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# NETWORKING: THE #1 JOB SEARCH TECHNIQUE

**M**ost jobs change hands simply by people talking to people. This reality is reflected in the writings of nearly all experts on job search and career management. While there is disagreement on exactly how to do it, these experts are nearly unanimous in their recommendation that people in a job search be active in talking to other people. While it goes by a number of names, this process is most frequently called informational interviewing, or networking.

Lee Hecht Harrison's experience shows that the most effective networkers talk to 30 or 40 people each week. We recommend a minimum of a dozen. While the number of contacts per week is important, the content of those conversations is also important. In this section we will cover a method of doing networking based on years of experience with thousands of successful clients.

## Contents:

- The unpublished job market
- Networks and networking
- Preparation for networking
- Long distance networking
- Networking letters

SMART  
SUMMARIZE YOUR VALUES  
MARKETING LIST  
ASK IF THEY KNOW ANYONE  
REFERRALS  
TRADE INFO

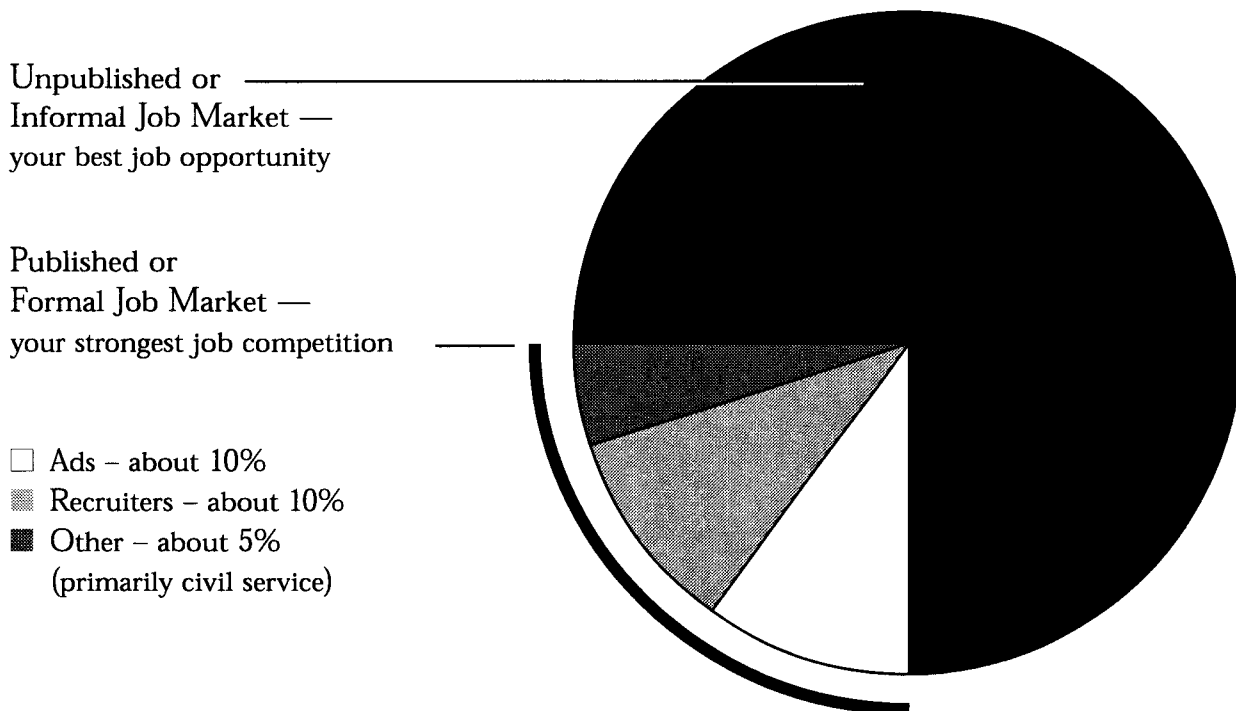
# The Unpublished Job Market

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According to parallel studies by a Harvard professor and the U.S. Department of Labor, the job market can be broken down into two categories: the formal, or published job market, and the informal, or unpublished job market. For managers and professionals, the published job market constitutes about 25% of available jobs. These jobs are generally publicized through advertisements and agencies.

The larger informal or unpublished job market includes jobs which are filled without being advertised. They change hands informally within a network of organizations and people or they are created for people who can fill an organizational need.

The best way to reach the unpublished job market is by informally talking to people. The central message of both the Harvard and the Department of Labor studies is that the majority of jobs change hands simply by people informally talking to other people.



# Networks and Networking

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People talking to people is an important part of job search. It is also an important part of the day-to-day business of living and managing careers.

Virtually everything we know we learn in conversations with other people. Some of them are one-way conversations in which we listen to people we have never met, including the authors of books and people on television. Often, the most useful information is gained in conversations with people we actually meet. These two-way conversations are opportunities to collect information relevant to specific personal situations. Unlike books and television, this information is more likely to be tailored to an immediate need because we can ask questions and guide the conversation.

Networking is a particular form of conversation directed toward information exchange. It is typically a series of conversations rather than a single one. Most of us do networking on a regular basis. We sometimes do it without even being aware that we are doing it.

Parents, for instance, often talk with friends and acquaintances about their children. In doing this, they collect information about child rearing, discipline, schools and all sorts of other things pertaining to their interest in their children.

In a similar manner, golfers might share information with other golfers about golf clubs, golf courses, books on golf and the like. Dog owners meet while walking their dogs in the park and talk about dog food, dog training and laws regarding dogs; the conversation may expand to other common interests.

