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**CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**  
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**Networking Basics**

**What is Networking?**

Networking is using the “six degrees of separation” principle to increase the number of people who can assist you with your job search. It works by introducing you to others who can offer valuable advice and information. It is also a great way to familiarize yourself with an organization at which you do not already have any contacts.

**Why Network?**

The percentages of people hired today are as a result of the following:

- Internet Postings: 1-3%
- Want Ads/Job Postings: 7-10%
- Recruiters: 10-12%
- Networking: 70-80%

Job searching is a numbers game: the more visibility you have, the higher likelihood you will find you ideal job! (And find it faster than through more passive methods of searching.)

**Goals of Networking:**

- To make contacts in your field
- To help you refine your ideal job or role
- To identify and learn about potential employers you have targeted as desirable
- To get advice from people working in a role you would like to work in
- To have your resume critiqued by someone knowledgeable about the career you seek.
- To identify possible mentors

**Networking Do’s and Don’ts**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Do</strong></th>
<th><strong>Don’t</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❖ Systematically contact everyone you know for information</td>
<td>❖ Call everyone you know to ask if they know of any jobs in your field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Tailor what you will say to each individual based on his or her area of expertise</td>
<td>❖ Contact anyone without preparing a script of what you will say</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Understand that networking is a give and take relationship: ask for a way to be of assistance to each person who makes time for you</td>
<td>❖ Blow off anyone who cannot instantly refer you for a job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Use an expanding list of contacts to get to know potential colleagues. That way you will have advocates inside identified organizations</td>
<td>❖ Use an expanding list of contacts to call more people to ask if they know of a job for you</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Keep contacts updated on the outcomes when they refer you to new contacts</td>
<td>❖ Forget to follow up on referrals or to sincerely thank each contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Ask people knowledgeable in your field to critique your resume for marketability</td>
<td>❖ Ask contacts to pass your resume on, indicating that you are only interested in asking for a job</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Practice conversation starters such as “How are you?” and “Nice Weather” in your everyday life</td>
<td>❖ BE SHY! Small talk can lead to big conversations and more</td>
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**Who and Where?**

Networking
Networking can occur at any time, in any situation, not just when you are looking for a job. Always be open to opportunities. The following are examples of where and with whom to network:

- **One-on-One Meetings:** Meeting individually with network contacts can range from an informal chat with the person sitting next to you on the subway, to an exchange of email with an online contact, to a formal appointment with an identified professional.

- **Conferences and Conventions:** Large, structured events like conferences or conventions are excellent opportunities to expand your network and meet other professionals in your field.

- **Professional Organizations:** Memberships in organizations can keep you updated on current events and job openings. They also serve to connect you with prominent professionals in your area or sector.

- **Careers or Job Fairs:** Attending career fairs can be a valuable way to expand your network. They are not only a source of job openings but also a convenient way to meet other professionals.

- **Academic/Training Settings:** You can also network through your classes, seminars, lectures and workshops. Classmates, instructors and guest speakers are often good sources of information.

- **Networking Meetings:** There are many informal groups formed for the express purpose of networking. These might be called “breakfast clubs”, “happy hour groups”, or “lead and tip groups”. Many are informal and created by a few people with common interests.

- **The Internet:** Utilizing online social networks such as MySpace, Facebook, Friendster, or LinkedIn can be a fast way to make contacts. Be aware of maintaining a professional profile.

- **Social/Recreational/Community Settings:** Valuable contacts are made in such everyday settings as health clubs, sporting events, cocktail parties, religious gatherings and other social events. Do not be afraid to ask friends and family for information but be sure to be specific about what you are looking for.

### Networking Contact Checklist
Develop your contact list based on your current contacts, not their known connections. The purpose of networking is to discover your contacts’ connections that are not yet known to you.

Think about the many people in your life who you could contact. For example:

- Classmates (one of your most valuable resources)
- Professors
- Faculty administrators
- Alumni organizations
- Internship supervisor
- On or off campus employer
- Temporary agencies
- Fellow members of professional organizations
- Contacts made at job fairs
- Contacts made at volunteer organizations
- Your religious/spiritual community
- Political organizations
- Neighbors and acquaintances
- Service organizations (PTA, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, etc.)
- Other professionals (dentists, doctors, veterinarians, etc.)
- Family
- Friends (parents’ friends, friends of friends, etc.)
- Fraternity/sorority
- Cultural organizations/advocacy groups
- Clubs and fellow hobbyists
- Online social network friends (MySpace, Facebook, etc.)

