

NETWORKING AT A GLANCE

INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY CAREER CENTER
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The most successful job searches include a variety of methods to locate job openings – online job postings, career fairs, and sending introductory resumes and cover letters. But job seekers often forget about one of the most successful ways to locate potential job openings – networking through their personal contacts. Many jobs are never advertised to the public which is why it is often called “the hidden job market.” When hiring, most organizations first look at people they already know and acquaintances recommended by people they know. **According to surveys, 80% of job openings fall into this “hidden job - market.”** This is why networking is so important.

What is Networking?

Networking Is

- An exchange of information or services
- Getting the help you need
- Building relationships **before** you need them
- Helping others
- Genuine and authentic

Networking Is Not

- Asking for a job
- Bothering or pestering someone
- Expecting something as a result of a connection

Types of Networking

Strategic

There might be a specific person that you want to meet for a specific reason. You ask people who know both parties for an introduction. This type of networking has a stated purpose and therefore a desired outcome.

Serendipity

This is an unplanned chance or encounter that leads to a mutually beneficial relationship. Since nothing is planned, there are no expectations.

Getting Started

Create a Plan

What are your networking goals and what results are you seeking?

A Few Good People

You want quality contacts, not quantity. This is not Facebook. Do not spend all of your time trying to gather a large number of contacts. Spend your time making a few quality contacts and keep in regular communication with them.

Inventory and Organize Your Current Networks

This makes it easier to find the right person for the right problem and helps you to not confuse your networks and contacts.

Your current networks are already bigger than you think. Contact people already in your life who might be able to link you to someone else. Consider these current networks: friends, extended family, your parents' friends and co-workers, your co-workers and bosses, church members, college faculty and staff, people at your gym, volunteer site, sports teams and community activities.

Evaluate Your Current Network

What is their relationship to what you need and how can you give back?

- Who has the power to help you?
- What do you need from these people? Have you written it down?
- What is the best way to approach them? Who can make an introduction on your behalf?
- What is their value? What can they offer you?
- What is your value? What can you offer them?

Preparation for Networking

Organization

It is important to record who you spoke to, what they said, what you promised you would do, who they referred you to, etc. As your network grows, you will need to make a record of each networking conversation and have a plan for maintaining the relationships. Use an Excel spreadsheet or notebook.

Things to include:

- Name and Position Title
- Company/Organization
- Address/Phone/Email
- LinkedIn/Blog/Personal website
- Referred to you by/How you found them
- Date met
- What you talked about and unique points of interest
- Follow up needed and completed

Creating a Personal Brand (The One Minute Commercial or Elevator Pitch)

- You want every contact in your career network to have a clear idea of who you are, what you offer, and what you are looking for. When building your one-minute commercial, keep it simple.
- Start with a single sentence describing who you are. “I am currently a senior at Indiana State University, working toward a degree in Business with a minor in Marketing. I chose this path because...”
- Add your best selling points.
[http://isu.mce.im/What attributes do people recognize you for? What are you passionate about?](http://isu.mce.im/What%20attributes%20do%20people%20recognize%20you%20for?%20What%20are%20you%20passionate%20about?)
- What have you accomplished?
- What value do you provide?
- What makes you unique?
- Explain why you want to connect with them.

Get Your Kit Together

- A professional resume that has been reviewed by a Career Center staff member. You can make an appointment or drop by during Walk-In hours.
- Business cards with a phone number and your ISU email address
- A list of specific target companies you would like to explore
- Detailed and memorized examples of your work achievements
- A professional business outfit for face-to-face meetings
- A padfolio and pen

Nonverbal and Verbal Communication

Body Language

- 18 inches or more of personal space between you and others when talking
- A firm handshake
- Shoulders and hips parallel
- Smile and maintain eye contact
- Hands out of your pockets and avoid playing with your fingers/nails

Voice and Tone

- Have energy, enthusiasm, and a sense of purpose
- Smile when you speak

Verbal Language

- Select a vocabulary level that is appropriate for the audience and comfortable for you
- Avoid acronyms that others may not understand
- Refrain from slang, vulgarities or clichés
- Speak in complete sentences

Encourage Face-to-Face Contacts

It's preferable to meet your network contacts face-to-face when possible. We forfeit 93% of our communication power when using email. Phone calls followed by a face-to-face meeting will go a much longer way in making a connection that lasts.

Informational Interview

Informational interviews are fact-finding meetings that will help you gain insight into an industry, occupation or specific employer, learn what types of skills are needed in the job, and establish contacts that may help you find employment in the future.

Written Correspondence/Email

Do not send a potential contact a laundry list of questions. Introduce yourself first and ask if there is a good time when you can speak with them about your questions. Examples of questions are at the bottom of this page. Always see if they can speak on the phone or meet face-to-face which are preferred methods of conducting an informational interview.

Telephone

Be sure to have an introduction script ready to go when you make the initial phone call. Show them you are mindful of their time by asking if it would be possible to schedule a time to speak at greater length. Assure them that you will only take 20-30 minutes of their time. It should be their choice as to whether the conversation lasts longer.

Face-to-Face

Use the time during the meeting effectively. Be sure to have an agenda prepared to keep you on track. Make sure to listen and take notes. This will make follow up and a thank you email/letter easier to write. Be open about everything you are doing. Odds are, that person has been in your shoes and is interested in why you are attracted to their profession.

Following Up

- At the conclusion of the conversation, ask the person what is the best way to follow up.
- Use email when time is absolutely of essence, but try to send a written thank you letter if possible. You will never hear anyone complain about receiving a handwritten thank you letter.

Common Informational Interview Questions

- How did you decide on this career? What was your career path? Your major in college?
- What is a typical entry-level job in this field?
- What skills are needed most for this type of job?
- What are the rewards/challenges/frustrations of your work?
- What do you wish you would have known prior to entering the field?
- What is it like to work in this organization?
- How does your job affect your general lifestyle?
- If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?
- What are the new developments in the field?
- Can you suggest anyone else whom I could contact for additional information?
- In which professional associations would you recommend that I participate?

Sample Informational Interview Request

1212 Memory Lane
Brazil IN, 47834
812-767-0985
mthompson@sycamores.indstate.edu

October 3, 2015

Ms. Kerri McWalters
Accountant
BGS Accounting Firm
3232 Market Street
Indianapolis, IN 46201

Dear Ms. McWalters:

Dr. Smith, my Professor of Accounting at Indiana State University, suggested that I contact you. He thought you would be in an excellent position as an ISU graduate to assist me with a career decision.

As an accounting student, I am exploring which career path to pursue. Public accounting, managerial accounting, and IRS work all sound interesting to me at this point, but I want to go into my job search this spring with a clear sense of direction. I would like to get your advice on the long term implications of each path, as well as to get a better handle on the day-to-day activities of a CPA.

If your schedule allows, I would appreciate a phone conversation or brief meeting. I can be very flexible in arranging a time that works best for your schedule. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Matt Thompson