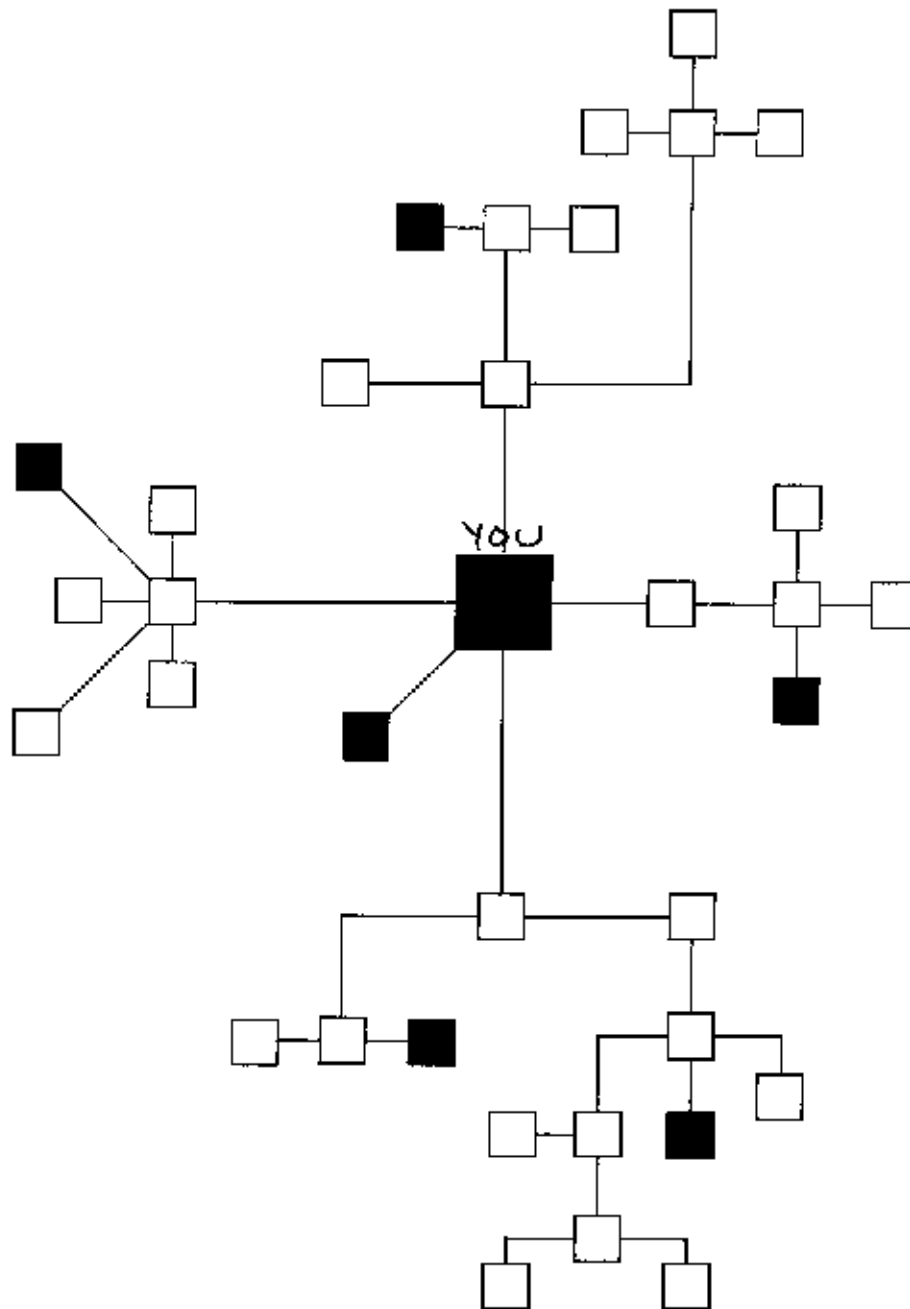
In a similar manner, secretaries talk to other secretaries about secretarial work and how to do it better. Human resource managers talk to other human resource managers about the common issues in their profession and how best to handle them.

All of these are examples of networks: the parent network, the golf network, the dog owners' network, the secretaries' network and the human resource managers' network. Notice that with all of these networks, the keys are:

- information exchange and
- some common interest between the people who are talking to each other.

# Network Connections

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# Networking in Job Search

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In applying networking to job search, there are a number of mistakes people commonly make. One is asking people about job openings. The problem with this is that the average person may not know of any job openings, much less know of one which is appropriate for you. The person may then become embarrassed by their inability to help. There is no information exchange. The conversation goes nowhere.

The second mistake people sometimes make is trying to network without a common interest. People who know you and care about you will share your interest in getting you re-employed. For people who do not know you, this will not be a common interest.

In job search networking, there always needs to be some sort of common interest. The two most useful are usually a common interest in certain organizations and a common interest in certain business or professional issues, as in the secretaries' or human resource managers' networks.

There are innumerable other common interests that are important. A mutual friend is a common interest which is nearly always enough to start a conversation. So is a shared interest in a religion (people often network in church, synagogue, mosque, or temple groups), a university (the alumni network), or other non-work organizations. It is even possible to do job search networking on the parents' or golfers' networks. Whatever it is, common interest is the second key to effective networking.

## Effective Job Search Networking

Effective job search networking includes:

- systematic information gathering about employers which leads to ...
- the identification of best potential employers for you which leads to ...
- conversations with people who work there which leads to ...
- opportunities as they arise

The process is a step-by-step process. Information exchange is the first key.

