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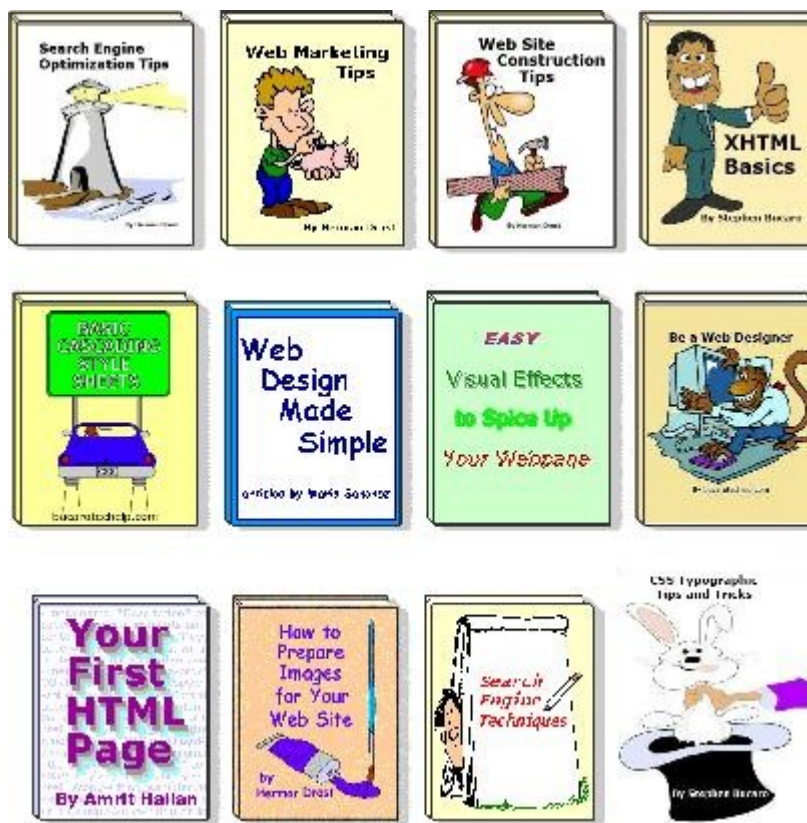
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Introduction

Whether you're looking for your very first job, switching careers, or re-entering the job market after an extended absence, finding a job whittles down to two main tasks: understanding yourself and understanding the job market. When the job market is tight, volunteering is a great way to learn new skills and to meet new people. Meeting new people allows you to network.

When you're networking, you're going to have to sift through the people you don't want to know to get to the people you do want to know. That's just an essential part of networking, but the good news is that with practice, you'll get better at spotting the people worth knowing. To get a job, you'll need a good resume.

Want to make your resume shine? This eBook shows you how to put together a resume that'll impress any employer. Plus 27 resume design tips. A good resume will get you an interview. Many structured interviews, particularly those at large companies, start with a question like "tell me about yourself." This eBook shows you how to narrow your life down into a brief but relevant and professional answer.

Some 30 percent of organizations, including many of America's biggest corporations, now use behavioral interviewing - and the number is growing. This eBook shows you how to prepare for behavioral interviews.

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How to Get a Job

Whether you're looking for your very first job, switching careers, or re-entering the job market after an extended absence, finding a job whittles down to two main tasks: understanding yourself and understanding the job market. Presuming you've already chosen a career and are currently searching for jobs, here are several ways to

actually get a job.

1. Network. The best companies to work for tend to rely heavily (up to 40 percent) on employee referrals. Make a list of all of your friends, relatives, and acquaintances. Call each one and ask them if they know of any openings that they could recommend you for. Don't be too humble or apologetic; tell them what you've been looking for, but let them know that you're flexible and that if they have any suggestions, you're open to them. This is not the time to be picky about jobs; a connection can often get your foot in the door, and you can negotiate pay or switch positions later, once you've gained experience and established your reputation.

