

1. “Not” networking

- ✓ I call this “not” networking as networking has such a bad reputation. Networking is what we all hate to do, the sort of thing only unpleasant, pushy sales people do to try to sell you things...?
- ✓ “Not” networking is a thoughtful, well planned and focused activity plan, simply to tell interested people about your next career challenge and to find out if they can help you to succeed.
- ✓ Networking is not about getting a job.
- ✓ Networking is about expanding your range, creating new possibilities, learning about other jobs that are out there, identifying key people and building a personal web of interesting, and interested, people.
- ✓ Networking is highly effective because you are accessing the unadvertised job market, which accounts for roughly 75% of all new job hires.

It's all in the maths

Sociologists estimate that on average we know 300 people on first name terms. When we meet someone and start chatting to them, we are only one step away from the people that they know.

Let's be very conservative with our numbers. If you can only think of 10 people who you know to contact initially, and each of these people gives you just 2 other people to talk to, you will then have a total of 30 people in your network.

The amazing stuff starts to happen after this point. If each of the 20 new people you speak to give you just 2 other people to talk to, you will then have 70 people in your network, the majority of whom will now be closely related to your ideal job!

Preparation

First you have to be absolutely clear about exactly what your next career challenge is. After all, how can someone help you find a job if you can't be clear describing what that job is?

Not only do you have to know what your ideal job is, but also you have to be able to communicate clearly the skills and experiences you have that prove you could do the job you're looking for.

You then need to practice it, out loud - ideally with a friend or family member - until you can talk through the above quickly and easily without being embarrassed or afraid.

Where to start

Draw up a list of your initial network of contacts. Note the key word "initial". You absolutely don't have to "know the right people" to start networking, you just have to start with the people you know. These could be old bosses or work colleagues, friends, neighbours, college friends or family members (not forgetting extended family members).

Networking online

Finally, don't forget to make use of networking sites online as an additional form of networking. A good business related one is www.linkedin.com. A list of all sites is given at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites

Chat rooms, message boards and user groups are also places to go to find people with similar backgrounds and experiences.