

# How to Get the Most out of an Employment-Related Networking Opportunity

## *What is Employment Networking?*

- A way of connecting with people who work in an industry you are interested in, or who have experience you can learn from.
- A focused way to talk to tell people about your interests and experience and what type of job you are looking for.

## *What Can Networking DO for you?*

- You may form a personal connection with someone already working at a company you would like to work for. You can learn about workplace expectations, what the company looks for when hiring, who to contact directly about scheduling an interview, etc.
- People often learn about job openings that aren't publicly advertised (approximately 75 to 95 percent of job openings are not advertised in public sources, such as the newspaper or Internet).
- An opportunity to learn about the requirements and expectations for a particular career or profession.
- Receive advice on how to improve your job search methods.

## *How can you PREPARE for a Networking Event?*

- **Research the companies** (or individuals) who will be attending, so you can develop a list of questions or discussion points you would like to talk to them about.
- **Create networking business cards.** Many people attend networking events and it can be difficult to remember everyone. Presenting a personal/networking business card helps people remember you and ensures you stand out. These are similar to traditional business cards and provide your contact information (name, credentials, career interest, contact information - phone number & email address) and a summary of your skills, qualifications, experience and background (on either the front or reverse side of the card).
- **Practice your introduction.** There is often only a brief time to talk with people, so it is important to introduce yourself confidently and ensure the main points you intend to share are highlighted. Practicing this with others in advance will help you perfect this skill.

### *What to do AT the Networking Event:*

- Think of it as a short **informational interview** - a brief opportunity to ask important questions and to present the things you have to offer to their company or industry.
- **Your introduction** - should include a very short summary of who you are, your training and career background, and what type of position you're looking for. The point is to be memorable in a positive way.
- **Be yourself** - not what you think others want.
- **Stay relaxed** - the professionals are at the event because they want to be! They are interested in you! Have fun!
- **Be specific** - due to the short time you will have to speak with each person, make sure you address the key points you wanted to discuss. \*This is where advance preparation helps!
- **Be considerate and respectful** - of the professional's time. Allow others to meet with them as well.
- **Ask for specific information and advice**, or leads on available positions.
- **Don't ask for a job or an interview directly**, but let them know you are interested in a role.
- Thank your contact and **ask for a business card**.

### *What to do AFTER the Networking Event:*

- **Send a thank-you note** to the contacts you made, reminding them of your conversation, and re-state your interest in working for his/her organization.
- **Keep notes** on personal information of your contacts (on back of business cards or in a file).
- **Check your resume** to make sure it is specific to your goals and particular job searches. Make any adjustments necessary, based on what you learned at the networking event.
- **Contact each one of your references** to tell them about your possibilities and affirm their agreement to be your reference. **Prepare them** for any calls from potential employers.
- **After an interview**, let your references know what happened and thank them for their help, regardless of the outcome.



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