

Networking Tips

Networking isn't just for the job search, when you're coming to your contacts for an immediate payoff. Senior professionals need to make networking a part of their daily routine, not just an alarm they sound when it's time to switch jobs.

Nevertheless, the move to an active job search is prime time to refresh your existing network, both online and off. The Internet has extended the reach and complexity of networking opportunities, but it hasn't replaced the need for traditional human encounters. People need to know you, and you need to know people, to establish your credibility and get the inside scoop on new opportunities.

1. Navigating Your Network

Social networks like Facebook and LinkedIn haven't changed where you network so much as how.

Networking used to mean working the phones, attending industry events and trading business cards. It still does. But today you can augment and support those efforts with the click of a button).

2. Alumni Networking Rules

Leverage your alumni association to find and win a job, but know the rules about what is and isn't fair play.

Alumni associations are a great jumping off point to networking, but it's just the start. A job seeker is still obligated to make a genuine connection before leveraging an alumni connection for a job opportunity.

A simple introduction where you disclose that you're up for a job and just ask if they have any advice about the industry in general. A better way than a basic cold call would be to meet them through a mutual contact or via a regular alumni association networking event and start up a relationship from there.

3. Apply and Network in One Step

The next generation of job application software will let you see whom you already know at the company, so you can express your interest in helping a particular organisation and network at the same time.

There are many features from the leading automatic online job application software packages, and is being adopted by many HR departments. If you do submit your CV through these channels, you'll be able to view potential connections between the organisation and your existing professional network.

They are able to link to your LinkedIn account to show you who in your network may be connected to someone at the organisation; that lets you follow up your application with an e-mail to a colleague to request a referral or set up an introduction to someone who can.

Referrals matter! Studies have shown that more than 60 percent of jobs are filled through referrals. Employers fast-track job candidates who are recommended by current employees; statistically speaking, employee-referred hires prove to be better hires, have longer job tenures and therefore represent a far sounder investment on the part of employers.