

Network...the right way

For those who think they don't know how to network or worry that they are too shy, I like to remind people that networking is just about talking to people and maintaining relationships. You don't have to network with CEOs or VIPs to benefit, and networking doesn't have to mean shaking a million hands at a conference or making 100 cold calls.

1. Start with people you know

List the people you know—friends, family, neighbors, professors, coaches, family friends, etc.—and start chatting with those people about your career interests and theirs. Then slowly start asking these people to introduce you to other people in their networks. If you are gracious and genuine, most people are more than happy to provide some advice and connections.

List people in your existing network to whom you can reach out to for advice and referrals:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Conduct informational interviews

Then schedule time on your calendar to meet with or call each person. Now list the questions you would like to ask people about your career and job search.

Examples:

- > *What publications do you read on a regular basis and recommend I read to stay current and knowledgeable?*
- > *What experiences and activities in college best helped you prepare for your career?*
- > *Would you be willing to look at my resume and provide some feedback?*

_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____
_____	_____

3. Always ask the #1 most important networking question

Whenever you ask anyone for help, guidance, a connection or a job lead, simply say very graciously, "Thank you so much for your help. Please let me know if there is anything I can ever do for you." This shows that you understand that networking must be mutually beneficial to be effective.

Persist (politely)

1. Be the first to follow up

In an economic downturn when jobs are scarce, it is crucial to act quickly. Whenever you meet a professional contact, hear about a job or make a connection at a job fair, follow up that same day with an email or phone call.

2. Schedule your outreach

Beyond your immediate follow-up activities actively schedule time in your calendar to check in with your contacts, perhaps for one hour every Friday afternoon. List 5 people with whom you'd like to follow up over the next week or two:

3. "Ping"

As you continue to build and expand your network, use these techniques to stay in touch with people in a positive, memorable way—called a "ping" by networking expert Keith Ferrazzi. List below the different ways in which you can "ping" people in your network so you stay top-of-mind if they hear of any job opportunities.

Examples:

- > *Forward an article you come across that would be interesting to your contact (but not those joke forwards!)*
- > *Comment on someone's Facebook or LinkedIn status update in a positive way*
- > *Send holiday cards or new address cards if you move*
- > *Invite someone to join you for a networking event, book reading or other free or low-cost event*

Volunteer

Volunteering is a great way to build your skills, expand your leadership experience and enhance your professional network. Here are some suggestions for making the most of community service and volunteering:

- volunteer to do something you really love, such as working with animals, building things or being outside—you'll get a great feeling from helping others and you'll relieve some of the stress of job hunting
- volunteer to write articles or report on events for a volunteer organization's website or e-newsletter—request a byline with your name so this effort adds to your Google results
- lead a project, initiative or event—leadership experience is very important to employers. If you don't have a lot of it, then volunteer to start or manage a volunteer effort—most nonprofit organizations will be delighted for you to take on as much responsibility as you can handle effectively
- chat with people while you're volunteering—this is a great way to meet new people for informational interviews and practice your 15-second pitch
- share your job search goals with your volunteer organization—many nonprofit leaders are very connected in their communities, including with the for-profit sector

Have more questions about your job search?

*Visit our blog on pwc.tv where you can post your career question and receive an answer from Lindsey Pollak, career development specialist and author of *Getting from College to Career: 90 Things to Do Before You Join the Real World*.*