

Networking

(804) 289-8547 | careerservices.richmond.edu

Office Hours: M-F, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. | Walk-in Hours: M-F, 2 to 4 p.m.



Alumni &
Career Services

Networking, if used properly, is the most effective job search strategy.

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Networking is the process of discovering and using connections between people. Tap into your circle of friends, family, professors, previous employers, and Richmond alumni.

The purposes of networking are:

- To gain *information* and *advice* about a career field, an industry, or an organization.
- To learn about *possible job opportunities* (**NOT** asking for a job!).
- To *connect* with more people who are doing the things you want to do.
- To tell people about *you*.

80% of jobs are filled
through networking.

WHY IS NETWORKING SO IMPORTANT?

Networking enables you to:

- Validate your choice of career/job by investigating the day-to-day experiences of someone in the field.
- Obtain current information about a career field; get additional leads to jobs and informational interviews.
- Develop knowledge of the vocabulary in the field.
- Gather information to make a positive impression on employers in a cover letter or in a job interview.
- Build confidence in your ability to discuss your career interests and goals.
- Tap into the “hidden” job market — most jobs are not advertised!

BASIC STEPS OF NETWORKING:

- Know yourself: your skills, interests, qualifications.
- Know basic information about a career (through books, internet, classes).
- Set specific, attainable goals for yourself and your job search.
- Start with people you know and who know you to identify people they know who you do not know. These “2nd degree” people are often a fantastic resource once your contact introduces you to them.
- Think of everyone you meet as a networking contact.
- Use various professional networking resources such as SpiderConnect and LinkedIn.
- Approach familiar people and less desired organizations first. At the same time, don’t be afraid to initiate contact with people you don’t know.
- What do you want from them? Advice? Info on their organization? Other contacts?
- Keep a well-documented record of contacts.
- Be patient and persistent: things may take a while to develop, and you will hear, “No.”
- Be polite, professional, and thankful! Be sure to send a thank you after your conversation or meeting.
- Keep in touch. After being introduced to new people, follow-up with short communications: e-mail, a phone call, a visit.

Skillful networking is a planned, structured, and intensive campaign that usually starts with family, friends, and acquaintances, but rapidly moves onto meetings with people you do not know, further expanding your network.

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BE PREPARED TO NETWORK ANYWHERE

Create and practice a “60-second” Personal Commercial.

Your script will change with your audience, but have some words prepared about the following:

- Introduce yourself (name, major, why you are making contact with the individual).
- Demonstrate your knowledge about the field or organization.
- Ask for advice or information on pursuing this career field.

NETWORKING CORRESPONDENCE

1250 Monument Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23298
August 1, 2011

Ms. Mary Karr
Genetic Counselor
Medical College of Virginia
1101 E. Marshall Street
Richmond, VA 23298

Dear Ms. Karr:

I was intrigued by your article, “Genetic Counseling: The Way of the Future,” printed in the latest edition of *Biology Today*. My biology studies at the University of Richmond have introduced me to the world of genetics. Until reading your article, however, I was unaware of the genetic counseling profession.

Your perspective and advice would be extremely valuable to me as I consider this career field. Please consider taking a short amount of time from your schedule to tell me about your experience.

I will call you next week to discuss the possibility. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Claudia Edwards

Claudia Edwards
904.562.1224

Sample Letter

An **approach letter** can be used for requesting an informational interview or an informal meeting to discuss career possibilities, even when a position is not currently open. See the informational interviewing handout for more information.

Dear Mr. Jacobs:

Sample EMAIL approach letter

It was a pleasure to see you again at the American Marketing Association meeting last month. As you may remember, I will graduate from the University of Richmond with my Bachelor’s degree in Marketing in May, and I am just beginning my job search. I am most interested in beginning a career in marketing within the computer software industry, and I would appreciate any assistance you might be able to provide by telling me a bit more about your career path and current employer. If this would be easier to talk about in person, I would be glad to set up a time to meet with you face-to-face within the next week. I have attached my resume so you can learn a bit more about my background.

I continue to be excited about beginning a career in marketing. I look forward to speaking further.

Sincerely,

Jason Wong