2. Volunteer. If you aren't already, start volunteering for an organization that focuses on something that you're passionate about. You may end up doing boring or easy work in the beginning, but as you stick around and demonstrate your commitment, you'll be given more responsibilities. Not only will you be helping others, but you'll also be gaining references. You should emphasize your volunteer experience on your resume, as companies that treat their employees well tend to favor candidates who help the community somehow.

3. Develop your personal elevator pitch. Many structured interviews, particularly those at large companies, start with a question like "tell me about yourself." The interviewer doesn't really want you to go back to grade school and talk about your childhood. This is a specific question with a specific answer ... in two minutes or so, the interviewer wants to get you to relax and loosen out your vocal cords, understand your background, your accomplishments, why you want to work at XYZ company and what your future goals are.

4. Prepare for a behavioral interview. You might be asked to describe problems you've encountered in the past and how you handled them, or you'll be given a hypothetical situation and asked what you would do. They'll basically want to know how you'll perform when faced with obstacles in the position you're interviewing for.

Be able to give honest, detailed examples from your past, even if the question is hypothetical (e.g. "I would contact the customer directly, based on my past experience in a different situation in which the customer was very pleased to receive a phone call from the supervisor"). You might find yourself listing facts - if so, remember that in this kind of interview, you need to tell a story. Some questions you might be asked are:

- "Describe a time you had to work with someone you didn't like."
- "Tell me about a time when you had to stick by a decision you had made, even though it made you very unpopular."
- "Give us an example of something particularly innovative that you have done that made a difference in the workplace."
- "How would you handle an employee who's consistently late?"

5. Research the company. Don't just "do an Internet search, memorize their mission, and be done with it." If it's a retail company, visit a few of their stores, observe the customers, and even strike up a few conversations. Talk to existing employees - ask them what it's like working there, how long the position has been open, and what you can do to increase your chances of getting it. Become familiar with the history of the company. Who started it? Where? Who runs it now? Be creative, and do whatever you think the other candidates don't have the guts to do.

6. Settle down. If you've moved around a lot, be prepared to offer a good reason for it. Otherwise, you'll need to make a good case for why you want to stick around in the area where the job is located. A company doesn't want to hire someone with wanderlust who still wants to relocate. Be prepared to outline why you are where you are today, how long you intend to stay there, and why.

Give specific reasons like "This county has the best school systems in the entire state, and I have a daughter who might find the cure for cancer" or "I was drawn to this area because it's at the cutting edge of innovation for this business and I want to be a part of that." The more details, names, and specifics, the better.



7. Make a list of work-related skills you'd like to learn. Your employer will be interested in hearing about how you intend to become a better employee. Think about which skills will make you more competent in the position you're applying for. Public speaking, project management, team leading, and computer programs are usually beneficial. Find some books and upcoming conferences that would significantly improve your abilities. In an interview, tell the employer what you're reading and learning, and that you'd like to continue doing so.

8. Cold call. Locate a specific person who can help you (usually the human resources or hiring manager at a company or organization

you're interested in). Call that person and ask if they are hiring, but do not become discouraged if they are not. Ask what kind of qualifications they look for or if they have apprentice or government sponsored work programs. Ask if you can send your resume indicating what field you want to go into. Indicate whether you would accept a lesser job and work up.

- Reflect after each phone call on what went well and what did not. You may need to write out some standard answers on your list of skills so you can speak fluently. You may need to get some additional training to break into your chosen field. None of this means you cannot get a good job it only means you need to become further prepared to do so.

9. Change your attitude. There's a difference between making phone calls and going to interviews thinking "I'm looking for a job" versus "I'm here to do the work you need to have done". When you're looking to get a job, you're expecting someone to give something to you, so you focus on impressing them. Yes, it's important to make a good impression, but it's even more important to demonstrate your desire and ability to help. Everything that you write and say should be preceded silently by the statement "This is how I can help your business succeed."

10. Fit the job to the skills rather than the other way around. Many people search for jobs, then try to see how they can "tweak" the way they present their own skills and experiences to fit the job description. Instead, try something different. Make a list of all of your skills, determine which kinds of businesses and industries need them most (ask around for advice if you need to) and find businesses that'll benefit from having you and your skills around.

