Over 30% of job seekers when surveyed, indicated they obtained their job through someone they knew, someone in their “network.” Even when an opening is clearly published, your network can make the difference in your probability of being interviewed. You know far more people than you think you do. The key to successful networking is not to restrict your contacts to those people who are in your target fields. Consider: family members, friends, professors, alumni/ae, acquaintances, former work supervisors, co-workers, members of professional associations, clubs, and groups, etc.

Going on the supposition that everyone knows someone else, you can use your primary contacts to learn about people who may be more closely related to your goals. Your best friend’s parents may have acquaintances who could be helpful to you.
UNLEASH YOURSELF FROM THE TRADITIONAL CAREER PATH...

MAKE A SPLASH WITH PET PARADISE!

PET PARADISE RESORT
The market leader in the pet boarding industry with 18 upscale, luxurious pet resorts located throughout the United States.

Visit www.PetParadiseResort.com for a complete listing of exciting career opportunities!
After your own acquaintances as mentioned above, you are connected with a large number of other people (including alumni from your college(s), members of organizations you join, conference attendees and speakers, authors of articles you like). You can reach out to this group through your common interests.

“As an alumna of the same graduate school, I would like your help...”

“I recently attended the conference on X, Y, Z, where I participated in your fascinating workshop on...”

“I just read your interesting article in the Globe magazine on...” (See “Developing Your Job Search Network” chart for an example of brainstorming a network.)

Contacts may be followed up either by phone or in writing, but the goal of both should be an appointment. A short letter of introduction is usually preferred where you do not know the person. Indicate the source of referral. Since this is not a letter of application, you need merely state that you wish to set up a meeting time to discuss your agenda. Two or three background sentences about you will suffice. You may enclose a resume for additional information, if you wish. Assure the person that you do not expect him/her to know of specific openings. Indicate at the end how you plan to follow-up. “I will phone next week...”

Here are some tips for setting up an informational interview:

» When calling or writing for the interview, make sure to specify that you are only seeking information or advice (or both). Do not go into the interview under false pretense and violate the “rules” by asking for a job.

» Always request a short meeting (20-30 minutes). You will usually get more. Don’t delay the end of the meeting; be prepared, be professional and be businesslike. Don’t waste his/her time.

» Prior to the interview, prepare yourself well. Know yourself and know as much about the employer and your career field as possible. Be prepared with relevant questions.

» Dress as you would for a regular job interview even though you are not seeking employment at this time. Image is extremely important and you want to create a positive one.

» Bring copies of your resume, but don’t show it unless the employer asks to see it. You want to create the impression you are prepared, but you don’t want to violate the conditions under which the interview was arranged.

» Topics of conversation should revolve around the profession, the growth of the organization, and any particular points of interests you might have concerning the organization. Bring out your own qualities and abilities as a way of indicating why you have such a strong interest in that field.
»At the end of the interview, ask if there are any other people or organizations he/she would recommend that you contact. If yes, ask if you can use his/her name.

»Always send a thank-you note. It may earn you more points than you can imagine. Remember that the purpose is not to get a job offer immediately but for the employer to remember you later, especially when a job opportunity may occur.

»Many job seekers feel embarrassed about asking people to assist them. Advice is free and people love to give it.

Everybody you know is a possible source who might lead you to a job in the “hidden job market.” When you think you are bothering someone, keep in mind that most people love to talk about their jobs and what they do for a living. In fact, they are very flattered when someone asks for their advice. Just do not take their advice and favors for granted. Be sure to acknowledge their help and send thank-you notes when appropriate.

Visit them at their work site: whenever possible you want to meet them at work in order for you to gain exposure to various work environments.

Prepare a script: develop a conversational script which you can loosely follow. The script can make sure you maximize your phone conversation with that person and get useful results.

