

The Networking Process Q&A

Let's clarify exactly what the networking process is in the context of running an effective career transition campaign...

1. Is networking about who you know?

Yes___ No___

Answer and Discussion:

Networking is not only about 'who you know.' It begins there, but entails a bit more than informing all those you know of your status in an effort to get them to use their influence, etc., in ultimately landing the next position.

In fact, it is not so much you informing them but rather that you ask for information from those you know will be helpful to you in your search. And that follows immediately after the identification of 'who you know.' After you write the list of persons who can be helpful to you, noting why and how they can be of assistance, then you make an appointment to obtain the necessary information that you seek. The thing to remember is that you do not want to ask your friends directly for a job, nor request they use their influence. You may find that makes them very uncomfortable. Your objective is not to lose a friend nor cause any tension in your relationship with them. That is why when you ask for information, people do not get defensive or offended; they are totally willing to help. They are complimented. It is also likely they acknowledge the reality of sharing this same experience one day.

So, the first part and objective of a networking meeting is to obtain critical information to help you move forward in the direction you intend to go. It may be that as a result of a networking meeting you may discover that you were on the wrong track. You may have thought that you could move into a different industry with ease, when in fact, you discover it may take additional work, possibly some retraining requirement is necessary, etc. Often, however, it is confirming; someone with a great deal of expertise has validated your action plan.

The best description of "Networking" is not who you know. It begins there, but takes you from those you already know to those you do not, all of whom can be helpful in the job search process.

What happens is that Person A agrees to meet with you for a brief meeting, set up by you, who is seeking information. The agenda can be regarding specific company information, or general industry information, in the case of someone looking to make a transition into another industry. The 20-minute meeting has a purpose and objectives set and managed by you, in an effort to obtain the information that would be helpful to you in your search. Lastly, you will want to ask for additional referrals from this individual, increasing your exposure in the most advantageous way.

At close of the meeting, which you will respectfully monitor, thank the individual, for his/her time and attention. You may wish to formally thank them in writing later, and keep them informed of your progress periodically.

Since this is the most successful manner in which people obtain their most suitable positions, you will want to spend most of your time engaged in the process of Networking. The other marketing vehicles are responding to ads, going through employment agencies and search firms, and conducting targeted campaigns.

Here benefits of Network:

- You enjoy the greatest amount of exposure to individuals who can be helpful to you, may even become long time professional acquaintances.
- You tap into the "hidden job market These are positions that are not yet advertised or public information.
- You are able to practice your interviewing skills
- You will become better informed various companies, opportunities, that you may not otherwise have known.
- Since most people like to help others, you are complimenting people asking their opinion, advice, assistance.

After a brief (networking) meeting of about 20 minutes to obtain certain information, you will want to request names of other contacts who could likewise be helpful to

you in your search. Now, you are tapping in to people you do not know directly, but who know the people you know. Thus begins your network extension. If you use this system properly, you should be able to discuss your job objectives, your skills, and interests with a large number of people, all of whom can potentially end up instrumental in your landing the most suitable position.

2. Is it beneficial to pick up the phone and call people you know, those who can help you, immediately upon becoming newly available on the open job market? Yes____ No____

Answer and Discussion:

Now, what about the second question. If you responded that no, it is not good to pick up the phone immediately after you have been told of your job termination, you are correct. Perhaps you even know why that is not a good idea. The reason is that you need time to think. You need to plan who you want/need to speak to and what you will say. If you do not step back and take the time to think through who can help you, why and how they can, then how can you have a productive conversation? To say nothing of sounding intelligent, relatively calm, and not cause a defensive reaction on the part of the receiver of your phone call.

Steps to successful networking

- Decide who and why you wish to speak to someone.
- Plan what you will say to each individual, understanding that the objective is not to discuss it over the phone, but in person.
- Like a salesperson, try to "close" using an assumptive close, or an alternative choice close. This means that you provide 2 choices as you ask for a mutually agreeable time to meet:

"So, looking down a couple of weeks from now, is the 4th of February better or the 9th? "

"Is 11:15 okay, or would you prefer 2:30 in the afternoon?"

[Question: What do you think this does?]