

## NETWORKING

**Statistics and anecdotal information agree that approximately 80% of jobs never become advertised. In effect, they remain hidden until uncovered by the use of networking; the proven #1 way to find a job.**

### **What is Networking?**

Each of us have been informally using the basic concept of networking since our sandbox days. It is using our relationships with family, friends, neighbors, acquaintances, or other “human” resources to put us in touch with others.

**The Networking Concept** – Most people consider it flattering to be asked for advice, and are usually very willing to give you the benefit of their experience as long as you follow some networking etiquette. All relationships thrive when treated with respect and consideration, which is what etiquette is designed to foster. Promote a collaborative attitude by carefully listening for ways you may be able to add something to the other person’s life. Consider this a long-range “give and take” relationship from the start, and you will find it truly beneficial to both parties.

- 1) **Develop Contacts:** Using worksheets, list all “contacts” including friends, relatives, professional associates and alumni that you can think of. You may want to break the contacts into groups for easier record keeping.
- 2) **Select Contacts:** Select the 10 most promising contacts you have listed. Call them and inform them that you are looking for employment and be specific about the type of work you are interested in. Be prepared to briefly articulate your strong points and interests.

You may want to arrange a personal meeting with some of these contacts. On the phone or in person let them know you are looking for advice and ask them for information about:

- does the individual’s employer have job openings
- companies that employ people with your skills
- leads to any possible openings
- other people to contact who may have information for you

***Your goal is to obtain information. You aren’t asking these people to get you a job. You are responsible for following up on the leads and obtaining an interview through your own efforts.***

- 3) **Keep Records and Follow Up:** Keep detailed records of all the people you contact. Write thank you notes or letters to those you meet or those who take an extra amount of time in helping you. Always keep any new leads that are developed or names of target companies that were discussed. Follow up contacts at appropriate intervals and periodically renew our relationships with “old” contacts.

- 4) **Continue the Process & Cultivate with patience and persistence:** From the original list of 10 contacts and from those additional contacts developed, make another list of 10 contacts, and continue your networking. The best way to avoid discouragement is staying dedicated to the task.

**Networking in Social Settings** - Each year during the semester break in December and January, Clarkson's Career Center co-sponsors Alumni Networking Panel Events, with the Alumni Office. These take place in several cities across the Northeast. They provide an opportunity for students to get to know alumni in their home areas, as well as a chance for alumni of different class years to expand their own network of contacts. Events of all types are perfect places to network, but for those more reserved it can be intimidating. Following are some tactics you can use in social situations, which might make it more comfortable:

- ✓ Keep positive! Expect to find "connections" with everyone you meet.
- ✓ Keep open and inviting body language. Crossing your arms in front of your body says, "don't approach me...I don't want to talk to anyone."
- ✓ Take the initiative to introduce yourself to others...especially if they look uncomfortable.
- ✓ Wear that name tag! In a crowd it is often tough to distinguish and remember spoken names.
- ✓ If you make eye contact with someone standing "your height" away from you; introduce yourself. If they are further away it would be awkward to get to them...smile.
- ✓ Make sure you have updated resumes with you.
- ✓ Know the current buzz in the industry. Avoid discussing politics, religion or sex.
- ✓ Hold your drink/food in your left hand so you will be able to shake hands with your right. Keep consumption of alcohol at a bare minimum, if at all, and make sure if you eat, take small bites. Invariably someone will ask you a question just as you "stuff" something in your mouth!
- ✓ Dress and conduct yourself as a professional at all times. Remember the phrase, "you only have one chance to make a first impression."

***This introduction to networking is meant to provide you with initial information. Please contact the Career Center for more ways this process can help your professional development.***

*Adapted from Career Development Services*