

Becoming a Master Networker

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The phrase, "It's not what you know, but who you know," may be overused, but it remains one of the greatest truths of a successful job search.

The real question is: How do you build relationships with the people who can open doors to new opportunities? It takes some work and know-how.

Here are some guidelines that will guide you through the process of becoming a master networker and finding the people who might help you:

1. Know What Networking Really Is

Networking is the process of building genuine professional relationships with people who share common interests, goals, or industries. Great networking doesn't end after an introduction—it grows through consistent follow-up, mutual support, and trust. It requires a 2-way, ongoing conversation. It can't just be you asking if they know of any jobs.

2. Understand Your Networking Style

- a. Introverts often prefer deeper conversations over large-group interactions. Smaller networking events, one-on-one conversations, or online networking may feel more natural. Don't assume networking has to mean working a crowded room. Finding an extrovert friend is also a good way to stretch your social circle.
- b. If you are an extrovert, finding meetings to attend, getting involved in community activities, and putting yourself out there is the best way to

find new connections. Extroverts often enjoy meeting new people and jumping into conversations. Their challenge can be in remembering to slow down, listen well, and intentionally deepening the relationships they start.

3. Serve Before Being Served

Nobody likes to be pitch slapped. Getting a sales pitch the moment you acknowledge the existence of a person is annoying to anyone. Before diving into your pitch or talking about yourself and why you are there to network, learn to ask questions. Learn to build a relationship, and if you can, provide a contact or solution for someone before asking for anything for yourself.

People are far more willing to help someone they know, like, and trust. Build trust and confidence before asking for it yourself.

4. Build Confidence in Putting Yourself Out There

Practice telling your story to people. Develop an elevator pitch that is well rehearsed but sounds completely natural, as though you're sharing it for the first time.

Knowing why you are awesome and then knowing what you want is a great tool in networking. If you don't know what job, or what company, or industry you want to be in, it is hard for someone to help you. Being specific in your needs and wants gives people a better idea of how to help you and it may bring the right person to their minds to introduce you.

5. Learn to Talk About Yourself Confidently and Positively

When you have the ability to tell people how awesome you are in an excited and confident way, you are mastering the art of getting them to be your best salesperson. A confident brag is not putting yourself above others, it is you expressing your enthusiasm for your accomplishments. Knowing how awesome you are isn't prideful, it is confidence so long as you never put yourself above or below others.

For a great resource see the book *Brag! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It* by Peggy Klaus.

Remove or change elements of your elevator pitch that are negative. All of them. People don't need to know that something negative happened to you. It happens to all of us. There's no need to include them in your narrative.

6. **Get Involved In Your Community**

If you were to leave your community tomorrow, would people notice? Would they say you made a difference? Why?

The more you get involved and contribute to the world you live in, the more likely you will be to have people vouch for you. **Nobody can recommend you if you never show up! So, show up.** Get out and do good things. Your community needs your talents and input and the more you do, the more people you know. The more people you know, the more connections to opportunities you have.

7. **Be Curious**

Networking isn't about impressing people. It's about learning about people. Ask questions like:

- What do you enjoy about your work?
- How did you get started?
- What trends are you seeing?
- What advice would you give someone entering this field?

People remember great listeners far more than great talkers.

8. **Finally, Stay Connected!**

What happens after the event or connection is probably the most important. Connect on LinkedIn, make a note on the business card, send a thank you note, refer a resource to the person, reach out again soon after to just say you appreciated meeting them. There are countless ways to stay connected today. Use them and keep that contact.

When I connect with someone new on LinkedIn, I always send a personal message thanking them for connecting and reminding them how we met. Later, that small note can remind both of us how our relationship began.

consider this, networking should be something you do before you need a job, not only when you're looking for one.

Networking is a skill, not a personality trait. Like interviewing, public speaking, or writing a résumé, it improves with practice. Every conversation is an opportunity to learn, serve, and build a relationship that may open doors months, or even years from now.

If you'd like guidance as you develop these skills, our courses connect you with experienced coaches and a community of professionals who are also working to advance their careers. You'll gain practical instruction while building a network that can support you long after the course ends.

Your ability to network and connect on the next level with people will expand your opportunities in a major way. But