

## 9 TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR NETWORKING SKILLS

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Most job search experts find networking to be the most successful way to secure a new position. Networking opportunities are everywhere. The next person you meet could be a future employer or could lead you to a new job opportunity.

Here are 9 tips you can use to improve your networking skills:

- 1. KNOW EXACTLY** what it is that you want from others. Have a plan in place before you start your networking. Prepare questions in advance of a meeting. Be prepared, courteous, succinct, and appreciative.
- 2. HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE** that manifests itself throughout your networking efforts. No one wants to help a glum person who has no self-confidence.
- 3. TALK TO STRANGERS.** Despite what your Mom told you, it is OK to mingle with people you haven't been formally introduced to at meetings, concerts, sporting events, political rallies, and even on airplanes.
- 4. SHARE INFORMATION,** ideas, resources, and contacts with others. "The more you give, the more thou shalt receive!" Networking is best treated as a two-way street.
- 5. DON'T ASK** for too much at one time. Limit the amount of help or information you seek from any one person to avoid becoming a burden on that individual.
- 6. DON'T FORGET** to follow-up on leads provided by the people you talk to. You can never predict where a tidbit of information may lead.
- 7. HONOR OTHERS'** desire for confidentiality. Trust is a vital part of networking.
- 8. KEEP IT BRIEF** and don't monopolize other people's time. It may even be necessary to make arrangements to call or meet at another time if you discover areas of vital interest.
- 9. CONTINUE YOUR EFFORTS** to network even after you have secured a new position. Networking should become a part of your everyday business life because there will always be ways an active network can help you achieve your goals. It is also a powerful tool for enriching your life and the lives of those in your network.



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