

Networking

(Dec 2024)

It's not what you know, it's not who you know, but who knows you!

When managing your career, it is of paramount importance that you learn how to network effectively. Whether in a personal, social, or professional arena, the proper "networks" can help you achieve your aims, whether it be looking for work, changing careers or starting your own business.

TEN STEPS TO EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

Determine your goals

Determine what you are looking for out of a potential contact. Is it a business relationship, career mentor, guidance counsellor?

Make a list of potential contacts

Compile a list of those persons you think will help fulfil your goals. Figure out what you need from the contact and the role you expect him or her to fill.

Research the contacts

Once you have selected your potential contacts, research their backgrounds, who they work for and position they hold. Think of questions to ask the contacts that are pertinent to your goal.

Make the initial contact

Build up your confidence and pick up the phone, send an e-mail or introductory letter. Establish a rapport, and don't be shy... but be polite.

Request help

Once you establish a contact and determine that he or she is willing to help you, let him or her know what you are looking for, your goals and aspirations.

Send a "Thank You" or follow up letter

After speaking to your new contact, don't forget to send a "Thank You" email or follow up letter.

Keep in touch

Remember to keep in touch with your contact. Even if the "network" does not generate immediate results, do not be discouraged and lose touch.

Leverage your new contacts

You asked for help once, don't be shy to ask for it again. If your contact cannot help you, maybe they know someone who can. Be respectful of their time and commitments.

Seek ways to meet new contacts

Seek out ways to meet new people, through joining organisations and professional bodies, attending events and trade fairs. Useful contacts can be made through any part of your life.

Join LinkedIn

Create and maintain your own professional profile on www.linkedin.com and connect with professionals and college alumni working in your chosen field.