



Networking?

DEFINITION: Networking is the process of using contacts made in business, through college, or family and friends for purposes beyond the reason for the initial contact.

Networking is imperative to the job and internship search process. Your network should include people who are willing to give you information about the field and industry of employment, as well as feedback on your career development. Your network should also include people who may be in a position to tell you about job opportunities that are open either within their organization or elsewhere.

STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL NETWORKING

1. DEFINE YOUR NETWORK

Your network should include most people you know or have met along the way. Write down, in your notebook, everyone in your network and gather as much information on each person as possible.

This should include:

- ✓ Name of Company & Position Title
- ✓ Phone, Email, Address
- ✓ Where you met / Who introduced you
- ✓ What you have already spoken about
- ✓ What you would like to learn from them
- ✓ Notes / Comments about the network

Be sure to include all contacts you have met over the years (high school/ college):

- ✓ Friends & Family
- ✓ Parents of Friends & Roommates
- ✓ Coaches
- ✓ Faculty & Teachers
- ✓ Staff & Administrators
- ✓ Academic Advisors & Club Advisors
- ✓ Alumni & Previous Employers

2. RECORD ALL NETWORKING ACTIVITY

Start an Excel Database or Notebook. This will help you stay organized! Be sure to log all of the information you have gained and keep business cards given to you by people in your network. Keep expanding your network by attending conferences, joining professional organizations or volunteering in your community.

3. REASONS TO NETWORK

Finding an internship or job in today's market is a very competitive process as you could be one of hundreds of applicants. Having a network may give you an edge and allow you to obtain position openings more efficiently and make contacts with the best employee at the organization. Often, a network will forward your resume, or "put in a good word" for you when they hear of a position opening. A network will make it easier for you to stand out in a large crowd of qualified individuals.

4. WHEN IS NETWORKING APPROPRIATE

Networking is an ongoing process which can begin as early as the high school years and is especially important during your college career. You can obtain information from networks through informational interviews, or even at formal or casual professional, social or family functions.

Because networking is ongoing, it is important to maintain your network, even once you have secured a job. Reconnecting with your network allows you to seek a job or internship with ease.

5. WHAT CAREER FIELD IS MOST SUITABLE FOR NETWORKING?

Networking is suitable for all professionals regardless of the career field or professional level. Depending on the culture of the profession, networking experiences may differ. Some organizations may encourage networking through various work functions such as golf outings or professional or social gatherings. Other industries may have to work more independently to network.

And don't forget to return the favor by helping fellow employees, students at your alma mater, or even friends and family interested in your field of employment. Aside from serving as a resume builder, helping others is a genuine act of kindness and allows you to remain active in your community while supporting the overall mission of Saint Vincent College and the Career Center.

6. FOLLOWING-UP WITH CONTACTS

It is most appropriate to follow-up with each person you contact by writing a brief thank you letter immediately after your meeting. Be sure to maintain ongoing interactions with your contacts. The purpose of keeping in touch is to be sure your network will think of you when an opportunity arises.

Some reasons why you may want to follow up with your network include:

- ✓ Sending an updated resume
- ✓ Updating the contact on the progress you have made and make them aware of any results based on the contact's recommendations
- ✓ Sharing new personal information (i.e. academic success; marriage; new baby; change of address)

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO:

- Treat networking as a two-way process; help others and serve as someone else's contact
- Keep up-to-date lists of your networks
- Keep time open for networking during social / work-related events
- Follow-up on all leads provided to you and listen to the advice a contact provides you
- Thank your contact for their time and be patient through the process