

TRANSCRIPT

HOW TO NETWORK: 3 TIPS TO ADVANCE YOUR CAREER

Networking is the number one job seeking strategy. It's a planned process of seeking information, advice, and additional contacts. It's building a sincere business relationship, and it's also building trust so that others want to partner with you and help you. It's not asking for a job.

There are many ways to make networking contacts. LinkedIn, which now has 170 million people worldwide, is an excellent resource. So try to use LinkedIn as a proactive research tool; join groups, connect with people. Also, many colleges and universities have specialized alumni databases where alums have volunteered to conduct informational meetings with other alums and also with students. Also, seminars, panels, conferences, advisers, professors, administrators – basically, anyone potentially that you knew, people that you know, and people that you will meet could be a potential networking contact for you.

So the best way to keep up with your contacts is to conduct a series of informational meetings. Ideally, these would be face to face, in person meetings, 20-30 minutes. What you're doing is you're not asking for a job, but you're trying to uncover leads. You're the interviewer, this is your meeting, you have your agenda. You're trying to find out what are the needs of the organization, and you're also building a sincere business relationship. You're meeting them; they're meeting you. It's about information and advice. And it's also important to ask to keep in contact periodically so you can keep the relationship going.

It is also important to develop a professional introduction. This is a brief, concise introductory message that markets and promotes you. It basically has three components: you're stating your name, your role – perhaps you're a student, you're professional – your career interest, what you have to offer, and most importantly, next steps.

I would say that 80 percent of your job search time should be spent networking. Most people don't like to hire strangers the way they used to. People like to hire people that they know of and that they know about. So the best way, again, is to conduct a series of informational meetings. Find out what their needs are. You let them know your contributions and how you can meet their needs. Perhaps, one of the questions you ask is what are problems and issues that they're facing. If you have some solutions, perhaps that can lead to a job, an internship, or a volunteer experience.