

*It's not what you know, its not who you know, but who knows you!*

When managing your career it is of paramount importance that you learn how to network effectively. Whether in a personal, social, or professional arena, the proper "networks" can help you achieve your aims, whether it be looking for work, changing careers or starting your own business.

### **TEN STEPS TO EFFECTIVE NETWORKING**

#### **Determine your goals**

The first thing you must do is determine what you are looking for out of a potential contact. Is it a business relationship, career mentor, guidance counsellor?

#### **Make a list of potential contacts**

Compile a list of those persons you think will help fulfil your goals. Figure out what you need from the contact and the role you expect him or her to fill. Be open to those outside of your field of interest. You may be pleasantly surprised as to the help they can give you.

#### **Research the contacts**

Once you have selected your potential contacts, research their backgrounds, who they work for and position they hold. Think of questions to ask the contacts that are pertinent to your goal.

#### **Make the initial contact**

Build up your confidence and pick up the phone, send an e-mail or introductory letter. Establish a rapport, and don't be shy... but be polite.

#### **Request help**

Once you establish a contact and determine that he or she is willing to help you, be forward and direct. Let him or her know what you are looking for, your goals and aspirations.

#### **Send a "Thank You" or follow up letter**

After speaking to your new contact, don't forget to send a "Thank You" email or follow up letter. Be cordial and gracious.

#### **Keep in touch**

Remember to keep in touch with your contact. Even if the "network" does not generate immediate results, do not be discouraged and lose touch. Everyone is busy; it's your job to keep in touch with them, not the other way around. Keep in mind who is helping whom.

#### **Leverage your new contacts**

You asked for help once, don't be shy to ask for it again. If your contact cannot help you, maybe they know someone who can. If they were willing to help you in the first place, chances are they'll do it again. Just don't get out of hand... be respectful of their time and commitments. You are not their sole priority.

#### **Seek ways to meet new contacts**

Seek out ways to meet new people, through joining organisations and professional bodies, attending events and trade fairs. Useful contacts can be made through any part of your life, for example through vacation work, hobbies or social circle.

**Join LinkedIn**

Create and maintain your own professional profile on [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) and connect with professionals and college alumni working in your chosen field. This website is a specific networking site for professionals and can help you connect with people who can be a fantastic source of information and help.