

TIP SHEET

NETWORKING

It is often said that Networking is the key to success for an active job seeker. This is because networking opens doors of possibility. The traditional job search process often leaves job seekers feeling "out of control," because so many decisions seem to depend on what others do. Networking gives job seekers a sense of control, because you can set your own agenda and pursue your own goals.

1. **Sources of contacts.** Think broadly about who you know that can help you in your job search in some way. Think of sources such as:

- **Friends** - contact your friends and be specific with them about what you want; contact them often to remind them of your progress.
- **Social acquaintances** - health clubs - other clubs; school organizations
- **Your schools** - get a copy of the student directory to investigate classmates that live locally.
- **Neighbors** - current and past
- **Family and relatives**
- **Co-workers** - current and past
- **Organizations** that you worked with in your previous job: advertising agency, PR agency, outside contractors
- **Recruiters** that you have worked with in the past
- **Church** acquaintances
- Your local **minister**
- **Teachers/Professors** that you have had
- **Business acquaintances** - your insurance agent, accountant, real estate agent, stock broker, doctor, dentist, banker
- **Chamber of Commerce members**
- **E-mail acquaintances**
- **Local Business organizations**
- **Labor Union members**
- **Trade Associations**
- **Peers** that you met at conventions
- **Competitors** that you know by name

2. **Make a list of contacts.** You can build a web of links starting with people you know well (Close Contacts) and connecting through them to people who have helpful information or contacts (Linking Contacts), and ending up with people in a position to hire you (Target contacts). Your list may look something like this:

Close Contacts	Linking Contacts	Target Contacts
Friends, relatives, acquaintances, former colleagues, former boss	Does same work, works in target company, knowledgeable in field	Can hire or recommend hire
Bob	Tom	Bill
Mary	Alice	
Chuck		

3. **Mini-resume.** Prepare a business card size mini-resume with your contact information on one side and your skills and qualifications on the other. Keep these handy for situations when you wouldn't ordinarily have your full resume handy. If you don't have the computer skills, software, or a color printer to make your own, contact your counselor and ask for assistance.

4. **Phone calling.** Start calling and working your way through your list to build your network. (See the related tip sheet on Informational Interviewing for more tips.) Be polite, positive, and respectful of their time. Let them know you are looking for a job, what type of job, and any other information that would be helpful. People have a natural born desire to problem solve and help others who ask for help. So, don't be afraid to state what you need from them: ideas, contacts, information, etc.

5. **Planning.** Plan what you want to say, and how it will come across to others. You may even want to develop a script at first for your phone calls. This will help with the fear of "now knowing what to say." It also helps you clarify and shorten your message, so that it is focused and positive.
6. **Do it!** Even if you feel reluctant to go Networking, because you are too shy, fearful, or embarrassed or any of the other common feelings, it is important to do it anyway! Read the excellent book by Susan Jeffers called Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway.
7. **Job Clubs.** Attend local Job Club meetings to meet more people and expand your network. The more you are "out there," the more you will start to get a feel for what's available and where the jobs are. This is a great place to spend time because everyone there is like you. They've all been laid off, and they know what you have been going through. A great benefit of Job Club support groups is that you will learn from others' successes and mistakes. These groups often have former attendees return with their success story of what worked for them. This is not only inspiring but also a good way to get practical tips.
8. **Other meetings.** Attend the meetings of any other organizations of which you are a member: Associations, Unions, Church committees, etc. Attend Job Fairs, conferences, workshops on Job Search Preparation. All of these activities will keep you busy if you really follow through on them.
9. **Support.** Meet people for lunch if you can afford it, or coffee if you cannot. If you were part of a large layoff, there is usually a place where "ex-employees" get together for breakfast or coffee once in a while to keep in touch.
10. **Enjoy.** Above all plan to "have fun" meeting people, learning interesting things, and expanding your horizons.

