

How to Get a Job and Keep It: Networking 101

Q1: Your network includes everyone you know. These are contacts like your closest friends and professionals. With the introduction of social media, how many people does the average person have in their network?

A1: **634!** Your actual network can be much larger because it's everyone you know.

Q2: In building a strong network that will produce career leads or advice you're looking for, what are some of the benefits of having a professional network?

A2: It can help you find a job, stay relevant in your career field, gain access to professional organizations, and development activities like training.

Q3: Building your network is an ongoing process that should always be growing. Don't wait until you need a connection to start. When should you start your network?

A3: You should start now! Build your network early so you will have a larger network to draw career and academic advice from.

Q4: You only get one chance to make a good first impression. It only takes 7 seconds for another person to evaluate you. In this short time, what appearance traits are identified that form an opinion of you?

A4: Your appearance, body language, mannerisms, and how you are dressed. It's important to create a first impression by smiling, making eye contact, good posture, and a proper handshake.

Q5: A good handshake is important and tells a lot about your character. Since first impressions are formed within seven seconds, what is the benefit of improving this skill?

A5: It can help to set the course of a relationship and improve your first impression.

Q6: Your networking success will be judged by the introduction you give. Having good posture, making eye contact, smiling, introducing yourself, and a firm handshake is just the start. What are the determining factors of a firm handshake?

A6: Keep fingers together with the thumb up and open, slide your hand into the other person's hand and squeeze firmly, and after the shake, release after 3 seconds.

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Q7: Initiating conversations may feel uncomfortable for some. Breaking the ice is important and can lead to a rewarding connection. What are some good ice breaker topics to ask?

A7: Current events, sports, hobbies or commonalities like what's happening at the event you're attending. Keep the conversation light with people you don't know and let the other person talk about himself.

Q8: Job or recruitment events are a great way to network with companies. Have an "elevator speech" ready that's a quick, concise summary describing yourself. What's the average length of an elevator speech and what should be included?

A8: Usually 20 seconds. It should identify your goal, what's beneficial to the company, and how it makes you unique. Your speech should end with an open-ended, engaging question. It's also a good idea to have a business card ready.

Q9: Turning network contacts into open doors is not easy. Begin by making a list of connections that can help you find a job. Email each of them and make it clear what type of job you're looking for. Be sure to include your resume'. What are some examples of how to initiate conversation with your contacts?

A9: "Have you heard of any openings or opportunities with your company?", "I saw a posting for the XYZ position. Do you know anyone in that department?", and "I'm looking for a career as a XYZ. Can you give some insight or possible leads?"

Q10: Social Media can be a beneficial tool when used with other networking techniques like "branding" yourself. The best site for professional networking is LinkedIn. What are some ways to improve your profile and get the most out of LinkedIn?

A10: Have a catchy headline, professional photograph, use key words in your summary, list relevant skills, volunteer work, and add media / videos to showcase projects.

Q11: Once you have your LinkedIn profile ready, what are some ways to make additional connections?

A11: Join LinkedIn Groups relevant to your vocation or share similar industry links with others.

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WRAP UP:

- ⇒ Building a strong network is important and can produce career leads. It's an ongoing process and one that should be started right away. The benefits of building your professional network are:
 - It can help you find a job.
 - Stay relevant in your career field.
 - Help gain access to professional organizations/groups.
 - Offer developmental activities like training or networking events.

- ⇒ A first impression is a lasting impression! The average time it takes to form an impression is less than seven seconds. It begins with good posture, eye contact, and a proper handshake. It's important to be aware of these skills and improve on them. The exchange sets the course for a professional relationship and improves their first impression of you and your character.

- ⇒ "Branding yourself" is also an important technique using professional social media like LinkedIn. You can get the most out of LinkedIn by boosting your profile. These include:
 - Using a professional photograph (don't use one from Facebook).
 - A catchy headline.
 - Using keywords in your summary, and list relevant skills.
 - Volunteer work and examples to showcase projects you worked on or a part of on a team.

FINAL THOUGHT:

Two questions to ask about your digital identity are: "What do you say about yourself and do your connections say the same thing?" and "Will what I post strengthen my connections and achieve my career goals?"