

Networking

While networking is essential to an effective job search, it can be a challenge. In going outside of your comfort zone, it may help to think of networking not as a means of self-promotion, but as a way of establishing mutually beneficial connections. Any relationships you establish will be advantageous for both parties involved. Networking also plays a very important role in searching for a job; since the majority of openings are never listed publicly, the more people you know, the more likely you are to hear about and be recommended for unlisted jobs.



PREPARE

- Prepare to arrive 15 minutes early to any networking event. This can be done successfully by finding directions to the event ahead of time.
- Prepare your outfit the night before and make sure that it is appropriate for the type of event you are attending.
- Prepare to bring plenty of information about yourself. Bring several copies of your resume, business cards (if applicable) and any other information that may be helpful to have on hand.
- Prepare your elevator pitch.
- Prepare questions and talking points. If you know which companies and representatives are attending the event, view their website for job opportunities and current events. An educated approach to any conversation helps you to stand out among the rest.

PRESENT

- Present your elevator pitch when introducing yourself to people at the event. Remember that nonverbal communication is just as important as verbal; you want to make a great first impression.
- Present your resume and/or business cards to potential employers.
- Present yourself as confident and poised. You want to create strong, memorable relationships with each person you meet. If this means you need to step away from the crowd once in a while, do it! Unwind and recharge.
- Present a firm handshake and great eye contact at the end of each meeting. Always ask for a business card so you can further enhance your networking relationship.

PLAN FOR WHAT'S NEXT

- Plan to write pertinent information on the back of each business card you collect. This way, you will remember specific information from each conversation and be able to refer back to this during future correspondence.
- Plan to write thank you e-mails to any contacts to whom you wish to further your networking relationship.
- Plan to follow-up on any job leads you may have encountered by applying with a resume and cover letter that specifically address the conversation you had with the employer.
- Plan to do this again! Attending a networking event is not a single endeavor. It is a skill that is learned over time and becomes very natural as you gain more experience. Pretty soon, you may be the employer that students are trying to network with!