

NETWORKING

Networking can be used to make and develop contacts for finding a career or job. A network is an interconnected chain, group, or system, according to Webster's Dictionary. By getting to know people within a chain you are automatically linked to others in the chain. By learning to use the system advantageously, you can enter the chain and develop career contacts.

USE YOUR CONTACTS

Network approaches can be greatly enhanced if you remember that all of your friends, relatives and colleagues have friends, relatives and colleagues that can be tapped for information. People are the key. By telling people that you need information (not a job) about a particular field, they may be able to refer you to people who can help. You can use these referrals in either casual or formal setting. In a casual setting, merely say, "John mentioned that you might have some excellent ideas about." This would work well in a professional association meeting or a social hour, an espresso bar or a family/friends event. It works in any setting.

ASK FOR INFORMATION

A large degree of success in networking occurs when you become creative in your approach. In addition to the common practice of establishing contacts by actively participating in a professional association, why not also use your time in innovative and practical ways such as discussing your goals with fellow racquet club members while waiting for a court to open? This does not mean asking for a job, which would send everyone running to the nearest exit! It means asking for information about a career area that you are considering.

MAKE APPOINTMENTS

The more formal approach requires that you set up an appointment with the person you have been referred to. You can use an email or telephone to say, "John Gordon suggested that I contact you for advice (information) on the field of...." Friends are usually quite willing to provide a favor for their friend. Most people enjoy sharing their wealth of knowledge.

BE CREATIVE

Others may have used this approach before and your potential contact may be weary of too many information gatherers beating a path to his/her door. Thus, you may need to design new and creative ways of possibly approaching these same people or developing new ways to obtain the information you want. In fact, why not take five minutes right now to think of at least ten ways to network in your field. As a concluding thought, remember that a large degree of your success in networking will depend on whether or not you believe you can make it happen. All of the information you need is out there. It is up to you to find ways to tap into it. Be imaginative and enjoy your new adventure in creative networking.

