

### **WHAT IS NETWORKING?**

Networking involves developing a list of contacts you meet through various social, business and educational events. You can use these contacts to your advantage when looking for a job. Your contacts can provide job leads, offer advice and information about a company or particular industry.

### **WHY IS NETWORKING IMPORTANT?**

Eighty percent of most job opportunities are not advertised, they are usually filled through referrals or networking – known as the “hidden job market”. Therefore the job seeker who has established relationships with professionals in the industry has a high probability of acquiring a job related to their field of interest.

### **HOW TO NETWORK EFFECTIVELY**

Start by creating a list of contacts and organize them into the following categories: Home Base, Work Base, Social Base and Casual Base. According to the *Networking Pyramid by Careego*, the Home Base contacts include friends, family members or neighbours. Inform these contacts that you are looking for a job and ask them if they have a contact that might be able to offer advice. The Work Base contacts include former colleagues, customers and previous employers. The Social Base contacts are people you might meet through a sporting event, through acquaintances or social and trade associations. The Casual Base contacts include your physician, dentist or accountant.

### **TARGET PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

You can join a professional association that is related to your program or to your industry of interest. Being a member of an association can give you the opportunity to network and learn from industry professionals. It could also give you the opportunity to join a group committee or volunteer and organize an event. There is usually a fee to join an association but it is worth the experience and the contacts you will acquire.

### **VOLUNTEERING**

Volunteering can be considered a strategic job search strategy to “test out” a job environment without making a long term commitment. It is a great way to gain experience in your field of interest and acquire new contacts. While you are volunteering you should always put your best foot forward because the organization might want to hire you after you have shown that you would be a valuable asset.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

E-Networking is a way of “tapping into the hidden job market” by networking with contacts through social media such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. These networking sites provide job seekers with an opportunity to interact with their contacts through messaging, email, file sharing, blogging or discussion groups. LinkedIn is business-oriented with over 90 million registered users around the world. Once you have created your profile on LinkedIn, you can start searching for contacts to network with. Keep in mind that employers, placement agencies or recruiters may review your profile to determine if you would be a potential candidate for a job. Therefore, you should highlight your accomplishments, skills and experience in a professional manner.

### **Resources:**

Quintcareers, Volunteering 2013: [www.quintcareers.com](http://www.quintcareers.com), Wikipedia, LinkedIn 2013: [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com), Careego *Networking Pyramid* 2013: [www.blog.readytomanage.com](http://www.blog.readytomanage.com), *Social Networking* 2013: [www.whatissocialnetworking.com](http://www.whatissocialnetworking.com)

\*Used with permission from George Brown College

## **NETWORKING AT A JOB/CAREER FAIR**

### **BEFORE THE EVENT**

#### **RESEARCH! RESEARCH! RESEARCH!**

- Review the list of organizations that will be attending the event and review their website to learn more about their products/services, mission, vision, current job openings and possible placement opportunities.

#### **RÉSUMÉ**

- Update and tailor your résumé to the industry/position you are interested in and include relevant skills and any accomplishments that you have achieved in order to make your résumé stand out.
- Print enough copies to hand out to each employer that you are targeting.
- You do not need to create a cover letter for a career/job fair because the employer may request that you apply online.

#### **MARKET YOURSELF**

- Prepare a 10-30 second “elevator pitch” to introduce yourself to the employer. Your “elevator pitch” should include your strengths and qualifications. You can start the conversation by stating your name, the program you are enrolled in and the position or industry you are interested in.

#### **STARTING THE CONVERSATION WITH YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH**

“Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_, and I am currently enrolled in the Business Administration-Accounting program at George Brown College. I am very interested in learning more about becoming an Accountant at ABC Company.”

#### **PREPARE A LIST OF QUESTIONS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ASK THE EMPLOYER**

1. “What advice do you have for graduates entering the field?”
2. “What qualifications and educational background do you look for in a candidate?”

#### **ENDING THE CONVERSATION**

“I would be very interested in keeping in touch with you. Do you have a business card?”

#### **BUSINESS CARD**

- You can prepare a personal business card (mini résumé) that outlines your contact information, education, relevant skills and qualifications.

#### **DRESS FOR SUCCESS**

- Different industries have their own “standard dress code.” It is important to research these standards before the event. For example, financial firms, insurance companies, and banks tend to be extremely conservative. Care should be taken to choose very conservative clothing.
- Educational institutions may be more lenient when it comes to interview attire. In fact, a conservative suit may be out of place at a teaching interview, business casual would be appropriate. You can also speak with alumni and other networking contacts for industry tips.
- Make a great first impression by leaving your winter coat, backpack, hats, and boots in your locker before meeting with the employers at the event.

### **DURING THE EVENT**

#### **NETWORK! NETWORK! NETWORK!**

- Introduce yourself using your 10-30 second “elevator pitch” that you prepared. Give the employer a firm handshake, smile and maintain eye contact.
- Ask the employer questions that you prepared.
- Once you have established a connection with the employer, inquire about their hiring process.
- Always collect business cards and contact information from each employer.

### **AFTER THE EVENT**

#### **FOLLOW UP**

- You can contact the employer within 24 hours of meeting them at the event to thank them for taking the time to speak with you.
- Sending the employer an e-mail is a great way to emphasize your interest in a specific position, and outline how your skills and qualifications make you an ideal candidate.