# You and Your Network

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## Key Contacts

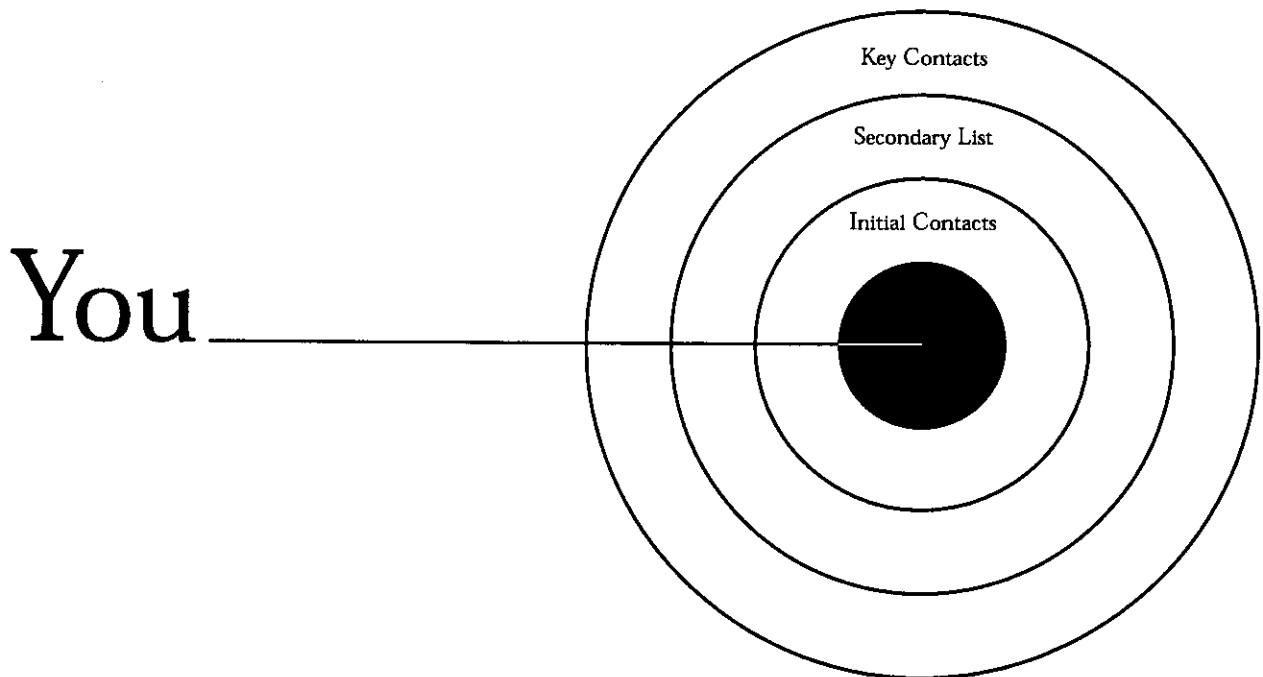
People who could help you

## Secondary List

People who know people who could help you

## Initial Contacts

People whom you know



# What You Can Gain from Networking

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The following are some of the more important reasons for networking or just plain talking to people in a job search.

## 1. Getting the Word Out: Your objective, qualifications, target market and availability

One important aspect of networking is simply getting the word out. The more people who know you are qualified and available, the better the chance that the information will get to the right person at the right time.

In order to do this, you need to be clear on your professional objective and your target market. If the only information you circulate is that you need a job, you are unlikely to be effective. What job? In what kind of organization? Without this information, it will be difficult for people to help you, even if they want to.

Whether or not people want to support you or even pass the word about you depends partly on whether they believe you are qualified. Why should people risk their own reputation by suggesting you for a position for which you are not qualified?

Some unemployed people get the word out that they are unemployed and desperate. This is usually unintended and always damaging. It can happen to people who have not carefully thought through their networking message.

The three most important parts of getting the word out are professional objective, qualifications and target market. People who have this information (and have also been impressed by your interest and enthusiasm) are likely to help you spread the word.

If you are conveying the right message, the more people who hear it, the better your chances are of connecting with a job. Effective job seekers find a way to work the basic message briefly into almost every conversation they have. It then spreads on various networks.

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## 2. Information on Your Target Market

The more information you have on your target market, the more effective you are likely to be in your search. Who is doing what? What are the needs of various target organizations? Which organizations are your kind of organizations?

The more you know about your chosen target market, the better able you are to focus on specific organizations. This general information on your chosen market allows you to select organizations which are more likely to be a fit for you and which are more likely to have an upcoming need.

Another important kind of information is that which allows you to do a reality check on your chosen career direction. This could include information on hiring practices, compensation levels and job descriptions. Do potential employers in your target market see you as a good candidate? Are there a large number of employers or just a few?

## 3. Detailed Information on Specific Target Organizations

As you prioritize your target list, you will be able to gain specific information on specific companies in networking conversations. This includes the names, interests, needs and personalities of its key people. It includes information on organizational culture and how the organization gets its work done. It includes organizational plans for the future. It includes the names, addresses and telephone numbers of people inside the organization who might have further information.

All of this organizational information can be the subject of networking conversations which are of interest to both parties. When you are networking with people employed in a certain industry, they usually are interested in other companies in the same industry. Their interest may be for competitive reasons, to help them do their job better, or because they know that one day they may be looking for new employment. Whatever their reasons, you can usually find significant common ground with people who are (or have been) employed in an industry you also know something about.



