

HOW **2** guide: *Networking*

All the positions advertised in job listing websites and newspapers represent only 25-40% of job openings available. Many of the jobs available in the job market are in small to mid-size companies who may not normally advertise openings and may not recruit on college campuses. Many recruiters rely on referrals from current employees or from their contacts within the industry. Therefore, up to 60-75% of jobs lie in the “hidden” job market. The way to penetrate the hidden job market is through networking. Although you can find a job in the advertised job market, it often takes a lot longer, and you are much more likely to experience high competition and numerous rejections when you focus only on posted job announcements.

What is “Networking?”

Networking is basically about meeting people and building and relationships. Once people get to know you, they are more likely to share information that can help you in the job search, such as: the names of companies that may be hiring, actual job openings, contact names within a company, referrals to colleagues or associates, and general job search advice.

Warning: People do not generally like being “used” for their information and contacts. Build a level of familiarity and trust with someone before asking for help. Networking relationships should be mutually beneficial – be ready to reciprocate and help them when needed. And always communicate back to someone in your network that helped you – let them know how things worked out and express gratitude for their assistance.

Who are your contacts?

- Friends
- Family/Relatives
- Neighbors
- Classmates/former classmates
- Teammates from sports
- Fellow Sorority and Fraternity members
- Former supervisors/colleagues
- Members of your religious congregation
- Friends of parents and relatives
- Parents and relatives of friends
- Professional Associations
- FGCU Career Development Center staff
- FGCU Alumni
- Current and former faculty

Networking Tips

- Join the student chapters of professional associations in your field
- Consider joining local “young professionals” networking groups
- Use Facebook or other social networking sites (but make sure your site looks professional)
- Attend professional conferences and seminars
- Stand out and be active. Consider taking a leadership role in a student club
- Join the FGCU Alumni Association after you graduate
- Volunteer in the community to meet people and gain experience
- Conduct informational interviews to gain insight into career fields of interest
- Stay in touch with your contacts and keep a log of all interactions
- Keep an updated resume with you at all times
- Write thank you notes to anyone that helped you
- Set networking goals, such as meet one new contact per day
- Read the local newspaper and a national newspaper frequently so you are knowledgeable of current affairs
- Read the local business magazine. For Southwest Florida, read *Gulfshore Business* and *Gulf Coast Business Review*