



Video transcription

Networking for Career Development

Studies show that a large percentage of job openings are never advertised publicly. This “hidden job market” highlights the importance of networking to discover career opportunities and connect with potential employers.

While websites like WorkBC, Indeed, and other job search platforms can help you find jobs that match your skills and experience, expanding your network of contacts — both online and in person — is an effective way to develop strategies that can broaden your career prospects.

How do we create a network?

Volunteer

Volunteering is a powerful way to expand your network, showcase your skills, and demonstrate the “employability” skills needed for all jobs. It offers an opportunity to connect with potential employers across different industries. For instance, volunteering at a local community event or food drive can help you meet people who may know about job openings related to the event. It can also connect you with decision-makers in other industries, as many business owners and managers volunteer through service clubs or to give back to their communities. You might find yourself working alongside the manager of a local business you're interested in while building hampers for the Food Bank or helping with a Habitat for Humanity project. Volunteering not only provides valuable experience but also helps you connect with decision-makers in your chosen field while demonstrating the commitment, teamwork, and skills employers are looking for.

Join a Job Club

Participating in a job club can be valuable for anyone looking for employment. Job clubs provide a supportive environment, offering advice on effective job-search strategies and helping you connect with potential employers. For example, someone in a job club might know of businesses in need of extra help. Networking within the club can uncover job opportunities that aren't publicly advertised, increasing your chances of finding the right position.

Find Groups in Your Areas of Interest

Joining specific professional or interest groups is a great way to meet people who share your career goals and may connect you with job opportunities. For example, if you're interested in construction, becoming a member of a local building or trade association can help you meet industry professionals who might know

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about upcoming projects or job openings. If you're passionate about working in a restaurant, joining a hospitality group can help you network with managers or chefs who may be looking to add someone to their team. These groups offer valuable connections and insights that can open doors to new career opportunities.

Engage with Family, Friends and Community Groups

People in your current community, such as family, friends, and acquaintances, may know about job openings that align with your skills or can connect you with someone who can help you find the type of work you're interested in. These connections can lead to immediate job opportunities, but they can also provide valuable guidance on your career path. They may help you plan for future roles as you develop the necessary skills. Networking within your community offers both short-term job prospects and long-term career support, helping you build a strong foundation for your professional journey.

Social Media Networking

Social media platforms are great tools for connecting with potential employers and finding job openings. Different businesses use different platforms to promote their work and hire people, so it's important to check where businesses are active. By joining local social media groups for job opportunities or following companies in your field, you can stay updated on job openings. Social media is also useful for finding posts about workshops or events that can help you network. Looking at a company's social media can also show you how active they are and give you an idea of how well they are doing. Social media helps you stay connected to the job market and find new opportunities.

Attend Job Fairs or Industry Nights

Job fairs, industry nights, and other networking events are great ways to connect directly with employers from different industries. Even if an employer isn't hiring for your specific role right now, they may keep your resume for future openings or refer you to others. Researching the companies attending ahead of time helps you approach the right people with your qualifications and interests, showing you're genuinely interested in working with them. It might feel intimidating to approach someone at a booth, but remember, they're there to meet people like you! — someone looking for work! Be sure to ask for business cards or social media contacts from the companies you're most interested in so you can follow up after the event. Networking like this can help you build lasting connections that could assist you in your job search and lead to job opportunities in your desired field.

By using these networking strategies, you'll be better positioned to discover job opportunities in the short and long term. Networking is about building relationships, and by showing gratitude to those who help you, you create lasting connections that could lead to valuable job opportunities.