

# **NETWORKING**

**NETWORKING** is really just a process that starts with an initial contact, which leads to a connection, which can then lead to a relationship. Networking should be viewed as a process of building relationships that get incorporated into the fabric of life—both your professional and personal life. Networking is about being genuine, not fake. It's how we look for a job; it is how we find prospects; it's how we engage our existing customers; and it's how we stay in touch with our friends and family.

Opportunities come from people. And when opportunities are limited, as in today's economy, you need to have a strong, thriving network to go to so that you can find and take advantage of those opportunities. People want to work with people they know and trust. If you have a limited network, your ability to discover opportunities is severely diminished.

## **Tips for Successful Networking:**

1. Be yourself. Talk real, act real, be real.
2. Be genuine. Take a genuine interest in the other person.
3. Be prepared. Project confidence. Smile. Make eye contact. Use good posture and a firm handshake. Introduce yourself in 1-2 sentences (your elevator pitch). Always communicate your story in a compelling manner.
4. Quickly find common ground. People build bridges between themselves by discussing things they have in common. Common ground is what moves an initial contact to a connection.
5. Ask other individuals to talk about their work:  
--What do you do? --Please describe your current position and organization? --Tell me about your most recent project. --What is a typical work-day like for you? --Can you tell me about YOUR career path and how you got started in your field? --What does it take to be successful in your organization?
6. Ask for career advice:  
--Given my strengths in \_\_\_\_, can you suggest some positions within your organization that might be a good fit for me?  
--What do you think I should do NOW, to prepare myself for a career path in the area of (your field of expertise)  
--May I follow-up with you about this matter in the future?
7. Bring your business cards with you. You can have some made at the Print Store or even create them yourself from an on-line program. Use two holders: one for your cards and one for the cards given to you by others. You can say something like, "It was nice meeting you. May I have one of your business cards so that I can keep in touch?"
8. **Ask for the other person's card before offering yours. Make some notes on the back of the card regarding your conversation with the employer.**
9. When offering your card, turn it so the person can read it immediately upon receiving it.

10. To exit the conversation, introduce someone else in the conversation, briefly summarize the conversation for the newcomer, and then excuse yourself.
11. Consider concealing a napkin or handkerchief in your pocket so that you can quickly dry your hand before extending your hand for the next handshake.
12. Focus on your conversation with the employer, rather than scanning the room to plan your escape.

### **DO NOT:**

**--Directly ask for a job or internship**

**--Ask the company representatives what their company “does”**

--Avoid the subjects of politics, religion, health problems, etc.

--Monopolize the conversation, be aggressive, or try to “one-up” others

--Even if the room is noisy, try to avoid invading others’ personal space

--Leave your cell phone, Blackberry, beeper, watch alarm, etc. in the ON position

--Stand by the refreshment table all evening

### **DO BRING WITH YOU:**

--Some breath mints and one or two nice writing pens.

--Knowledge (homework) on the companies who will be attending.

--Knowledge of current events (particularly economic events).

--Positive attitude.