# What You Can Gain from Networking

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## 4. Advice and Ideas

If you are talking to someone who is more experienced than you are it may be appropriate for you to ask for career advice. Sometimes people enjoy mentoring someone less experienced. This kind of conversation could even lead someone to sponsor you in their own organization. (See #5.)

In talking to someone on your own level, asking for career advice may create the impression that you are too unsure of yourself to be a good candidate. Asking for advice or ideas on your target market, however, can be very effective for everyone.

Showing someone your list of target organizations and asking for their ideas and suggestions about which ones to pursue can be a very effective networking technique. It may produce target organizations you had not thought of. It may also lead to conversations on specific organizations that enable you to collect detailed information. Properly handled, it may also result in introductions to people inside target organizations. *All of these are extremely useful in a job search. In discussing target companies, you must always be clear that job openings or who is hiring are not your primary concerns.*

While asking for ideas on your target market can be useful, asking for advice about your resume is nearly always a bad idea. It usually focuses the conversation on resume writing technique rather than on you, your qualifications or your target market. Furthermore, you are more likely to get bad advice than good advice on resume writing. Once you have asked for the advice, your contact may expect you to rewrite your resume and even be offended if you do not.

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## 5. Sponsors

Every now and then in the networking process, someone takes a particular liking to you. This may be personal in that the two of you are becoming friends. Or it may be professional in that your networking contact would like to see you join their organization in order to strengthen it.

In either case, the person is prepared to promote you actively within their organization or to advise you on how to pursue employment there. Obviously, either of these options could be a major advantage. If you sense a willingness for someone to be your sponsor, you might begin by asking for advice on how to best pursue their organization.

## 6. Referrals

A very important potential benefit of networking is the possibility of getting referrals. A referral is an introduction to a new networking contact. These introductions increase the size of your network which also increases your chances of early success. Referrals also make new meetings easier to arrange. A stranger is more likely to be willing to meet with you if you have been recommended by a mutual acquaintance. So referrals are an important benefit of networking and also part of making networking effective.

# Summary

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## What you can gain from networking:

1. Getting the word out
2. Information on your target market
3. Information on specific targets
4. Advice and ideas
5. Sponsors
6. Referrals

# Why People Will *Not* Talk to You

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When you are doing job search networking, you will find that many people are willing to talk to you. You will also find people *not* willing to talk to you. Here are the most common reasons why people will not talk to you, and what you can do about them:

## Because they are too busy

When you are attempting to speak to people you do not know very well, this is a common reaction. Or to put it another way, you have not yet succeeded in conveying the idea that there might be something in it for them if they meet with you. Let them know what they might gain from meeting you, or at least reassure them that the meeting will be brief and pleasant.

## Because they do not know you

If you are contacting people who do not know you at all and have never heard of you, it can be difficult to get them to see you. Why should they talk to a complete stranger? If they do not know you, what you have to offer needs to be more compelling. This again points to the importance of getting referrals or introductions as a way of setting up meetings. If you are introduced by a mutual acquaintance, your new contact will feel more comfortable about seeing you.

## Because they are afraid you will pressure them

Especially when they do not know you, people may be concerned that meeting with you could be difficult or unpleasant. They may have a fear that you will try to pressure them into doing things they do not want to do. You will sometimes need to tell people, when setting up an appointment, what you will not do as well as what you want.

With good preparation and some persistence, you will be able to get many people to accept your invitation to talk. *What is it about?* is a question people will often ask when you are requesting a meeting. You need to have a well-thought out answer to this question.

# Why People *Will* Talk to You

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## Because they know you

One group of people who will obviously be willing to talk to you are your friends and relatives. They will talk to you now for the same reason they have always talked to you: they are your friends and relatives. In a job search, however, you may need to take extra care to make sure they are comfortable with the conversation. If they have any feeling that you are asking them to do the impossible (i.e., tell you where an appropriate job opening exists or fix you up with a job in their company), they may shy away from the conversation. On the other hand, if you are comfortable, and if you direct the conversation immediately to non-threatening areas, they will be comfortable, too.

Usually the most important part of networking with friends and relatives is for you to educate them on the process and on how they can be helpful. The simplest way is nearly always asking them to review your target list. The odds are quite good that they will have some information on one or more targets or be able to introduce you to someone who is likely to have information on targets.

## Because you were referred

A second, large group of people will talk to you because you were referred by a mutual acquaintance. This is an essential part of effective networking and the easiest way to get to meet the people you need to meet. If you are “a colleague of Joe’s” or “a friend of Sally’s,” there are people who will automatically talk to you. Notice that this is one form of common interest: you and your networking partner share an acquaintance.

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## Because they want to help

A third group of people are those who simply want to help. They may want to help because they themselves have been through a job search and understand the difficulties. Other people currently in the outplacement process are likely to be in this group. Or they may simply be people who like to help other people. In either case, the advice for you is the same: offer them some specific and practical ways they can be of assistance.

## Because you have something to offer

The fourth reason people will talk to you when you are networking is that they believe there will be something in it for them. This is especially important with people who do not know you well. Before talking to you, they will want to know whether the conversation is likely to be difficult, unpleasant, and not worth the time, or whether the conversation might be pleasant, beneficial and well worth the time. While you are doing job search networking there are numerous things you might be able to offer other people. Some of these are listed on the following pages.

