



NETWORKING

What is Networking?

For folks new to the job search process, networking might be a new term. From a career-related standpoint, it is the process of interacting with individuals who either have positions or work for organizations similar to those that interest you, or who are willing to share information about their position or organization, or provide the names of others who have positions or work for organizations similar to those that interest you. Networking adds the human aspect, that personal touch to the job search process.

How do I Network?

It will be very hard to network if you haven't established why you are networking. It is important to set goals and objectives as a basis for why you are building a network. You want to maximize the contact that you have with those professionals interested in networking with you. When making a contact, you should immediately be able to state the purpose of your call, and be able to talk about your goals and objectives. You should have questions and points of discussion prepared before you ever approach a networking contact.



Who Should I Contact To Build My Network?

Contacts for building networks can come from a variety of places. To better understand this idea, think about different types of networks. Here are **three** basic ones:

1. *Individual Contacts* – These networks include friends, acquaintances, fellow college alumni and immediate family (parents, friends, classmates, neighbors, relatives, etc...).
2. *Organizational Contacts* – These networks include groups and departments related to your education or working environment (co-workers, supervisors, past clients or coworkers, professors, group and club members, professional organization members, related field colleagues, etc...).
3. *Community Networks* – These networks are any contacts within the community (doctors, dentists, fellow church members, local Chamber of Commerce, insurance agents, bank managers, teachers, hairdressers, etc.).

Why Should I Network?

There are many advantages to networking, the two most prominent of which are to learn more about careers in general and to establish relationships that may indirectly result in a job lead. Think about the following points:

- 75% of job vacancies are never advertised. You may only be exposed to 25% of available jobs.
- Most employers would prefer to hire a person referred by a colleague, peer or friend and believe they will be exposed to a higher quality candidate in this manner.
- The referral process can put you in contact with key people you might otherwise never meet.
- You learn more about your field of interest and various occupations within it, including specific organizations, which may help you in choosing a major or career path.
- Doing information interviews early in your career exploration means you will have a collection of resources to call on when you really are ready to start your job search!
- Your network can be maintained for years to come and be used repeatedly as you go through job changes later in life.



Informational Interviews

Just as it states, this interview is to gather information, **not** to gain employment. This is **not** a job interview. These interviews **are** a great way to gain realistic information about what you have heard about careers, expand your knowledge of the job market, learn strategies for breaking into a certain career, find out about additional career paths and build your professional network by talking to individuals working in a career field of interest to you. Again, in **no** way should you ask for a job!

So you don't waste the time of the person you are interviewing, think about what questions you are going to ask ahead of time. Figure out what information you are looking for. If the individual senses that you are enthusiastic and interested, they are usually happy to share information with you. Try to keep the interview to 30 minutes or less. The following are some questions to consider while preparing:

- **What is your title? How long have you been in this position?**
- **How did you become interested in this field?**
- **What are your responsibilities, and what skills are particularly useful to you in fulfilling them?**
- **How does your organization compare with others in the field?**
- **Take me through a typical day in your position.**
- **Do you work closely with other people?**
- **What are some problems you must face and decisions you must make?**
- **What do you find challenging in your work?**
- **Would it be possible to take a tour of your organization?**
- **How do most people get started in the field?**
- **Are any degrees or licenses required to enter this field?**
- **What academic preparation would you recommend to qualify for this position?**
- **What are some of the current changes in the field?**
- **What professional organizations are good to join in this field?**
- **Where can I get more information on this field?**
- **Which skills do you consider important for success in this field?**
- **What talents and personality traits do you consider to be necessary for this field?**
- **What is the salary range for work in this profession?**
- **Are any travel obligations associated with your job?**
- **Is this field growing? Are there opportunities for employment?**
- **Are "no experience" college graduates employed in this field?**
- **Are there related fields?**
- **What was your career path from college to present?**
- **Can you suggest other people who might be valuable to talk to?**



Career Services Office
Penland Administration Building, Room 107 ~ Phone: (803) 641-3440 ~ Fax: (803) 641-3652
<http://www.usca.sc.edu/careers>

USC Aiken provides affirmative action and adheres to the principle of equal educational and employment opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, sex, creed, national origin, age, disability or veteran status. This policy extends to all programs and activities supported by the university. Any person who feels they qualify for special accommodations due to a physical, learning, or psychological disability OR if you need this form in an alternate format, please contact Kay Benitez in the Office of Disability Services at (803) 641-3626.