Tips

- Realize that you may have to work your way up. For example, if you want to become an apparel buyer, work for a company that manufactures or sells such goods.
- Remember you are doing some HR workers a favor when you present yourself and they do not have to go out and find workers like you. If you get a rude person, be happy you don't have to choose to work for them.
- It's also possible that your true calling is to be self-employed or an entrepreneur, in which case your task is not so much to find and get a job, but to create a job. Most people who work for themselves, however, often started off with a "day job" that paid the bills until their preferred income source could take over.

Warnings

- If you're doing a thorough job search, you will get rejected sometimes. If you're not getting rejected, you're not putting yourself out there enough. And if you don't learn to see rejection as a chance to improve your approach, then you'll have a very difficult time getting a job. Good Luck.

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How to Volunteer

Volunteering is a great way to further a cause, support an organization, and make a difference in your community. It can also be an opportunity to meet new people and learn new skills. If you'd like to give something besides money, consider lending your time and talents to organizations that are important to you.

1. Consider why you want to volunteer. Do you want to help the world or your community? Do you want to build your own skills, make new friends, and learn? Do you love what you do? Do you want to share your gifts with others or give something back? Examining these sorts of questions can help you to choose the right direction for your volunteer work.



2. Choose an organization that is meaningful to you. If you feel strongly about literacy, for instance, volunteer at your local library or find out if there is an organization of volunteer tutors in your area. There are organizations doing all sorts of work, and it is especially important with volunteer work that you choose something that you value. Organizations exist for all sorts of purposes, so if dishing up food at a soup kitchen doesn't sound like your cup of tea, consider ushering at your local theater, building homes, or volunteering at a hospital or animal shelter.

3. Look for an organization or activity in your area or community. While some volunteers do sign up for the Peace Corps or other worldwide organizations and travel to remote parts of the world, you should probably start on a smaller scale than that, especially if you already have commitments at home. If you do plan on venturing abroad in your volunteer work, get lots of information about what to expect there and ask your



doctor about getting immunizations appropriate to your destination. Talk to others who have traveled with your intended organization and ask them to share their experiences, too.

4. Seek out an organization and tasks within it that suit your skills and interests. Of course, you can develop new skills and learn many things by volunteering, but your volunteer work can still be compatible with your interests. If you're an outgoing "people person", you might not have much fun in the back office stuffing envelopes or filing papers. Others, by contrast, might find it uncomfortable to solicit funds door-to-door. Do you love to work with people? With animals? With children? With numbers? Are you handy? Do you love to speak or to write? Organizations need all sorts of skills. If you're not sure what sort of work you like or dislike, a volunteer organization may be a great opportunity to dabble a bit and try different things.



5. Start small. If you already have a busy schedule, volunteer your time for an hour or two per week or perhaps one day per month. (Just about anybody can free up that much time easily. Try turning off the TV!) You might be surprised how much you can accomplish in even a little bit of time. Then, if you find you enjoy the work and have more time to pursue it, gradually take on more.

6. Get to know others in the organization and how the group supports volunteers. Attend a training or orientation session, if one is available; if not, talk to local group leaders and other volunteers in the community about their experiences. You'll learn what to expect of an organization and your work with it, and you'll pick up some good tips to make your work there more productive and more meaningful.



7. Explain your own background and preferences to those in charge. They can help to match you with meaningful, suitable tasks, but only if they know a bit about who you are.

- Ask, don't demand. The people in charge of organizing, whether or not they are also volunteers, have certain needs to meet and may be quite busy.
- Especially if you're just starting out, consider helping with an immediate need even if it is not the ideal match for your abilities. Work doesn't always neatly match the people available to do it. You will still be helping the organization and you might learn a new skill or discover something about yourself. The favor you earn may also help you into a more suitable or desirable task next time.

8. Get started. Ask plenty of questions and do your research, but until you sign up and get your feet wet, you won't know if volunteering for a particular organization is really right for you.

