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Quick Networking Tips

Career management experts and veteran job seekers promote networking as one of the most effective methods of obtaining a new job. Networking is the ongoing process of obtaining, from personal contacts, industry information and leads. Networking does not involve asking anyone for a job. It is a reciprocal process that allows you to give, as well as get, information and leads thus enabling you to build ongoing mutual beneficial professional relationships. With rare exception, network in person.

Steps in the networking process

1. Create your contact list; include:
 - Names of personal contacts
 - Names of professionals at any level within your preferred organization or industry
 - Decision makers within your preferred organization, industry, specific company or department
2. Create a list of target companies
3. Set up the networking meeting by telephone, email or letter
4. Prepare for the networking meeting
5. Conduct the networking meeting
6. Follow-up the networking meeting

Once you have secured a networking meeting, prepare by deciding what you want to ask. For example:

- Would you look at my target list and tell me if you have any contacts in these companies?
- Can you name other companies that might be interested in someone with my background?
- Do you have any ideas about industry associations or strategies I may not have considered?
- Do you know the names of any industry specific websites I could investigate?
- Would you take a look at my resume and offer me any feedback?
- Are you aware of any companies in the area with openings in my field?
- Can you suggest what other positions might match my skills and background?
- What do you see as the future trends in this industry?
- What skills are employers looking for in this particular industry?
- Can you provide me with three to four names of other people who might be willing to speak with me?
- Who do you know who works in (fill in the appropriate field/industry/company)?
- What can I do to help you?