



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Career Services

Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management

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Networking

Networking is a key part of job searching. Statistically, 60% of all jobs are received through effective business networking. Networking is contacting people you know and making new contacts with the desire to gain advice and information about the industry in which you are seeking a job. Who is in your network depends on who you know:

- Family
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Professors and Coaches
- Social Organizations
- Teammates
- Counselors and Advisors
- Religious Groups
- Bosses and Co-workers

1. Prepare – Know who is in your current network and make contact first with a clear idea of what you want. Know your prospective industry and research how to expand your contacts. Set goals for yourself.
2. Build a Rapport – Networking is not just name collecting, so be genuine with people and show your interest as well as your willingness to help others in return. Use active listening when making contacts and try not to dominate the conversation. Ask your prepared questions and keep your language positive. Be referral-centered and advice-centered when seeking information, rather than expecting job offers from each contact. Remember, one contact might double *your* contacts by putting you in touch with other people. In this way, and with some effort, you will have a full network in no time.
3. Quality over Quantity – The more you practice your networking, the more likely you are to feel comfortable adding new contacts. Networking is learned with practice, so try not to worry if your network starts small. The quality of your relationship with each contact is more important than how many contacts you have. The 30 people who know your name but nothing about you are going to be less helpful than the 10 people who have an interest in who you are and what you hope to achieve.
4. Follow Up – Make notes regarding who your contacts are and how each contact fits into your personal network. Keeping notes on business cards is a great way to organize your contacts. Send an email or add your new contacts on a business networking site such as LinkedIn. Keep in touch with contacts and always send thank-you notes to those who have provided you with assistance.

To access all Career Services' handouts, visit: niu.edu/careerservices/handouts.html #D17 06-12