

**One of the most effective job search strategies is networking.** By using and building relationships, developing contacts and exchanging information with people connected to your career of interest, you'll increase your chances of landing a job. Only 20% of job openings are filled through job boards / online - the other 80% are filled through the hidden job market, which is accessible through networking.

## Advantages

- It works - 60% of people report getting a job through networking
- You learn about opportunities earlier, before they're posted
- You learn about organizations, positions and industry trends, all of which can help when you get an interview
- Many people want to help you find work! They've been there themselves and they are always looking for new talent
- Allows you to test your communication skills and gain confidence
- Your connections may get you introductions to people who may control job opportunities
- Adds to your credibility because a trusted source referred you

## Challenges

- Requires time and effort to make contacts and follow up
- Can be difficult at first if you are shy or nervous meeting new people. Start small by talking with a few people individually, and then expand to meetings, informational interviews and larger networking functions

## Guidelines for networking –setting up and managing contacts

- Develop a target list of people to contact and establish a timeline
- Determine a comfortable place to start in order to build your confidence
- Send a networking e-mail and request a time to talk
- Attend professional organizations, community groups, alumni events, etc.
- Keep a record of all your interactions with each contact
- Brainstorm with others to expand list of contacts
- Let others know you are looking for work
- Talk to people who know many other people
- Keep contacts / mentors informed of your progress, send thank you notes

## Getting the most out of professional networking events

- **Research**—Learn about the event (who will be there, opportunities for connections)
- **Set Goals**—Determine what you want to accomplish
- **Build Relationships**—Identify the people you would like to meet
- **Prepare**—Rehearse your 30-second personal commercial about yourself and communicate your value
- **Help Others**—Consider volunteering to work a registration table or assist in some other way at an event

## Identify your personal network

*List names of potential contacts and identify those who seem the best for getting your message out and researching the job market.*

- Begin to seek out people who are involved in areas about which you would like more information
- Call and/or email contacts to request a brief meeting / informational interview to learn more about what they do
- Let your contacts know you are looking for employment
- Ask your contacts for names of other people that would be good to contact
- It's important to make your network as far reaching as possible and continue to network (by building and maintaining relationships) even after you've found a job

<b>Friends, relatives, neighbors</b>	<b>Instructors, teachers, alumni</b>
<b>Former bosses, managers of other departments &amp; divisions, co-workers, suppliers, customers</b>	<b>Personal business connections (banker, doctor, dentist, barista, babysitter, book club, sports, clubs)</b>
<b>Professional associations/organizations, community/faith-based/political groups</b>	<b>Your parents/spouse/partner/kids networks</b>

