friends and their families
- Current and former bosses, co-workers, teachers, coaches, and counselors/advisors
- Acquaintances from places of worship, health/country clubs, and other organizations.
- Businesspeople and community members with whom you and your family have had dealings (e.g., lawyers, bankers, realtors, insurers, accountants, health care providers, government officials)

Call, e-mail or write your networking contacts and let them know that you are nearing graduation and looking for work. Provide them with a copy of your resume, and the areas of work that interest you. Ask them for assistance, recommendations or referrals.

Remember - You are not asking for a job or a “hand out”– you are seeking counsel and advice. Your contacts may actually be aware of jobs to which you can apply, but more often they will provide suggestions, referrals or “leads” that can result in an application for employment or an interview. Provide your contacts with occasional updates – positions to which you have applied, and interviews you have scheduled or completed.

Important - Requests for advice are seldom considered inappropriate or an imposition. Instead, your contacts will likely be flattered for having been approached. Most people have received wise counsel and helpful career advice in their lifetime and look forward to the opportunity to share their experience, know-how and contacts. Always ask your contacts if they know of someone you can contact. If, for example, your 10 contacts each know three people, your 10-person network has now expanded to 40!

Networking With Strangers - A stranger is just a person you haven’t met yet. While job searching you should view all people you encounter as potential “networking contacts.” For that reason, you should always have a business card and/or resume close at hand. Share with people your career interests and job availability. Possible “contact points” include parties, weddings, sporting events, golf courses, libraries, professional conventions or conferences, chamber of commerce activities, Toastmasters, philanthropic organizations, family and high school reunions – anywhere you come into contact with people and are willing to strike up a conversation.