

# **Networking-Meet the Job, Internship or Career of Your Dreams**

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## ***Who Do You Know?***

You will find the job or internship you want because of someone that you either know now or will meet soon. Everyone has a significant person in their past that helped them find success in their career. Networking is about meeting people who could turn out to be a significant person in your future career. People who are successful in their career typically want to help others who are "just starting out" because they know that someone helped them along the way. So don't think you are "using" someone by networking. You are simply meeting people who may want to help you to achieve your goals.

## ***What's Your Problem?***

If you want to find a job, figure out what problem or types of problems you would like to spend your time solving. It could be a social problem, health problem, mechanical problem, etc. Then find people and organizations who are also interested in solving these types of problems. Try to meet as many people as you can who currently work in or know people who work in those organizations. Don't ask potential contacts or mentors to help you find a job. Instead, ask them about their work and organization and listen for ways that you could be of help to them. Show them how you could be of value to them in solving their problem.

## ***Timing is Everything!***

There is typically a time gap, anywhere from a month to a year between the time when an organization either conceives of the idea for a new job or realizes that an existing job will soon be available and the time when that position is actually advertised to the public. The goal of networking is about making yourself known to an individual or organization so that they consider you for the position before it is even advertised. Networking will increase your chances of being thought of when someone in the organization that is hiring asks the question: "Does anyone know someone who would be good for this job...?"

## ***Hey, Wanna Buy a Used Car?***

Finding a job or internship is similar to finding a good used car to buy. You probably won't find a really good used car at a dealer or on a website or in the newspaper. You find a really good used car by telling everyone you know that you are looking for a used car. Sooner or later, someone that you tell will know someone who is trying to get rid of a good used car. So tell everyone you know about the type of job or internship that you are looking for and sooner or later, someone who is hiring will hear about you.

## ***Falling in Love with Your Job or Career***

Finding your dream job or a career is kind of like finding your spouse or soul mate. Nobody just all of a sudden says, "I'm going to marry and spend the rest of my life with...um...um ... that person over there" and then decides to marry them. "Love at first sight" typically only happens in the movies. In the real world, the process typically goes like this. We will, by some chance occurrence, meet someone, go on dates to learn more about them, fall in love, and before we know it, we have found "the one" we might spend the rest of our life with. It is not so much a decision that we make, as it is something that happens to us over time. Unless it's an arranged marriage (or an arranged major or career), you will have to spend some time with a person before you can know if they are "the one" for you. Likewise with finding your major, career or even a job, you may have to spend some time with it to see if it is something that you will enjoy doing. In the same way people typically don't end up marrying the first person they date, you may not end up staying with the same major, job or career.

## ***Just Do Something!***

If the key to finding a job is meeting the right people, then what is the key to meeting the right people? It all starts with some type of random, chance occurrence. Ask anyone how they met their significant other and they will tell you a story about how they went to a certain party or took a certain class or walked into a certain store, and that specific action, down the road, led to them meeting the person of their dreams. So, if you want to meet the people who will help you find your job, you have to do things that will bring you into contact with new people and new ideas. Just do things; get involved in something, volunteer for something, have people you know introduce you to people they know, go to places where people are who share your interests and values. Talk to people in different jobs and careers that may interest you. Get involved in campus activities, student clubs and community service opportunities. Approach someone who works in your field of interest and ask how you could help them on a project or upcoming event. The only way to discover what it is you really want to do is to just do something. Keep moving forward and before you know it your dream job will find you.