

YOUR JOB SEARCH NETWORKING CAMPAIGN



Every survey you will read today shows that 60-80% of all employment positions are found via networking. These are known as hidden jobs, and if you don't want to be searching for your next position forever, this is where you will want to focus.

Therefore, this is a critical part of your job search strategy that you need to leverage.

It may seem daunting at first, but don't let that stop you. The more active you can become in networking, the faster you will find your next position.

NETWORKING DO'S & DON'TS

Before you get started brainstorming on who to reach out to, here are some "must-know" details:

Don't ask for a job or interview.

Instead, ask for ideas, leads, and referrals in your job search. Unless this is someone you know is hiring, your goal is making them feel important and valued – that you know they can give you direction, advice, and strategy. "I know you are well connected (very experienced in this field, etc.) and was wondering if you might take a look at my resume and provide me with any suggestions or advice regarding networking or other strategies." Make them feel important first before you ask any specific questions.

Don't focus too narrowly.

I understand the temptation to limit your networking to your industry and those directly related to your search. While that is important, you need to broaden your focus to consider other individuals who may seem to have no connection. It's best to keep an open mind in our well-connected world. Also, stay flexible with your industry focus as parallel industries could offer a great match as well.

Don't go in blind.

Unless you meet someone on the street and just feel compelled to ask their advice (yes, it happens and can be beneficial), never send an email or make a call to someone you barely know (or don't know at all) without looking the person up first. Check out their LinkedIn profile and even Google their employer to get a sense of who they are so you will be knowledgeable.

Don't hide behind your computer.

Please note that while the internet has made it easy to find people and connect, there is still something to be said for face to face, in real life (IRL) networking. Attending even one local chapter professional association meeting for your industry could provide the break you are looking for in finding opportunities. Get out there!

Always ask for referrals.

When speaking with someone, always be sure to ask if they can think of anyone else you should be talking to for advice, feedback, and more referrals.

Send a thank-you note.

You'll likely think me old school, but the reality is that this is how you stand out in a sea of emails, texts, and social media messaging! You send an old-fashioned note card through the postal service. Don't go with cutesy cards and simply aim to say, "I wanted to thank you for the time you gave me yesterday. I truly appreciate your ideas and advice. If you think of anyone else I should speak to, please let me know. If there is any way I can return this favor, just reach out." Then include your business card (yes, it is great for job seekers to have business cards).

Follow up a week after any discussion or meeting.

Here's the reality: when putting even folks with the best intentions on the spot, they won't necessarily think of a referral for you. When they do think of someone a day later, they'll mean to reach out to you but likely get busy and forget. A week later, when they remember and feel guilty, they'll make themselves feel better by telling themselves if you were still in need, you would have followed up. So, just follow up! It's as easy as a phone call, email, or social media message (however, you communicate with the individual) saying, "Thanks again for your advice last week. I just wanted to check in and see if you had any other suggestions or if any referrals come to mind."

CREATING YOUR CONTACT LIST

There are four basic categories of networking contacts. Each has its own unique value, and a good networking campaign will draw from each group. You can use the forms on the following page for further brainstorming and as tracking for who you will contact.

1. People you know well: friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers.

This is an excellent place to begin your campaign because these are the people who are close to you and who have the most interest in your success and are excellent networking contacts. There's also a certain bit of comfort in starting with those you know, like, and trust.

This is the group that you can ask for the most assistance. However, when networking with this group, it is essential to set clear goals. They may want to help more than you want.

It is also important to acknowledge their value and to say "thank you." Don't take this group for granted. You never know who those closest to you might know.

2. People you see occasionally (IRF or online): acquaintances, business contacts.

More than 25% of the people who find jobs through networking received the referral from someone they see once a year or less! With the advent of social media, it's possible to receive referrals from individuals you never meet in person. While these are people with whom you may be less comfortable, they offer some of the most significant potential. Ask this group for ideas and referrals.

When making contact, you may need to reintroduce yourself. State your purpose, acknowledge their value, and request a meeting (most likely virtual, depending on the relationship). It is a good idea to set reasonable time limits for the meeting. Let them know you only want 10-20 minutes of their time. Be sure you stick to your time limit. Come well prepared, and be professional and organized in your discussion. Remember to follow up with a thank you.

3. Referrals from your networking contacts.

Stretch your network by meeting new people who are the friends, associates, and acquaintances of your networking contacts. Again, these are more and more likely to be found online in your social media accounts. Look to LinkedIn first and foremost.

In every meeting or discussion, you should also ask if the person knows of anyone else to whom you should speak. Sometimes these will be people with additional information, but they may also be potential employers. When approaching a referral contact, you should introduce yourself with a lead statement that will get their attention. It is beneficial to use the name of the person who referred you, then state your purpose and request a meeting or conversation. You should also limit the time for the meeting, be well prepared and professional. Again, remember to follow up with a thank you.

4. Cold calling people you do not know and to whom you have not been referred.

Through your employment research, social media accounts, and networking, you may discover the names of people with whom you would like to talk. This type of contact takes another level of confidence, but the potential is great. Take the initiative, and you will find that these contacts will pay off. Plus, remember that with LinkedIn, you have the opportunity to find and reach people more easily than at any time in history.

Just always remember that the squeaky wheel gets the grease! So if LinkedIn doesn't pay off with a response, don't avoid picking up the phone and trying to connect. Not everyone stays connected to their social media, and some are so overwhelmed by messages that only a phone call may allow you to stand out. Once you've made contact and received any level of assistance, again, be sure to say thank you.

NETWORKING BRAINSTORMING LIST

Use the following list to further jumpstart a list of individuals you might network with. Keep an open mind as you consider the different people you know or could get to know. Try not to rule anyone out on your first pass of brainstorming.

Once you've created your list of potential networking contacts, it's a good idea to rank them as A, B, or C contacts.

A. Contacts are those that appear to offer the most direct line of sight to your target position.

B. Contacts are those that are more peripheral to your target position but still on the radar.

C. Contacts are those that you currently see no direct path to your target.

You can then decide in what order and by what level of effort to address each contact. This strategy will help ensure you attain the greatest return on investment for your networking time.

- Accountant
- Bank Manager
- Chamber of Commerce
- Classmates
- Coaches
- College Alumni
- Convention Attendees
- Dentist
- Doctor
- Friends
- Friends of Friends
- Insurance Agent
- Investment Advisor
- Lawyer
- Mechanic
- Mentors
- Neighbors
- Optician
- Past Co-Workers/Managers
- PTA Members
- Real Estate Agent
- Relatives
- Religious Leaders
- Social Acquaintances
- Teachers
- Veterinarian
- Volunteer Affiliations

NETWORKING TRACKING FORM

Use this form to guide you in the information you should be tracking and saving.

Name: _____ Dates Called _____ / _____ / _____

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Appointment Time/Date: _____

Follow-up: _____

Summary of Conversation/Contact _____

Contact Names Received

Name: _____	Name: _____
Position: _____	Position: _____
Company: _____	Company: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____
E-mail: _____	E-mail: _____
Name: _____	Name: _____
Position: _____	Position: _____
Company: _____	Company: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____
E-mail: _____	E-mail: _____