Sample Networking Contact List
It is important to keep an updated record of your contacts. Organization is the key to successful networking!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/title</th>
<th>Phone/email</th>
<th>How you know this person</th>
<th>Contact or meeting dates</th>
<th>Type of contact i.e. phone, email, in person</th>
<th>Received a response Y/N</th>
</tr>
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Your Personal Pitch
A “personal pitch” can serve as an introduction for networking purposes. It is one way to introduce yourself and clarify your goals. Your pitch should be between 30 and 90 seconds, and should be brief but specific. While it is important to have your pitch readily accessible, it is also important to sound natural. There are various ways to conceptualize who you are and what you are seeking. The following examples can serve as a basic guideline as you are formulating your personal pitch.

There are four questions to think about when preparing to present yourself to networking contacts.

- **Who I am:** (State your name, your current position/education, and any other aspects relevant to your current identity).

- **What I’ve done:** (Highlight one to two relevant experiences, interests, or personality characteristics that are important. Experiences do not have to be paid).

- **What I want:** (Why you contacted them, what you hope to gain from the interview, brief careers goals).

- **Follow up question:** (Lead into what you would like to know from the person you are speaking with).

“Could I ask you about your career in graphic design?”
“What skills and experiences do you think make a successful producer?”
“Could you tell me a little about your day-to-day tasks?”

**Hints:**
- Don’t try to tell your life story
- Focus on the career area you are interested in, not a specific job title (different companies have different ways of titling jobs)
- Be brief; your goal is to start a conversation and relationship, not close the deal
- Develop a basic pitch and then tailor it to a particular situation
Example 1:
“My name is Nicole Kelso and I am a sophomore psychology major at The New School with experience working with autistic children and homeless adults. I have also trained other volunteer counselors. I am currently interning as a peer counselor at the Wellness Center in Manhattan, and am now looking for a counseling related position where I can continue to develop my skills. My internship supervisor (Name) suggested I contact you to learn more about your organization. Could you tell me a little bit about the unique needs of your population?”

Example 2:
‘Hi, I am Anna Sorenson. My work experience is in public relations, customer relationship management, corporate training, and coaching. During my career, I have worked in government, small business, a global ad agency, and in my own business. I am very interested in the consulting field, and I am exploring how I might use my skills and experience in a consulting firm. What skills and experiences do you think make a successful consultant?’

PRACTICE YOUR PITCH IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR, WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY, ETC.
Thank You Letters

Always make sure you follow up your communication with a thank you letter. The purposes of the thank you letter are to show appreciation for that person taking the time to talk with you and to reiterate your goals. Think of networking like karma. You are participating in a community of relationships and information sharing. You receive what you give.

Key points to remember:

- Keep your letter professional, brief, and to the point (about 2 paragraphs)
- Depending on the context, the letter can be a handwritten note or a formal business letter
- The letter can be either emailed or sent through the mail
- Thank the person for what he or she provided for you (even if it was simply their time)
- Try to send the letter as soon as possible after the meeting (within 24 hours)

Formatting Samples:

January 16, 2008

Dear Ms. Katz,

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me last Thursday to discuss your day-to-day tasks at Inner Light Holistic Counseling Center. I was impressed by the center’s process of matching clients with counselors who best fit their needs. The brochure that you gave me was very useful and informative. I will be contacting the director of Wellness World Counseling Center that you recommended. Thank you again for your time, and I look forward to keeping you updated on my future career pursuits.

Sincerely,

Jennifer A. Jackson
January 16, 2008

Ms. Michelle Smith
4700 W. Mountain Hill Road
Willow Springs, OK 47375

Ms. Lindsay Cohen
Director
Film House Marketing
984 E. Mitzy Road
Colby, OK 47764

Dear Ms. Cohen,

Thank you for taking time to discuss Film House Marking with me. I also appreciate the advice you gave me about entering the marketing field as well as your useful comments about my resume. After learning more about the company, and the specific tasks of your marking team, I am further convinced that this type of work would fit well with my abilities and interests.

Thank you again for your assistance and your time. My email address is msmith@newschool.edu. I look forward to keeping in touch in the future.

Sincerely,

Michelle Smith
Contact cards are a great tool for providing quick information to potential networking contacts. Always keep your cards handy and be sure to ask for others’ cards as well. Contact cards should be simple, easy to read, and attractive. Useful resources for contact cards include your school and/or department, current place of employment, print shops, or online at sites such as Moo.com and Vistaprint.com. Your contact cards could include a variety of information such as: your name, title or degree, and contact information. You do not have to be currently employed or representing any particular organization.

**Sample Contact Cards:**

![Sample Contact Card 1](image1)

![Sample Contact Card 2](image2)