# Tips on What to Offer Your Networking Partners

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## Information on other organizations

This information may help people do their jobs better or advance their own careers. You are likely to have this information on other organizations because you are making it your business to research them and to network in them. Notice that this is a common interest in an industry or organization.

## Information on careers and career advancement

As someone who is paying a great deal of attention to your own career, you may be able to offer advice and other information to people on better managing their own careers. You could refer them to articles, books or people. Again, there is a common interest in careers.

## Information on the current marketplace

Because you are currently in the market, you have the most up-to-date information. This could be helpful for business as well as career pursuits.

## A good new prospective employee

While they usually will not say so, people are sometimes quietly looking for new employees. Therefore, a chance to take a look at you without admitting they are looking for someone is attractive. They may also refer you to a friend who is looking for someone, as a way of doing the friend a favor.

Remember, people who are looking to hire would prefer to avoid the problems and expense of hiring recruiters or placing ads. You may see yourself as unemployed. They may see you as a valuable commodity.

# What is Networking?

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Jeffrey Stamps and Jessica Lipnak wrote *The Networking Book* (Routledge and Kegan Paul) on how networking works. In this book they said:

*What is a network? A network is a web of free standing participants cohering through shared values and interests. Networks are composed of self-reliant people and of independent groups. (In other words, **common interests**.)*

*What is networking? Networking is people connecting with people, linking ideas and resources. One person with a need connects with another with a resource, and networking begins. (In other words, **information exchange**.)*



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## Ideas

You may have ideas on how your networking contacts can do their jobs better or improve their organizations. With specific business or technical knowledge, you may even choose to do a little consulting. Sometimes people combine job search networking with actual paid consulting.

## Listening/Support

Most people enjoy being listened to and value personal support. You may have the opportunity to assist people simply by empathic listening and giving personal support.

## Appreciation

Expressing your appreciation both at the meeting and afterwards makes life more pleasant for your networking contacts. People appreciate appreciation.

## Other information

The present time has been called *The Information Age*. People depend on accurate, up-to-date information to be effective in their careers and lives. Strong networkers always ask themselves what interests they have in common with potential network contacts — and what information their networking partners will find useful or interesting.

# Prerequisites to Effective Networking

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As you have probably gathered from reading the previous sections on networking, there are certain essential prerequisites for effective networking. They are:

## 1. A Professional Objective

You need to be clear with people about what kind of work you are looking for. If you have not completely decided, it is perfectly acceptable to have several alternatives. But if you cannot be more specific than *I am looking for a challenging new job with a dynamic organization*, you are probably not yet ready to begin networking.

## 2. A Statement of Qualifications

You must be able to state your qualifications briefly in support of your Professional Objective. While you will not go into detail about your qualifications, everyone you speak to must know that you are qualified. If they believe you are unqualified, they will be less likely to be helpful, especially in the area of referrals.

## 3. A Target List

You should have a list of target organizations. This list need not be complete, but it should be representative. It needs to clarify for people the kind of organization you are going after. This list is an excellent conversation starter and also helps people understand your Professional Objective.

By referring to SIC (Standard Industrial Classification) codes and some of the resources listed under *Information Sources*, you can identify the potential employers you wish to target. You may be able to conduct a computerized search at your public library.

For more information on how to research a targeted industry and create a target list, refer to *Researching the Marketplace* in the preceding section.

You will not actually show the list to everyone you talk to; however, your awareness of specific companies will help you guide the conversation in productive directions and ask questions if the conversation stalls. Talking about specific target companies is non-threatening, comfortable and very useful. Remember that you are not asking which of them has openings. You are collecting information, including names, whenever possible.

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## 4. Research on Your Top Targets

If you have a list of 50 target companies, you should know which are your highest priority. You should also have basic information on your top 10 targets. If your target list includes an industry where you have already worked, you may not need to do library research on your top targets to collect this information. On the other hand, if you are beginning to network in an industry where you have never worked, it is very important that you do enough research on your targets so that you will be able to have an intelligent conversation about them.

Library research on industry or company issues can be useful for anyone, as can library research to add names to a target list.

## 5. A List of Possible Networking Contacts

This is a list of 100 people to whom you might talk. You should include on this list people who would be likely to accept a phone call from you, either because they are a friend or acquaintance or because they have probably heard of you. Including someone on this list does not necessarily mean that you will talk to them. Include everyone. Then prioritize the names.

The chart on the following page is designed to help you prepare this list. Include your references from your *Career Profile, Part I*, and browse through the entire *Profile* to jog your memory.

## Summary of Essential Prerequisites

1. A professional objective
2. A statement of qualifications
3. A target list
4. Research on your top targets
5. A list of possible networking contacts

# Your Current Contact Network

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## Friends

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## Relatives

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## Neighbors

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## Co-Workers (Past and Present)

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## Suppliers/Customers (Past and Present)

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## Business/Professional Associates

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**Alumni/Alumnae**

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**Community, Political Contacts**

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**Church, Synagogue, Mosque, Temple**

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**Organizations**

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**Personal Business (Banker, Broker, etc.)**

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**Your Spouse's or Partner's Network**

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# Preparing for a Networking Meeting

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In job search, it is important that you think through and prepare for every networking meeting, even those with friends and relatives. This will enable you to have meetings that are productive for you and comfortable for your networking contact. Because you have requested and arranged the meeting, it is your responsibility to conduct it. In preparation, you should think through the following three key questions.

## 1. Why will this particular person talk to me?

This is likely to be one of the reasons listed in *Why People Will Talk to You* on pages 14-15.