Evaluate your approach: As you make contacts, rework your script or approach and go with what seems to work. Remember, the purpose of a networking contact is not to ask for a job but to gain information about the following:

»Facts about the organization
»Feedback on your resume and qualifications
»Tips for your job hunt
»Other departments or jobs you might wish to contact
»Additional names of individuals within or outside the organization that might assist you
»Potential job openings

Follow Up With Contacts

“Follow up” is the key to an effective job search. Make sure you follow up with contacts on a regular basis. It is important to:

1. Follow up each meeting with a thank-you letter expressing gratitude for the specific help you received. If the interview went well and the individual agreed to keep you in mind regarding future opportunities, remind him/her that you appreciate the assistance.

2. Keep detailed records concerning whom you have interviewed, date of the meeting, what transpired and any additional contact names.

3. Maintain copies of all correspondence.

4. Maintain contact in the future. This step is the most neglected. Establish the on-going nature of your acquaintance during their interview by mentioning that you would like to get back to this person to let him/her know the progress of your exploration. Future contact can be made by phone or letter.

5. If the person directed you to call someone else, follow up and let them know what the result was. Many people have expressed
frustration in never hearing back from an individual they have helped.

To follow up on every contact in your network takes a great deal of time. Therefore, it is important for you to set some daily and weekly goals in the beginning of your job search to help you manage your time effectively. The more organized you are, the less time it will take you to find the job of your choice.

Furthermore, you must be willing to take some risks. Be assertive and pro-active in your job search. If you are re-active or passive, your search will be extremely frustrating.

Examples of risk-taking include:
» Cold calling a stranger to request an interview
» Writing a personal letter to potential employers
» Seeking out the person with power to hire you within a specific organization
» Dealing with the secretary screen.

The more pro-active you are, the more opportunities you will have to choose from.

Informational Interview Sample Questions

1. How did you get into this field?
2. Which majors are most successful with securing employment in this field?
3. How would you describe a typical day/week on the job?
4. What are the most satisfying aspects of your job?
5. What frustrations or drawbacks do you experience in this position?
6. How would you describe the work environment?
7. How often do you travel and for how long?
8. What percentage of your time are spent utilizing computers? Interacting with people? Writing reports? Reading job-related publications?
9. How much contact do you have with people outside of your organization? What is your relationship to these people?
10. How does your career affect your lifestyle? (The amount of work required, your material needs, and time for leisure, travel, outside interests, and family?)
11. What are the latest developments and primary issues in your field today?
12. How do you see the jobs in the field changing over the next five to ten years?
13. What educational degrees, licenses, or other credentials are required for entry and advancement in your field? Are there any which are preferred or helpful, although not required?
14. What are the trade/professional groups to which you belong, and which do you find most beneficial to your work? Do any of them assist college seniors interested in entry-level positions in your field?
15. Which other career areas do you see as being related to your work?
16. What personal characteristics, personality traits, values, interests, etc., do you believe are necessary or helpful for success and satisfaction in this occupation or organization?
17. How do people usually learn about job openings in your field?
18. What do you wish you had known about this career field before you entered it? What about this employer?
19. How is the organization structured? What kinds of entry-level jobs are available within organizations like this?
20. What is your organization’s leadership management philosophy?
21. How does this differ from other organizations in the field?
22. What are your organization’s plans for growth?
23. Do you have a formal training program? Could you please describe it to me? What percentage of training occurs in the classroom? On the job?
24. What are the typical career paths within your organization?
25. What impresses you about this organization?
26. Why did you originally decide to join and stay with this company?
27. Are there any books or periodicals that you would recommend?
28. What special advice would you give to a young person entering your field?
29. What are your personal future career plans?

USE THE FORM BELOW TO BUILD YOUR NETWORK
UNLEASH YOURSELF FROM THE **TRADITIONAL CAREER PATH**...

**MAKE A SPLASH WITH PET PARADISE!**

**PET PARADISE RESORT**
The market leader in the pet boarding industry with 18 upscale, luxurious pet resorts located throughout the United States.