9. Get training. If your organization has a formal orientation or training, attend it. If not, or if you still don't know where to begin, ask to work with an experienced volunteer or group. Then, ask lots of questions and give it a shot.



10. Try not to give up. Volunteer organizations, too, sometimes have less-pleasant tasks, difficult fellow workers, busy times, slow times, or bad management. If you find your work unpleasant, you have choices:



- Work through it, anyway. If you feel it needs doing, but it's dull or heavy work, put the music on, divide it into manageable pieces, take breaks when you need them, and get the job done. Don't forget to look for ways to ease the task or prepare better next time.
- Get help. If you're overwhelmed, confused, or stuck, ask if there is anyone else that could step up and give you a hand, even temporarily to get through some backlog or difficulty. Organizations may also have other resources to draw on, from contacts to sister organizations to libraries and municipalities.
- Fix the problem. If there's something in your way, it's probably in everybody else's way, too. Lead the charge to get more volunteers, more money, better equipment, or skilled help. Clean up messes when you see them. Suggest (gently, please!) how matters could be better handled or organized. Or, simply bring the problem to the attention of the organization or its leaders and ask what can be done.
- Take a break or back off. If you're exhausted, you may not be doing yourself or anyone else any good. Would everybody be better off if you came back with fresh energy later?
- Ask to do something else. If you feel you can better serve the organization by doing something more in line with your talents or skills, say so, and let organization leaders know what sorts of tasks or talents you would rather contribute.
- Look to another organization or branch. If you have tried all your best diplomatic skills and still have difficulty with the tasks or people you encounter, leave graciously and look elsewhere. Mismatches and mismanagement can happen in volunteer organizations, too.
- Start your own organization or volunteer freelance. Remember, though, that you may be on your own to provide the money and talent that an established volunteer organization may already have secured.

11. Have fun! You will accomplish more if you love what you do, and chances are good that your enthusiasm will infect others.

Tips

- Volunteer organizations, too, often have hierarchies within them, up through which volunteers must make their way. If you think you would like to volunteer during your retirement, for instance, consider starting on a small scale now to build your track record and contacts within that organization.
- If you are offered a leadership position or nominated as an officer, consider carefully whether that is what you want. If what you love is the in-the-trenches work for an organization, its board meetings and budgets may only prove to be a burden and an extra commitment of time. On the other hand, if you feel you can best contribute by helping an organization to run smoothly, give it a try.
- If you are asked to lead other volunteers, remember that they are volunteers and that their only compensation for their time is the enjoyment they get out of helping. Lead by example. Suggest, guide, advise, and organize. Rather than dictating or demanding, aim to serve your team by clearing their path of obstacles.
- Don't forget that wikiHow needs volunteers, too! Share your knowledge by writing or improving an article, or simply fix an error. You can begin here.

Warnings

- Try not to get pressured into volunteering, or taking on too much. If it stops being rewarding and starts being a chore, back off or take a break.
- Don't be a zealot. Enthusiasm for your chosen organization or cause is great, but balance and moderate it so that you don't burn out. Remember, too, that others may not feel as strongly about your cause as you do.



- Pay attention to safety and don't be bashful about asking for training.

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How to Make a Resume

Want to make your resume shine? Here's how to put together a resume that'll impress any employer.

1. Start by making a list of all your accomplishments to date. Don't leave anything out. Include jobs, awards, educational degrees, skills, personal projects: anything that would be impressive and/or interesting to anyone (even if not impressive or interesting to everyone). Even after your resume is finished, maintain this list. That way, you don't have to revisit those portions year after year. Organize your list by category.
2. Tailor your list to the position you're applying for (this will require a bit of research). Trim out each item that is not directly relevant to the job and add on two or three sentences explaining the relevance of each item. Whenever possible, list your experience in terms of accomplishments and achievements rather than tasks and responsibilities. Show your success. You may end up with many different versions of your resume, each one emphasizing a different set of skills.
3. Consider stating your objective. Again, keep this short and to the point, a single sentence. Personalize it to the position. Make sure your objective doesn't contradict the position you are applying for. Many employers will ignore an objective; so if it doesn't add something to the resume, don't include it.



4. Now it's time to format. Mind the look and feel of your resume. It should have clean lines and be easy to read. Make it two pages max, and only one page if you're just out of school - if you have more to share, save it for the interview. The font should be 8-13, no smaller, no bigger, but you should be able to read it well when you print it out. Black and white is best unless you're emphasizing your artistic or publishing skills (and even then be careful and tasteful). Keep the format neat and organized.

5. Include an address, phone number and email address. But, do not include an email that shows you shouldn't be taken seriously, like beerandboys@email.com. Don't use your current employer's name, number or email, either. If necessary, get an extra email address with a professional name that you can use for job searches.

6. Proofread, proofread and proofread again. Have a friend proofread. Have an enemy proofread. Have a stranger proofread. Then proof again! Don't boast about written communication skills with a typo.

7. Toot your own horn, but be careful. There is a fine line between arrogance and confidence. Try not to cross that line.

8. Follow directions. This is a huge indicator of responsibility to a hiring manager. If the ad says "no calls please," then don't call! If the job description asks you to provide your salary history, then include that information in your resume.

Tips

- Remember: the point of a resume is not to get the job, it's to get

the interview. Focus on your best accomplishments. Focus on things you've accomplished so that whoever reads the resume will think, "I want to find out more about how this person did that."

- Be consistent! Format each entry in your resume in the same way.
- You might not need to list your whole name if it takes up two full lines (James Michael Allan Hoffman III; James Hoffman is fine or even Jim Hoffman if that's the way you like to be addressed).
- Don't over qualify yourself for a position. Give enough information for interest and save the "wow" factor for the interview. Write the resume for the position you are applying for without altering the truth.
- Don't attach 6 letters of recommendation, your diploma, your birth certificate, and your CPR and fitness certifications. Indicate your current certifications and be prepared to give references upon request. Do not waste space on your resume by saying "References available".
- If you're just out of school put your educational details in before your employment details, with the most recent first on both of them. If you've been out of school for more than a year, or you have significant job credentials then list past employment and accomplishments first.
- Another approach is to lead with your strong suit, whether it be education, skills, work or volunteer experience. The idea is to showcase your strengths and hide any weaknesses.
- Detail your duties within each position but don't go overboard. Accomplishments are more impressive than duties. "Cut expenses by 25 percent over six months while maintaining historic revenue levels," is more impressive than, "Was responsible for a \$500,000 budget." The latter says, "I did this," the former says, "I did this and I can do it for you."
- Highlight your expertise in software programs, languages, customer service and/or any other particular skills that will impress the interviewer.
- Listing personal hobbies is optional, but make sure they are sending the right impression. In other words, you might want to mention your stamp collection if you're applying for a job at a delivery company, but don't include Monday night football at Hooters.
- Be careful about listing volunteer activities. When you start listing things that tie you to political and other emotionally charged organizations, you might get put in a bucket of preconceived notions. It's not right, but everyone has biases and it is better to avoid them if possible.
- Quantify your accomplishments, if possible, by applying specific numbers to your successes. For instance, if you streamlined the flow

of work for your department, define how much time it saved the company over a period of, say, 4 months. Time is money.

- Most people are somewhat shy and modest about what they have done on the job. Don't be! Think hard about what you've done and what you've accomplished. For instance, instead of saying "answered phones," say "answered multi-line phone and routed calls for an office of 43 people." The example here shows the prospective employer the volume of work you've handled and the complexity of the equipment.
- Print your resume on good quality paper, such as 20 pound bond white paper. Fancy papers are nice, but it's the content of your resume that employers care about.
- If possible, keep the resume for a day or two before reading it again. You may think of something else you want to add before submitting it to prospective employers.
- Write a cover letter that is short, sweet and to the point (and specifically written for the job you're applying for). If at all possible, do not write more than a page-long cover letter (make sure, though, that you include everything the employer asks for). Try and remember that the person reading it is probably looking at hundreds of resumes. Address logical questions in your cover letter. If you're applying for a position in California but your resume has a New York address, explain why. If you don't, the reader will probably trash the resume (unless the company is ready and willing to pay for a relocation package).
- If you do have to use two pages, make sure that the second page is at least half filled. If not, go back and re-work the formatting to see if you can fit it on one page. You can also review all the information you have and make sure it is all necessary and relevant. Remove the "fluff".
- Use no more than three different fonts.
- Always backup your resume on a floppy (yes, a floppy), flash USB drive, or even print it out.
- Use white space effectively. The resume layout should be professional, crisp and well-defined. If you have too much information on the page, feel free to leave out what you feel is not 100% necessary, such as that fast food job you had in high school, if you have other more relevant experience to draw from.
- Do not pad your resume. This may be illegal in some instances, and is quite likely to make you look like a fool.
- Do not include irrelevant personal information. If you make inappropriate personal disclosures on your resumes, employers may perceive you as having poor judgment. They may also, intentionally or unintentionally, discriminate against you.

- Although in some cultures, it's customary to list your age, marital status, and family status, it isn't common in the United States. If you think age is important, you can allude to it with the year you graduated college or high school. Otherwise, these dates aren't necessary. Beware that, depending on the industry, you may face age discrimination if you graduated many years ago. For example, in creative industries, having graduated more than a few years ago may disqualify you from getting an interview for a junior position.
- In some countries (like Germany) you have to include a photograph with your application. In others, like the US and Canada, including a photo will immediately disqualify you with many employers. This just goes to show how important it is to research the local culture if you apply for a job in another country.
- Many word processors, including Microsoft Word, have "fill-in-the-blank" style resumes. Check for one with an appropriate style and then follow their guiding. It can give you help on how to start.
- Make a lot of drafts!
- Remember, the resume lands you the interview and the interview gets you the job!

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How to Develop Your Personal Elevator Pitch

Many structured interviews, particularly those at large companies, start with a question like "tell me about yourself." The interviewer doesn't really want you to go back to grade school and talk about your childhood. This is a specific question with a specific answer ... in two minutes or so, the interviewer wants to get you to relax and loosen out your vocal cords, understand your background, your accomplishments, why you want to work at XYZ company and what your future goals are. Here's how to narrow your life down into a brief but relevant and professional answer.

1. Spend about 1-2 hours writing down your top five work or personal experiences. These experiences should follow this format - situation/task, action, result (STAR). What was the situation, what did you do, and what happened?

2. Narrow each down to a paragraph. Think about the STAR format as a 100 point pie. Only about 15-20 points should go to the "situation" with about 40 points going to your actions and 30-35 points on the results.

3. Think about the themes that come across. Are you all about growth, customer focus, sales excellence, product innovation, etc. and how do the themes come through? How do your experiences reflect a recurring theme?

4. Pick your top themes. What are the top 1-2 things you want the interviewer to remember about you? When you have finished answering the question, the interviewer should know clearly what these top 2 things are.

5. Put it together. A good way to finalize this is to use the word-count feature on your word processor. At 150 words per minute, you should not use much more than 350 words for your pitch. You'll generally want to start with undergrad, unless that was a very long time ago. Quickly move past undergrad and launch into your work history, keeping in mind that you want to highlight your top 3-5 experiences and not every last thing you did in each job. Keep your undergrad and work history to 75% of your time. Save the last moments for why XYZ company and what your future goals are. These goals should match the new position and/or the opportunities at this company.

Tips

- Once you have your personal elevator pitch, practice it in front of the mirror. If possible, try to video or audio tape yourself, and watch it in fast forward. You'll be amazed at your nervous habits!
- Even though you've prepared and practiced, keep it natural. Remember to breathe and smile.
- Rehearse it, but make sure it doesn't LOOK rehearsed.

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How to Network

You've probably heard the phrase "It's not what you know, it's who

you know." In today's interconnected society, that rings true more than ever. Your talents, abilities, and experience will never take you anywhere if nobody knows you exist. In order to get what you want out of life, you need to be resourceful. Your fellow human beings are a vast resource.

1. Break your stereotypes about networking. If you're reading this article, you're probably familiar with the benefits of networking, but you've avoided doing it for a variety of reasons.

- Networking can seem insincere, pretentious, or even manipulative. And if that's what you're thinking, you're probably right... about some of it. There will always be people who judge others based on image and titles, but there are also people who want to build genuine, mutually beneficial relationships.



When you're networking, you're going to have to sift through the people you don't want to know to get to the people you do want to know. That's just an essential part of networking, but the good news is that with practice, you'll get better at spotting the people worth knowing.

- You might think you're too shy or self-conscious to schmooze. Networking does require a degree of boldness, but with the advent of social networking sites, you can get to find others with similar interests and goals without being in a room full of people.

Also, people who are shy and self-conscious tend to be a lot more open and talkative when they're doing or talking about something they're deeply interested in. If you find people who are just as obsessed with birding, origami, or manga as you are, then you'll have a much easier time establishing connections.

- Networking takes time and effort. Unless you're an extroverted person who thoroughly enjoys schmoozing, it can be exhausting. Why bother? Well, one way to think of it is to imagine how much time and frustration you would save if anything you wanted or needed was just one or two phone calls away. Ultimately, a network can be an investment, with benefits that outweigh the costs. You just need to stick with it and watch it grow.

2. Build your social network. If you hate small talk, this will be the hardest part, but you'll improve with practice. The key is to smile and take a genuine interest in other people's lives.

- Strengthen your existing connections. Getting in touch with old friends, distant relatives, and people you went to school with can be a good stepping stone because you're reaching out, but you're not approaching complete strangers. Give them a phone call or send them an e-mail to find out where they are and what they're doing. Tell them what you're up to.

- Pursue interests and activities that mean a lot to you. The Internet has made this a whole lot easier. Check forums, listings, classifieds, and Internet mailing lists (known as "listservs") for local events or meetings that are likely to attract people with similar interests or passions.

- Go to work-related conferences. Print out business cards and give out as many as you can. Ask the people you meet for their business cards, and write any details about them on the back once you have a moment to spare.

3. Find out who knows whom. When you're talking to people, find out what they do for a living and for fun, as well as what their spouse or significant other, nearby family members, and close friends do for work and recreation, too. It may be helpful to make note of this in your address book so you don't lose track of who does what.

- Example: You meet Mary at a book club meeting and you find out that her cousin is an expert windsurfer. A few months later, your niece reveals to you that one of her life's goals is to go windsurfing. Instead of scratching your head and thinking "I know somebody mentioned windsurfing recently but I can't remember who..." you look at your address book, find "windsurfing cousin" written next to Mary's name, call her up and ask her if her cousin is available to give your niece a private lesson, that you want to give that to her as a birthday gift. Mary says "Sure!" and convinces her cousin to give you a discount. Your niece is thrilled. A month later, your car breaks down, and you remember that your niece's boyfriend is an aspiring auto mechanic...

- Find the extroverts. As you continue to network, you'll find that some people are much better at it than you are - they already know everyone! You'll stand to benefit from getting to know such people first because they can introduce you to others who share your interests or goals. In other words, if you're an introvert, find an extrovert who can "set you up".

4. Invite people out. Going out for lunch, beer, drinks, or coffee is usually good for catching up casually. You can also invite people to do things related to your interests. If you met someone at a caving club, why don't you ask them to check out a new cave with you? The objective here is to establish a connection beyond your initial meeting. Preferably, this should be one-on-one.

5. Be generous. Since you're looking to create mutually beneficial relationships, a good way to kick start this is by thinking of ways in which you can help others. It's not all about contacts, job offers, and loans; you can offer compliments, good listening skills, and other less tangible (but valuable) gestures of kindness and generosity. As long as you're sincere, you're establishing good relations with people and opening channels for mutual benefit. The girl who was crying on your shoulder last month might get you the job of your dreams next month. You never know, so place your bets on good karma. What goes around, comes around.

6. Follow up. Don't get someone's business card or e-mail address and forget about it. Find a way to stay in touch. Maintain your network. Whenever you find an article that might be of interest to them, for instance, send it on their way. If you hear about a negative event (a tornado, a riot, an electrical blackout) that happened in their vicinity, call them and make sure they're fine. Keep track of everyone's birthday and mark them on a calendar; be sure to send birthday cards to everyone you know, along with a nice note to let them know you haven't forgotten about them, and that you don't want them to forget about you.

7. Tap into your network. The next time you need something (a job, a date, a hiking partner) cast a wide net and see what happens. Make a few phone calls or send out an e-mail describing your situation in a friendly tone: "Hey, I'm in a bit of a pinch. I have these concert tickets for Saturday and I haven't been able to find someone to go with me. Since this is a band I love, I'd like to go with someone I know I'll have fun with. Do you know of anyone who might enjoy it with me?"

- Don't ever apologize when asking for a favor or help. It can signal a lack of confidence and professionalism. There's nothing to be sorry about - you're just seeing if anyone happens to be in a position to help you; you're not making demands, or forcing people to do anything that they don't want to do.

Tips

- Start small. Don't sign up for 12 meetings in one month. A sustained effort over the long run is better than making a one-time big effort and then burning out. Remember that networking requires maintenance, so don't bite off more than you can chew.
- It always helps to look approachable and be charming.
- Can't find a local club or group relating to your interests or career? Start one!

- You can make great contacts with politicians and their aides by volunteering in an election or being involved with their party outside of election time.

Warnings

- If you've never networked, it'll be hard at first. Very hard. But over time, it'll get easier. Eventually you'll learn how to start a conversation with a complete stranger in a way that feels comfortable and acceptable to you.

- Watch out for parasites - people who'll pump you for favors and never try to help you in return. When you find one attached to you (and if you're generous, you will) turn them down as politely as you can: "No, I'm sorry, I can't do that tomorrow. I've got plans." If they try to make you feel guilty, feign an excuse to get out of the conversation and make yourself scarce to them. Don't lose your temper or act cold because that'll give them something negative to say about you when they're talking to others, like "Oh, yes I know James, he once called me a leech..." - don't let this happen to you.

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How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview

Increasingly, employers are giving job candidates behavioral interviews. Behavioral interviewing is an interviewing strategy that considers the candidates' past performance the best indicator of future performance. If you're in the market for a new job, it's probably wise to prepare for behavioral interviews. Some 30 percent of organizations, including many of America's biggest corporations, now use behavioral interviewing - and the number is growing.

Listed below are the steps to prepare for a behavioral interview:

1. Study the job description for the position for which you're interviewing.
2. Visit the organizations website to gain an understanding of what type of candidate the organization is hiring.
3. List the personal and professional attributes of the ideal candidate for the job.

4. Think about which of your experiences can be used to illustrate you have these personal and professional attributes.

5. Make up questions that demonstrate you have each of these attributes. Behavioral questions usually start with phrases like "Describe a time" and "Tell me about a situation" which force the interviewee to talk about specific experiences.

6. Develop two or three stories for each personal or professional attribute, using experiences from your past to show you have each attribute.

7. Try to use the SAR technique to tell these stories. Describe the Situation you were in or problem you were facing at the start of the story. Describe the Action you took or took part in as a result. Then describe the Result of your actions. Spend less time on the Situation and more time on Action and Results. This is what the interviewer cares about.

8. Practice answering the behavioral interview questions you invented, using the stories you created, so your stories become second nature.


Tips

- Use your resume/CV to help evaluate how your experiences can be used to illustrate you're the ideal candidate for the job.
- Don't limit yourself to the experiences on your CV, if there's some other story that best shows how you'd be a great a fit with the job.
- Do a Web search for "behavioral interview questions" to find sites with sample questions you might face in a behavioral interview. Good places to look are business school websites. You may often find the marketing club or finance club mini-sites, where the students share behavioral interviews.

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