The point here is to be sure that there is a reason before attempting to set up the appointment.

## 2. What do I expect from this particular meeting?

You need to be realistic. You may hope that you will get referred to an important hiring manager, but is that expectation realistic? Think about who this person is, who they are likely to know, what kinds of information they are likely to have, and how strong your relationship with them is. What might you realistically expect?

Information is nearly always a realistic expectation. What kinds of questions should you ask? Should you show this person your target list? Do you want to give them a copy of your resume? Think through your questions and conversation starters.

Consider all of your goals and expectations. Plan the meeting accordingly.

## 3. What can I do for them?

This is the other half of the equation. Once you are clear on what you want, you need to also be clear on what you have to give in return. Whenever possible, this should be a two-way street. You may wish to review the list of *Tips on What to Offer Your Networking Partners* on pages 16 and 17 as a way of thinking through what you have to offer.

# Sample Questions for Networking Meetings

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## About the target list

- Are you familiar with Sanchez Manufacturing? Do you know how they sell their products? Do they have a sales force? If so, how large?
- I am interested in exploring law firms of 10 or more partners. I'm already considering Bindle, Brign, and Ransome. Are you familiar with any others? Do you know if they have patent practices?
- Would you take a look at my target list of non-profits and service agencies and see if you are familiar with any of them?

## About industry or professional issues

- I have experience in the use of self-directed multicultural work teams and am interested in organizations using them. Do you know of any?
- As you know, I have experience building businesses through acquisitions. I have a particular interest in what makes acquisitions succeed — financial, marketing factors and cultural factors — everything. I know you've also done acquisitions. What do you think is the key to success? Which organizations are doing it well and which are not?
- How do you think current interest rates will affect the cyberscope industry? What do you see companies doing to deal with it? Which companies are succeeding and which are less successful?

## About the organization

- I'm talking to Tse Ming Tam about the engineering group and Samantha McMillen in customer service. Have I overlooked anyone?
- It occurred to me that a sales group may be able to use my skills. Where do you suggest I start?

# Some Phrases for Networking

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## Openings ...

*Tell me about ...*

*What is your opinion?*

*What are your thoughts?*

*Who would you suggest?*

*How would I ... ?*

*What would you advise?*

*Since we don't know each other, may I tell you about myself?*

*Would you be willing to explain how you made your career change?*

## And closings ...

*You probably know a lot of people in the business. Does anyone come to mind who would be a good source of information?*

*I understand that you know people in the association. Any suggestions about who I can call?*

*Do you know of any projects coming up that I may be of help with?*

*You seem to share my interest in genetic engineering firms in Asia. If I learn more about them, would you like me to pass the information on to you?*

*After I speak with George, I will call and let you know what happened.*

*As we talked, you mentioned four different people you know in the cyberscope industry.*

*Would you be willing to introduce me to them?*



# Networking with Diverse Audiences

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The background (ethnic, cultural, religious) of a networking contact may offer a distinctive contribution to your network activities, such as fresh ideas and different perspectives.

Here are just a few examples of multicultural associations you might want to utilize in networking:

- American Association of Black Women Entrepreneurs
- Association of Black Certified Public Accountants
- Conference of Minority Public Administration
- National Council of Black Engineers and Scientists
- National Minority Business Council
- National Association of Minority Women in Business

- Chinese Cultural & Education Association
- Indochina Women's Association
- Association of Chinese Journalists
- International Buddhist Progress Society
- Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce
- North American Taiwanese Professional Association

- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Latin American Management Association
- National Hispanic Bankers Association
- National Hispanic Corporate Council

For other multicultural organizations, check the *Encyclopedia of Associations* and *National Trade and Professional Associations of the United States*.

For a good primer on networking internationally, the book *Kiss, Bow or Shake Hands: How To Do Business in Sixty Countries* by Terri Morrison is excellent. It gives information on how people process information and arrive at decisions in other cultures.

# Suggested Structure for Networking Meetings

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## 1. The opening

Establish rapport through a cordial introduction. Mention the name of the person who referred you or suggested that you meet with this contact. Tactfully state that you are not asking for a job but currently seeking information. Agree on how long the meeting will last.

## 2. Identify your situation

Talk about yourself. Describe your Professional Objective, your qualifications and your target market. Be brief and summarize. You scheduled the meeting to obtain information, not sell your qualifications. So give only the information that is needed in order to prepare the person for the rest of the conversation.

## 3. Ask the questions you prepared and listen

Prior to the meeting, make a list of questions you want to ask in order to direct the conversation and collect information.

When your networking partner offers information or advice, listen and take notes. If your contact brings up a specific obstacle to your finding the position you are seeking, ask for advice on how to overcome it. In addition to suggested solutions, ask your contact to refer you to others who can assist you.

If you are discussing your target list, look for the opportunity to collect names of people relevant to the list. For example, if your contact mentions three new target companies, you might ask: *How did you happen to know about those companies?* If the response is *I know someone who works there*, you might ask for the name of that person.

In a similar manner, discussions of individual target organizations and discussions of issues in your field or industry may also lead to the names of relevant people. The same is true of younger people who are discussing career direction. This may also lead to the names of additional people.

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## 4. Ask for referrals

Once you have asked the questions you came to ask and gathered information, you might make a specific request for introductions. This is easier if the person you are talking to has already mentioned names. You can now repeat some of those names and ask for an introduction.

