

A Practical Guide to Successful Networking

Networking is quite simply the most effective way of landing a job – read on to discover how to do it right.

There is a whole host of clear, practical and actionable careers advice from the Career Agent available on [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and at thecareeragent.co.uk.

In this guide we consider **why** we should network, **what** we should do (and what we shouldn't) and **how** to do it!

Why Network?

'85% of jobs are filled via networking' [LaSalle Network, 2018]

'70% of job opportunities are never published online' [Business Insider, 2017]

Most people are resistant to networking because they do not want to ask for help. Some genuine quotes from are clients are: 'I don't want to bother anyone' and 'I don't want to be a burden'.

But consider these points:

- Employers famously find it challenging to hire the right employees.
- If employers use recruiters, they pay a fee of up to 25% of the candidate's annual salary.
- If a candidate is recommended by a mutual and trusted contact, the risk of hiring them is significantly less.

Thus, networking for job opportunities is of great benefit to both parties. You are not asking favours by networking; you are helping the right company to find you.

Networking Dos and Don'ts

Great Networking	Poor Networking
<p>Do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a clear pre-meeting plan before the meeting • Clearly state what you want to the person you meet • Confidently sell yourself, your skills and strengths • Ask their opinion on you and where you should go • Ask who else they know who could help you • Make a clear post-meeting action plan with next steps • Follow up: thank them and state actions • Follow up a week or two later to chase actions <p>Take this approach and the person will feel that they are doing everything they can to help you.</p>	<p>Don't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be vague. Avoid using phrases such as: 'I don't know what I want to do' or 'I just want to see what's out there' • Deflect attention from yourself by asking questions like 'I just want to learn more about what you do' • Leave without a plan. Do not finish the meeting with 'let's keep in touch' <p>Adopt this approach and you may frustrate the person you are meeting; you are wasting their time.</p>

How to Network

1. Analyse Your Existing Network

Brainstorm for potential contacts. Consider this list as a starter:

- Your friends
- Your former colleagues
- Friends of your parents or family
- Networks of all the above
- Who do you know that works in industries matching your strengths and values?

Build a spreadsheet of names and plan how you will contact them.

2. Contact Your Network

- **Connect** to people - [LinkedIn](#) is a fantastic place to start. Send a **personalised message** about why you are interested in speaking with them.
- Contact anyone who might help you and **ask them for a call or a coffee**.
- Don't think, just go for it.
 - If you're passionate enough about what you want, people will help you.
 - Retire your ego and fear of rejection, the only failure is in not trying.
- **State what you want to discuss** and be clear about what your career plan is.
- **Be Positive**. Apply the Law of Attraction; Employers and individuals cannot resist someone who really knows what they want to do and is bold in their approach to achieve it.
- **Do it Again!** The more you do the easier it gets. You will quickly learn that rejection isn't a problem; just move onto the next one.

3. Prepare

- **Research** the person you are meeting, their background and the company they work for.
- **Update your CV**: consider what selling points are relevant for that person, especially your skills.
- **Try to predict their objections**. Prepare to 'objection handle' with the person you are meeting, especially if you are trying to change industry/career.

4. Meet Up

- **Ask questions** to get to know your contact and build rapport.
- **Adapt** your communication style to that person
- **Advertise your skills**. Be clear about what they are.
- **Advertise your career plan**, being clear about what jobs you want.
- **Ask for advice** about jobs and the field etc.
- **Ask for further contacts** who could help you achieve your goal. Be bold; if you don't ask, you don't get.
- **Be assertive** – state what you are looking for and confidently state that you are going to get there.

5. Reflect

- **Record the salient points** from the meeting, to help you chase up on actions.
 - **Follow Up** by thanking them and setting the next actions.
 - **Widen the net** - reach out to people on LinkedIn who catch your interest, at companies you like the look of.
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Summary

Great networking means everybody wins, you and your future employer, so what are you waiting for?

1. **Be bold**, the phrase 'who dares wins' is very relevant here
2. **Prepare** your skills and be clear about what you want to achieve
3. **Build rapport** during the meeting before you ask for their help
4. **Follow-up**, be very organised and responsive throughout the process
5. **Take each contact seriously**: each call or meeting is an opportunity – any networking call / meeting could in theory be a first stage interview.
6. **Go again**: Tenacity will be rewarded, trust me.

At The Career Agent, we accelerate your career to bring you a fulfilling, successful and enjoyable life. [Contact us](#) to find out more.

**Best wishes and good luck,
Rory.**

Remember to follow us for clear, practical and actionable information:

