

POSITIVE TIPS FOR THE JOB MARKET

CASTING A SUCCESSFUL NET:

A SHORT GUIDE TO NETWORKING IN THE BOW VALLEY

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Did you know that 60-80% of available jobs are NOT advertised? To gain access to this important hidden job market, you will need to have a professional network in place. Because the Bow Valley is a small area, it is likely that you already have a substantial one; your network may include friends, colleagues, past employers, fellow volunteers, teammates, etc.-all sorts of different people who will keep you in mind, and let you know, when they hear of available jobs! *Now, the question is: how do you expand your professional network to ensure access to the hidden job market?*

First, you need to compile a list of companies within which you wish to make contacts. This list should be divided into priority, secondary and alternative companies that you plan on targeting. After doing some company research and identifying the key contacts, you're ready to cast your net.

Two techniques used for networking purposes are: Information Gathering Interviews (IGI) and the Direct Contact Approach (DCA). First, the IGI's purpose is not only to expand your professional network but also to gather information about a particular industry, the company, or a specific occupation. An IGI should be a face to face meeting which takes no longer than 20 minutes. Make sure to research the employer and prepare an agenda before you go!

Secondly, the objective of the DCA, in addition to expanding your network, is to apply for positions that are either not posted, not in existence, or are contract opportunities. There are two methods to the direct approach. One is to mail a self-marketing letter detailing the skills you can offer the employer. The second is to call the contact and convey your skills, experience and employment objectives in a concise form with the goal of securing an interview.

Whichever way you decide to go, remember that first impressions are everything!

- You need to have a FIRM, but not bone-breaking, handshake.
- Use appropriate body language- make eye contact, don't slouch and smile!
- Dress to the company standard- business casual usually works in the Bow Valley.
- Don't monopolize the conversation- listen just as much as you speak.
- At events, seek out people you don't already know.
- Know your own comfort level and style; otherwise, you may come off as a phony!

Probably the most important step in networking is the last one- the follow-up. Send hand-written thank-you notes, forward your resume, or make follow-up telephone calls to show that you are a keen and proactive individual.

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