

Networking Tips 2: Top 8 Suggestions for Meeting and Beyond

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Recruiters and hiring managers hate taking risks. They don't want to take a chance on someone they know nothing about; they'd rather hire someone they've met or who comes recommended, and whose personality, skills and attitudes will be a good fit for the organization. These intangibles are difficult to communicate through a cover letter and resume, but come through loud and clear when meeting in person. How can you reduce risk for recruiters? Network!

While getting connected and arranging meetings with contacts can be hard work, the real time to "perform" comes when you connect in person, either face-to-face or over the phone. In Part 2 of our networking series, we look at some techniques for giving and getting information, and giving a positive impression.

1. Know yourself (if you need to know the whys and hows, take a look at "Networking Tips 1: Getting Connected"). Be ready to tell one and all about who you are and what makes you tick, and make your "ideal work situation" a jumping off point for networking meetings.
2. Have your "[elevator pitch](#)" – a 30-45 second sound bite that tells someone the most important things about you as a person and potential employee or colleague – practiced (yes, practiced) and ready, and try to deliver it (or a version that fits the conversation) within the first few minutes of meeting new contacts.
3. Make it as attractive as possible for your contact to meet with you. Offer to meet for coffee instead of at their office. Offer to get the coffee. Be up front about the purpose of the meeting, keeping in mind that an informational interview (finding out about an industry, organization or department) is far less intimidating than discussing potential employment opportunities (that can come later once you've developed rapport and gotten the lay of the land).
4. Don't make the meeting all about you. Find out about the issues and challenges facing your contact and their organization. What projects have just been announced? What's wrapping up? How's employee engagement and turnover? How are changes in accounting standards and designations affecting the organization? What's getting in the way of success? This is part of your information gathering. Offer suggestions for solutions when you have them.
5. Ask for further contacts (in HR or Accounting where they work or at other target organizations) at the end of the meeting, and if you feel it appropriate, if they're looking for any new people now or plan to be in the near future.
6. As you go through your job search, let your contacts know how you're progressing, or if you've met interesting new connections. Keep yourself top of mind for when opportunities do arise.
7. Return the favour for meeting with introductions and referrals of your own, particularly if a new connection can help with a raised issue. You never know where this could lead...
8. After you get a job, send a thank you to your connections for their help along the way. Let them know what was helpful to you, and keep the door open for future contact. If you've worked hard to develop a network, it makes sense to maintain it; you never know when it might come in handy again!

And that takes care of networking... or does it? What about Web 2.0 and the wonders of social media and online networking? In Part 3, we take a look at the world of LinkedIn, which provides a new venue for efficient and effective networking, whether you're looking for work or are happily employed.