10 Ways to Network Properly

By Rachel Zupek, CareerBuilder.com writer[[1]](#endnote-1)

1. Know your purpose for networking.

It sounds obvious, but job seekers waste their contacts' time when they don't really know what they want to do, where they want to work, or how the contact might be helpful to them. Think about what companies you want to target through networking and how you can identify connections that will lead you to those employers.

2. Do your homework.

Don't ask your contacts questions that could easily be answered by doing a little basic research. The more you know about your contacts' companies and backgrounds, the more impressed they will be.

3. Don't act desperate.

Your contacts will be much more willing to help someone who is confident and capable than someone groveling, whining, and desperate. Don't forget that as high a priority as it is to you, your job search is not so to most of your network.

4. Listen.

When someone is kind enough to offer you job advice, listen attentively. Write your contact a thank-you note and include something that tells your contact you listened.

5. Respect your contact's time.

Don't drop into a contact's office uninvited and when you call a current or prospective member of your network, always ask if he has time to talk. When the situation allows, bide your time before launching into networking conversation.

6. Ask for help in small doses.

Don't burden your contact with overwhelming requests for help and advice. Ask more questions than favors. You can always ask for more at a later time.

7. Get permission.

Before using a network contact's name to approach another prospective contact, get his or her permission. Similarly, when you're scouting for new members of your network, tell prospective contacts how you got their names.

8. Be careful with your use of the word networking.

Some people have grown weary of being networked. Unless you are attending a function specifically earmarked for networking, it's best not to advertise the fact that that is what you are doing. Instead, think of yourself as making connections, building relationships, and seeking advice.

9. Don't be pushy and aggressive.

Be sensitive to just how much a contact is willing to do for you and don't push beyond that limit. Be persistent, but not annoying.

10. Remember that networking is a two-way street.

The idea of reciprocity is perhaps the most important aspect of networking. Offer your help to your contacts and supply needed information whenever possible.

1. Rachel Zupek is a writer and blogger for CareerBuilder.com. She researches and writes about job search strategy, career management, hiring trends and workplace issues.

   \*Adapted from the online article\* [↑](#endnote-ref-1)