If no names have been mentioned, now might be a good time to ask for referrals within or outside your contact's organization. Be sure to get specific names and titles and confirm how and when you will approach the referrals. Ideally, try to get your contact to make the preliminary contact for you. If your contact cannot think of any people for you to see, you might ask if you can call back in a few days after he or she has had more time to think about it.

## 5. Make an offer

Throughout the conversation, you have been looking for opportunities to offer something to your networking partner. If you have already done so, now is the time to confirm that offer. For example, if you offered to send a copy of an article, reaffirm that commitment now. If you offered an introduction, make arrangements to complete it.

If you have not yet made an offer, now is the time to make one. At the very least, you can offer your sincere appreciation.

## 6. Close the meeting

Arrange any necessary follow up. Explain that you will inform your networking partner of what happens in meetings with people to whom you were referred. Conclude the meeting with your thanks and leave at or before the agreed upon time.

## 7. Follow up

Send a thank you letter and follow up with any promised actions. Keep your networking partners informed of your subsequent meeting with referrals. Plan your next contact with this person.

# Suggested Structure for Networking Call

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1. The opening (*mention referral*)
2. Identify your situation (*include your Professional Objective, qualifications, target market*)
3. Ask questions and listen (*questions regarding targets are usually most productive*)
4. Ask for referrals
5. Make an offer (*give something back, if possible*)
6. Close the meeting (*arrange next contact*)
7. Follow up

# Example of Networking Script

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1. *Hi, I am Nancy Williams. Frank Wright of Rothchild, Martinez and Mazzetta suggested I contact you. Frank and I went to law school together and he thought you might have some information on law firms with labor or employment practices.*
2. *As a result of a large reduction in force at Tunje Communications, my position as an in-house attorney was eliminated. Now, I am considering returning to a law firm, as well as new corporate positions. I think my 10 years' experience at Tunje is a large plus in labor and employment law. I am looking into law firms in both Illinois and California.*
3. *Do you have any knowledge of firms with labor or employment practices, either here or in California? I am exploring firms of any size, whether or not they are currently in a hiring mode. Or: I've made a preliminary list ... Or: I am curious about Langwood & Gleason locally. Are you familiar ...*
4. *Do you happen to know Theodore Plotkin who is head of Litigation at Langwood & Gleason? Could I use your name when I contact him? Do you know anyone who might have more information on California firms?*
5. *I really appreciate your offer of help in introducing me to Mr. Plotkin. I will send you the article we discussed from the Labor Law Journal and the address of the Internet Business Law Forum.*
6. *I would like to let you know how my meeting with Mr. Plotkin goes. May I call you when I have met with him?*
7. *Send a follow-up note to your contact and follow up by phone as you suggested in step 6.*

# Long-Distance Networking

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The following are ideas for long-distance networking:

1. Determine your target city. If you have a close friend or relative there, you may wish to arrange to use their address and phone number.
2. Order the yellow pages, the Chamber of Commerce Directory of Businesses and Industries and local newspapers.
3. Ask your local friends or contacts for referrals who live in your target city. Get introductions to the largest possible number of people there. Contact them.
4. Collect data. Send a letter to any friends or contacts in your target city and announce your plans to relocate. Enclose a list of potential targets. Request any information they might have about your target list and your target city. Network on the phone. Try to locate common interest organizations (religious, alumni, professional, etc.) that you might want to network into or visit.
5. Send a copy of your resume and an approach letter to recruiters and agencies in your target city.
6. Use a direct self-marketing approach with businesses that interest you in the Chamber of Commerce Directory.

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7. Check on-line computer bulletin boards; post a message.
  8. Contact the mayor's office, economic development office or governor's office for lists of companies you might pursue.
  9. Contact business groups and professional associations in your target city for lists of companies you might pursue. Try to make network contacts in them.
  10. Collect all favorable responses. Write or telephone those people and schedule appointments or interviews.
  11. Schedule a trip to your target city. When you arrive, get busy. Telephone, meet, follow up.
  12. Spend time in your target city. Meet and network with people you located by telephone. Extend your network. Try for meetings with hiring managers. *I'm only in town for a few days* sometimes works.

# Networking Letters

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Letters can be used to inform people within your network that you are in the job market, to ask contacts for the names of others who might be of assistance during the job search, or to inquire about target organizations. A networking letter can be sent to a primary or a secondary contact. Such letters always need to be followed by a phone call or meeting. Sample letters follow on the next pages.

As part of your networking activities, you will want to follow up and thank people for their assistance as effectively and promptly as possible. Sending a follow-up/thank you letter within 24 hours after a contact is good business sense. A sample follow-up/thank you letter is included in the samples.



# Sample Networking Letter to a Friend

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(Date)

Mr. Wasali Romanenko  
Romanenko and Associates  
4444 Sepulveda Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90034

Dear Wasali:

Because we have not talked in a while, I wanted to get in touch with you and update you on a recent change in my professional life.

After seven years with ABC Corporation, my position was recently eliminated as part of a workforce reduction. This event has offered me the opportunity to change directions and to move into sales, preferably in a technical area. I am very positive about this move and feel the time is right for me to take a new direction. Since I respect your opinion, I wanted to run some ideas by you.

I would be interested in any thoughts you have about which companies I should pursue. I have enclosed a list of 35 organizations I am investigating and am interested in information on any and all of these, even if they are not hiring right now. Information such as product lines, sales methods, reputation, policies, and anything else would be helpful. If you know someone who has personal knowledge of any of these organizations, that would be particularly helpful. I will give you a call in a week to see if you might have any information for me.

