

## BUILDING A NETWORK IS WORTH THE EFFORT

*Summary: Find out how to network in order to find a job after graduating from college.*



**Question:** I am a recent college graduate looking for employment. Often people say that the best way to get the type of work you want is through networking. How can I proceed and go about meeting the right people to network with?

**Answer:** Start with a networking mindset that puts you in a state of readiness to view everyone as a potential resource in your job search. Anyone you come in contact with may know someone or something that leads you to an employer and a job offer. Approach people by conveying an interest and curiosity about their work and a willingness to both learn from and share with them. This will set a positive tone for a mutually beneficial exchange.

While it is important to be open to leads that may come serendipitously, targeted networking may speed up the process for you. To focus your networking, develop a list of people in your existing pool of contacts: family, friends, professors, classmates, and colleagues from work or internships. Then, consider ways to expand this list to include other "hot" prospects. Contacting alumni of your college, joining and actively participating in a professional society and volunteering will allow you to meet more people and diversify your network.

When approaching people in your network, make your questions and requests for information as specific as possible. It is much easier to be helpful with a clear inquiry such as, "I'm interested in XYZ Co. What have you heard about the work environment, and do you know anyone there that I might contact?" than through an ambiguous request like, "I'm looking for work, do you know about any job openings?"

Your initial presentation is important, so prepare a brief introduction to yourself and have an updated resume to distribute as appropriate. Networking is an ongoing activity, and you will need to continue to build relationships after you secure employment. To keep the circle going, remember to find ways to show your appreciation and reciprocate with those who are helpful.

See **33 Quick Tips to Improve Your Networking Experience** for more information.