

Networking

Networking can help you go from college to career. An effective tool for any job search, networking could be your best bet for finding out job opportunities in a competitive job market. Networking is the process of developing professional relationships in industries and organizations of interest to you. It is the “human aspect” of the job search that helps connect job seekers with the numerous positions that are never advertised. Given that, it’s clear that you will want to make networking a part of your job search.

Using Social Media to Network

Chances are, you have profiles on social networking sites. As its focus is “networking”, social networking can be a good addition to your job-search tool kit, when used properly. Do not mix social with professional networking. There are sites that are focused on professional networking. Such sites can help you develop a professional presence and use the technology of social networking to build your professional network.

LinkedIn. If you have not created a professional profile on LinkedIn (and kept it updated), you probably should! With millions of users around the world and an increasingly significant role in the hiring process, LinkedIn is a great way to begin enhancing your network. Check out the following resources for more information: www.learnlinkedin.com

Conduct Informational Interviews

Informational interviews are one-on-one conversations that you may have with professionals to learn more about their career. These exchanges can take place in person, over the phone, or even through email. Most people love helping students and sharing about themselves, so you should not feel weird about contacting professionals to get more information. Just keep a few things in mind: First, it is not acceptable to ask for a job during an informational interview. Secondly, be professional and courteous in all of your communications...and be sure to follow up with a polite thank-you note!

Internships and Volunteering

Interning and volunteering are both great ways to expand your network and build your resume! Since employers seek candidates with real knowledge of the workplace, it is highly recommended that you complete an internship during your time in school. For more information, contact Career Services at (678) 466-5400

Campus Resources

As a student, you have a tremendous amount of networking resources at your disposal. Take advantage of the opportunities on campus! Attend any events sponsored by your department or college, student organizations, and Career Services. Each area will offer an excellent venue to expand your network. In addition, do not be afraid to seek out alumni on your own to expand your professional network. Alumni remember what it is like to be a student and they are usually happy to share information about their career path.

Utilize Professional Organizations

One excellent way to develop your network is by becoming involved in professional organizations related to your career goals. This may be state, regional, or national chapters of a professional society or a local community organization dedicated to a cause or industry that relates to your interests. Conduct research online, talk to professionals you know, or ask your professors to learn which organizations may be the best option for you. Many such organizations have resources specifically for students. Once you have some leads, keep in mind that you have to do more than just become a member if you hope to receive any networking benefits. Try to attend conferences, workshops, or other events, and you may even consider seeking an officer position and making a contribution to the organization.

Develop a Strategy

Based on the suggestions provided and your own professional needs, begin thinking about how you might create a networking strategy. For instance, write down specific goals or timelines for networking objectives that you would like to achieve (example: “I will conduct two informational interviews by November 1.”). In addition, make a list of people – specific names or job titles – that you would like to meet. Always go to a networking event with a specific goal in mind.