

Networking

What is Networking?

Networking is an informal approach to access the hidden job market - a route to the jobs which have not yet been advertised. They may not even exist yet.

Why do it?

Ultimately to help you find a job; but it's most immediate benefit is that it develops your knowledge and awareness of the field or industry you are most interested in. It is mostly about obtaining information which eventually leads to identifying job opportunities. In the process you become a very well informed candidate, get practice in talking about yourself and you widen your own range of personal contacts.

Some people are reluctant to try, finding the concept threatening and thinking they are imposing on people. However experience has shown that most people approached appropriately are more than willing to help others. Put yourself in the position of someone asking for a short amount of your time and for your advice. Wouldn't you want to help?

As networking is an information gathering exercise you want your contacts to be creative and outward looking on your behalf, so you need to ask them for something which is in their power to give; i.e. their time and their advice. If they happen to have a job in mind and they are impressed with you, this will come out of such a conversation.

Networking is an effective career management strategy and a cornerstone of the whole job search process

The Value of Networking

- It provides you with information:
 - essential for those thinking of a radical change of career;
 - essential for those who are seeking to further their career in a similar field since it provides additional market intelligence.
- As you explore with your contacts different experiences and options, your overall objectives will become clearer.
- It gives you the opportunity of matching your skills with what the market needs; especially important when you are considering changing careers.
- It enables you to practise your self-presentation skills in a less structured environment than an interview.
- Most importantly, it will enable you to increase your network as you coax your contacts into giving you further names to approach.

Talk to your Career Coach about developing a networking strategy.