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OVERVIEW: NETWORKING

Networking is essential to your job search plan and connected to how you do your job search, research companies, and create your targeted resumes and cover letters. The goal of networking is to:

“Develop a relationship with the decision make or hiring manager before the job opening becomes available”

This packet is designed to guide you through a series of questions and activities to start you in your networking plan.

KNOWING YOURSELF, YOUR GOALS AND YOUR INDUSTRY

Researching your interests, skills, and values is vital for setting your career goals. Even if you have always known your general career path, you still need employer and job-specific information in order to get the most out of your job search.

- Take time to emotionally process the loss of a job and clear any baggage that you may have as you move forward in your job search
- Identify your "big picture," your ideal job, and decide what large-scale goals you need to achieve to get that job. Break down this “big picture” goal into 2 short-term goals

STARTING YOUR RESEARCH: YOUR CORE MESSAGE

Before you can get a job, you need to know what jobs are available and the job requirements. Your professional objective, where you want to work and why, is your Core Message of every Networking interaction that you have.

- Research and find as many different job descriptions and position requirements online that you can, and start to identify your ideal job
- Attend King County and/or Seattle Public Library workshops
- Be aware of starting wages for entry-level positions. (see website resources)

Targeted job search – It is important to identify 10-15 companies that you want to work for in starting your research:

- What types of positions/businesses are you interested in?
- What type of company do you want to work for? Non-profit? For-profit? Government agency?
- What size company do you want to work for? Less than 100 employees? More than 500 employees?
- What geographic locations are you willing to travel or move to for your job?
- Are you looking for full-time or part-time employment?
ESTABLISH YOUR BRAND

Your “brand” is your unique story and set of experiences that is marketable to employers. Before you begin your job search, it is essential to define your brand and be able to talk about your skills or new skills to an employer.

It is important to prepare a 30 Second Commercial; a quick sales pitch to an employer or networking contact which highlights your education, and skills/abilities. Most importantly your commercial demonstrates your knowledge about the position and industry, and engages your contact in a conversation.

CONSIDER

- What type of position you are seeking?
- What are you primary qualifications?
  - Recent education or/and # years experience in the field
- What are your primary job skills?
- What other strengths do you have that is relevant to the job?
  - Why are you the RIGHT person for this particular job?
  - Do not be shy, Let your passion for this work show, passion always wins

Putting it all together, PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE. Before you map out your contacts and make connections, you must practice telling your story and selling your Brand.

EFFECTIVE NETWORKING STRATEGIES

Mapping Your Contacts (See Worksheet on p. 5)

INNER CIRCLE— Anyone who will take or return a phone call from you.

MIDDLE CIRCLE— Contacts who are dormant may or may not return phone call and you need to touch base with.

OUTER CIRCLE— Contacts from participating in a group such as your graduating class in college or some other type of program you participated in past years.
Creating your Network

College and Employer Network
- Each past employer is a separate network
- All current and past employees of organizations where you have worked
- Employee alumni groups
- Past employer networks even if not in your field of study
- Consider external contacts from each of your past jobs

Professional and Personal Associations
- Religious or Community leaders
- Professional Business Networks – All the people you do business with example bankers, doctors, lawyers, hairdressers, and so forth. Make all aware of your job search – core message.
- Non-Vocational Networks & Hobbies
- Family Friends – Two Best Networks

Conducting Networking Conversations
Talk to people in your network who you already have a connection with AND
Talk to people you are introduced to by current connections

Networking with Personal Contacts

Networking with Personal Contacts should be great practice, easy and fun. Personal contacts can be our first guide to meeting the hiring manager before a position is posted. Be clear with your core message about the type of job you are looking for and consistent in your brand.

Networking with Professional Contacts

Look for opportunities and meet insiders who can introduce you to the decision maker. It is not about job openings-effective job hunters meet the decision maker before there is a job opening!

Elements of Networking Conversation
- An Authentic conversation, no gimmicks; Be Yourself!
- Create conversations that are comfortable with no hidden agendas or attempts to manipulate
- Identify Common Interest for a basis for the conversation. This leads to information exchange
- Mutual learning happens in the conversation; mutual topic and sharing back forth on that topic
- Do not focus on job openings or inappropriately ask for favors. Your focus is to build your network
Remember: Our first goal is to aim our networking activities toward those people in our inner circle.