Looking forward to seeing you at the sales conference next month in Monterey.

Best regards,

Sung Lim

Enclosure

# Sample Networking Letter to a Referral

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(Date)

Ms. Maria Menji-Machado  
Director of Human Resources  
Airwaves Cellular  
1000 Maplewood Circle  
Houston, Texas 70033

Dear Mrs. Menji-Machado:

Frank Wright of Rothchild, Martinez and Mazzetta suggested I get in touch with you. Frank and I went to law school together. The Tunje Communications Company has had a large reduction in force which eliminated approximately two departments, one of which was mine. I am a seasoned attorney with transactional and team building skills, including:

- Ten years of legal experience, with the last five years as legal team leader in a national corporation.
- Drafting and developing business contracts for both recurring transactions and deals worth tens of millions of dollars.
- Proven success in consensus building as demonstrated by development of a corporate security program, redesign of 401K program and many other projects.

As an in-house counsel, I have always been proactive and emphasized preventive measures and procedures. These efforts for Tunje significantly reduced litigation and claims costs. My emphasis was on negotiation and mediation which minimized or resolved high exposure situations.

The ideal organization is one where I can continue my emphasis on preventive, proactive law and teamwork. I will call you in a week to follow up and see if we can meet. I would be interested in any suggestions you have regarding companies that might need good in-house counsel.

Sincerely,

Nancy C. Williams  
Attorney at Law

# Sample Networking Letter to a Referral

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(Date)

Mr. Amin Hodo  
Datalogic Information Systems  
482 Hartland Street  
Hartford, CT 06108

Dear Mr. Hodo:

Andrew Wilson of Mitchell Multinational suggested that I contact you regarding changes in your organization. He indicated that you are expanding and may be in need of someone with a background in Systems Administration to support your existing UNIX Systems.

As UNIX Systems Administrator for CBI for the past five years, I provided hardware and software support to a system supporting over 200 users. I integrated existing and future engineering tools and databases, coordinating telecommunications between CBI and Netcom via Sun/UNIX.

Specific accomplishments include the following:

- Downsized complex applications to a client server system using Solaris in a mixed environment.
- Five years' experience in Sun UNIX in a mixed environment, Novell and UNIX; experience in SGI and Sun O/S.
- Knowledge of TCP/IP, NFS, NDS, SMTP, SLIP, PPP, and ISDN.

I would be happy to discuss my background in further detail, and your expansion needs, if you would like to do so. I am sure that Andrew could speak to my qualifications. I will call you next week to see when we might meet.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kei Yamatsu

# Sample Networking Letter to a Key Contact

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(Date)

Mr. Arden Kwan  
Vice President — Sales  
XYZ Company  
1000 Siesta Way  
Pittsburgh, PA 19321

Dear Mr. Kwan:

For top sales professionals, change often presents a springboard to capture new markets and customers. In the past quarter, my employer, ABC Manufacturing, consolidated sales districts nationwide which resulted in the elimination of all district manager positions, including mine. As a result, I am using this as a springboard to locate an organization that could use an innovative sales management professional like myself.

My immediate goal is to talk to a few key executives like you who are always open to having a discussion with someone who can bring top skills and talent to your organization, either now or in the future.

By way of introduction, I am a seasoned sales manager and marketing professional with over 15 years of experience in selling quality products in highly competitive markets. Some recent accomplishments are:

- Created a strategy to win a niche market and gained stocking commitment from major wholesaler of over 500 SKUs.
- Developed a strategic plan to offset 3M's entry into the Pittsburgh market. Took entire sales force to Pittsburgh for three weeks and met with every customer in target market. As a result, 3M withdrew from the label business.

I would like to have a brief telephone conversation with you to learn about XYZ's current and future sales needs. I feel confident I can contribute immediately to your continuing success in a marketplace that requires unceasing commitment, energy and enthusiasm on the part of its salespeople. I am also interested in your insights on the Pittsburgh marketplace in general. I will call you next week to set up a convenient telephone time. I look forward to talking to you then.

Sincerely,

Selani Anderson

# Sample Follow-up/Thank You Networking Letter

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(Date)

Mr. Amin Hodo  
Datalogic Information Systems  
482 Hartland Street  
Hartford, CT 06108

Dear Mr. Hodo:

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you last Thursday. I appreciated the time you spent reviewing my target list and giving me information on those companies.

Your support on Thursday was most appreciated and it helped to hear about how you approached your recent career change. I will follow up with the names you gave me to contact and let you know of my progress in a couple of weeks. I am enclosing the article we discussed. If I run across anything else on the topic, I will let you know.

Thank you for being such a great networking partner!

Best regards,

Kei Yamatsu

Enclosure

# Next Steps...

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The intended outcome of *Networking* is a readiness to begin job search networking. This should be based on a clear understanding of networking, its importance in job search, and the basics of how to do it.

To attain this outcome, you may want to:

- Plan a specific networking conversation following the suggestions in the text.
- Review and rehearse such a conversation, perhaps with a colleague who is also in job search. (While you are at it, you may want to do a real networking meeting with that person.)
- Try networking in person and on the phone, starting with your easiest contacts — those people you are most comfortable talking to. (Your spouse and your best friends are possibilities.)
- After trying two or three networking conversations, reread the preceding pages — you may learn more after you have actually tried it.
- Find an appropriate on-line bulletin board or chat room to see what else you can learn.

After this work on *Networking*,

- Review *Standard Job Search Techniques* and *Job Search Productivity* if you have not already done so.