

11 WAYS TO NETWORK LIKE A PRO

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There's no doubt that networking can give your career a good boost. Many employment opportunities are never posted, and they're ultimately filled by someone that knew someone that knew someone else. **It's important to put yourself within that social chain.**

With the internet, it's not as important to network face to face, but it's still necessary to get the most from your networking efforts.

Remember that everyone you meet is an opportunity to network.

Spend part of your week networking and making new contacts with these methods:

- 1. Examine your current resources.** You already know someone that is well-connected. Think about all of your friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers. Consider your entire social network. Maybe you're a member of a church, Moose Lodge, or a local women's group. Are you leveraging those contacts effectively?
- 2. The key to effective networking is consistency and persistence. A little each day is more effective than a monumental effort every once in a while.** It's like going to the gym. You need to be consistent in your efforts if you want to see big results. Set aside time to reach out to people each week.
- 3. Join relevant local and national organizations.** Whether you're a chemist, firefighter, priest, school teacher, or plumber, there are organizations that cater

to your needs and interests. Become a part of them. In many cases, your employer will foot the bill. Do some research and see what you can find.

4. **Make use of social media.** LinkedIn.com is great for networking. Utilize social media and make your presence known to the world. Make contact with a few people regularly via social media.
5. **Be proactive.** You can't just stand in the middle of the crowd at a networking event and expect people to line up for the privilege of talking to you. The burden is on you to start conversations. Take the bull by the horns and mingle. You'll get much better with practice.
6. **Learn to ask open-ended questions.** It's hard to maintain a conversation by asking questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no". Ask questions that require a detailed answer. **You'll find it much easier to speak with others when you use open-ended questions.**
7. **Follow up religiously.** Communicating with someone one time won't do much for you. Reach out to the most promising contacts you've made and touch base. Stay in touch.
8. **You can't expect to receive more effort and value than you provide.** You truly receive what you give when it comes to networking. You won't get much if you don't give much. Make a real effort to help others.
9. **Focus on quality over quantity.** Passing out your business card like you're passing out car wash coupons won't do you a lot of good. Everyone can see what you're doing. Make an effort to make a few real connections rather than throwing a 100 darts at the wall. Quality counts.

10. Connect others together. This can be especially powerful. Bring other people together. This is especially easy to do and can pay off down the road for your own career.

11. Avoid selling or asking for anything. If every time you reach out to someone you're trying to get something from them, people will tire of you very quickly. **Instead, give them something.** "I know you're interested in the effect of the Trans Pacific Partnership on the trade deficit. Here's an article I thought you might be interested in."

Networking can be an effective way to begin the process of building relationships with potential employers. You can also get to know people that can give you referrals. **Ensure that you're also doing all you can for your network.** The more value you can provide, the more you're likely to receive.