

Cardinal Rules of Networking

Networking is a method of finding information and advice to help you identify job opportunities that are not traditionally advertised with the goal of getting a meeting with someone who can make a HIRING decision.

1. Never ask a network contact for a job
 - You want their advice on your search and information about industries, companies or contacts
2. When possible, never send your resume out ahead of you
 - Most resumes give people information with which to SCREEN you out, unless you're the perfect match
 - Sell yourself in person, leave your resume for reference during and after the meeting
3. Always research the company/person you will be speaking/meeting with and be prepared. Know why you're calling/meeting and what it is you want from that person.
 - Every contact presents an opportunity to DEMONSTRATE your skills and the type of employee you will be. Practice BEFORE you call - what if I get voice mail, what if they don't want to meet, what if the secretary says they don't have time? Think these through before you call!
 - Information is POWER - do your research - it separates you from the competition!
4. Always do exactly what you say you're going to do and do it when you say you're going to do it.
 - Remember, you're demonstrating how you perform as a worker!
5. When speaking with a network contact, always ask for two more contacts and IF you can use their name.
 - Who else would you recommend I speak with, and may I use YOUR name?
6. Always follow up meetings/interviews and important/significant phone conversations with an immediate thank you letter.
 - It's common courtesy, another opportunity to demonstrate your skills, remind them what they were going to do for you and/or when you would contact them again
7. Networking is work - what you put into it is what you get out of it!
 - Be disciplined, set a routine, set goals and stick to them
 - Use the libraries, internet, job fairs, newspapers, industry associates as sources for information
8. Care and Feeding of your network throughout your career.
 - Welcome to the real world of the 2000s, stay in touch with those that helped you, and help others. Vow to make at least 3-4 calls per month and have breakfast/lunch meetings with contacts twice a month.