

Networking: The Key to Finding a Job

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Networking can be defined as developing and maintaining relationships with others. Networking involves staying connected to people to learn about new ideas, services, and of course, job opportunities. Networking is most successful when done consistently over time. When it works, networking can “net” many gains for you personally and in your job search in particular.

Why is Networking Important?

Networking puts you in touch with contacts who have the ability to:

- ❖ provide you with insights about a career field beyond what you learn in the classroom or from printed resources;
- ❖ refer you to other people who can also be helpful;
- ❖ connect you with information about a job or internship opportunity.

Many jobs (some say as many as 75%) never get published anywhere. Candidates who were known by the employer -- often through networking contacts, fill them!

Developing YOUR Network

Your network starts with people you already know!

Family, friends, faculty, members of groups or organizations to which you belong, classmates -- all of these can be a start at building a network. Although they may not be in your chosen career field, they may know people who are!

Former employers, particularly if they are in your chosen career field, can be excellent contacts. Members of the **professional association** in your field or **community groups** can also be networking resources. And don't forget **college alumni**, especially those in Whitman's Career Consultant Network.

HOW-TO'S OF INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

One of the most effective ways you can gather important information about a possible career option is by talking with someone who knows the field. This is called "informational interviewing." It is actually just a conversation about a topic of interest to both of you. **You** are the person who guides this interview. Questions you will want to ask may include:

- ❖ Can you tell me about your profession?
- ❖ What preparation did you have for your job?
- ❖ What skills are important in this job?
- ❖ What do you like about your job?
- ❖ What don't you like about your job?
- ❖ How would I find a job in this field?
- ❖ Can you refer me to anyone else who would be willing to share information with me?

As you prepare for this interview, try to target some ways you can build rapport with the person.

What do you have in common?

This can include your college, an organization to which you both have belonged, a home town, a friend or relative.

How did you get his/her name?

Did someone suggest you call or make the appointment? Did you find him/her in the Career Consultant Network?

Learn about the organization where he/she works, before your meeting.

What are its products or services?

One important reminder: this is an opportunity to gather important information. Never ask the person for a job! If the person suggests the possibility of an internship or other position, you should state your interest and ask for more information.