Networking Strategies for Job Seekers

- Go out your way to meet people. Even if you don’t feel like going to that birthday party, get out and go!
- You never know whom you’ll meet and odds are you will have a good time.
- Remember the names of people you meet. Practice remembering names, write them down, get business cards from people, and pass out yours.
- Take a genuine interest in people and their passions.
- Keep in touch with new acquaintances and old friends.
- Listen actively when you are involved in any conversation.
- When making a phone call, have your self-introduction by your side so you have something written to refer to. State how you found the person you are calling. Let them know about the person who referred you to them. Also, know the basics about the company – its main line of business is a must.
- Set up an informational interview appointment that should only take 15 to 30 minutes of your contact’s time.
- Decide in advance what you need from your contact. In some instances, you may want to know more about the contact’s field or career path. Or, you may want to find out about the requirements and types of people the company hires.
- Keep in mind that your goal is to obtain relevant information regarding your career path and to obtain advice on where to go from there.
- Ask your contact relevant questions and hold a conversation regarding the field, the occupation, the industry, or the employer. Get feedback on your résumé and develop new contacts. Ask whom they recommend you should contact next.
- Some topics about yourself that you can cover: your career objectives and jobs you are interested in; the skills you would like to use in your next job; the type of company you would like to work for; the aspects of previous jobs you enjoyed; the places where you have been submitting résumés and people you have been networking with; your non-work-related skills that would be an asset to employers; and any other subject you consider relevant.

Increase your networking opportunities through:

- **Informational interviews** are a valuable means to make new contacts, nurture past relationships and learn about the new development in your field.
- **Career/job fairs** are offered by colleges, professional associations, recruitment firms, and other groups. They provide you with information about specific employers and industries and help you make initial contact.
- **Internal referrals** also depend on knowing someone in the employing organization. Some companies even offer “finder fees” to employees who recommend candidates who are successfully hired.
- **Job-search clubs** may be organized by locale, industry, occupation, school, religion, or other denominator. They offer an appropriate environment for job seekers to get together and exchange leads and ideas.
- **Professional associations** not only provide you with the opportunity to network but also often publish newsletters with job listings. Remember, the more you get involved in your association, the more chances you will have of being referred by another member to an employer.
- **Alumni associations** also provide networking opportunities and contacts. Some may even have mentoring programs.
- **The Internet** provides a wealth of career-related information, company information, and many job listings.
- **Volunteering** offers an excellent opportunity to meet people in the workplace while making yourself indispensable.

References: