Networking and Informational Interviews
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Networking is one of the most efficient ways to spend your time when you're looking for a job. **Networking yields about an 80% success rate.** Networking means talking to friends, professors, family, co-workers, former supervisors, customers, and all of the people your contacts know. Do not be afraid to utilize your network. Most people remember what it's like to be job searching and are happy to help out. In addition, people usually like to talk about themselves and their careers. If you are respectful, professional, and enthusiastic, you will probably find that networking can work for you! In order to begin networking follow these steps:

1. Have your resume ready to go….that is up to date with accomplishments, powerful job description statements, recent awards, educational pursuits, certifications, etc. Most people that will talk to will ask you for a copy of your resume!!
2. Brainstorm a list of all the people who can help you find a job. Don't leave anyone out. Your contacts don't have to be Senior Level Executives or CEO's to be helpful!
3. Let all of your contacts know what type of position you are seeking.
4. If possible, give each of your contacts a copy of your resume to circulate.

Linked In is a great professional networking tool that allows you to connect with professionals working in your field! The Nurse Career Consultant can assist you in strategizing the networking process and can suggest employers to talk to beyond those you know.

Another great way to network is to conduct an **informational interview.** An informational interview allows you to "interview" someone in your chosen field, or a field that you are considering. The purpose of an informational interview is twofold: a) to find out more about the field, department or employer in which you are considering employment, and b) to make contact with professionals who can offer information and possibly help you along the path of finding the right job for you.

The idea is to dress professionally, to ask great questions, and to make a positive impression and a valuable connection while finding out the "inside scoop" on your field. Follow the steps below in order to complete a successful informational interview!
1. Make a list of people you know who have a connection to your line of work/ area of interest.

2. Call each person on your list and suggest a brief meeting (10-15 minutes) in order to learn more about their line of work. Suggest a meeting (informational interview) at their place of employment or wherever is most convenient for them. The meeting might even be before they go to work at a coffee shop. Make sure you pay for their coffee....they are giving you invaluable time, information and resources!!

3. Be on time for the meeting and ask for information and suggestions, not a job. Be brief and respectful of the person's time.

4. Have good questions prepared. Be sure that you have researched the field, the company, and that person's position adequately before you arrive. This will help you ask better questions and appear more professional. These will help you get started:
   - How did you decide to go into this field?
   - How did you get your position here?
   - What type of degree / training do you possess?
   - What do you like best about your job?
   - What are some of the challenges of your job?
   - What opportunities for advancement exist in this field?
   - What do you see as the future of this career path?

5. Take your resume with you in case they ask to see it or to circulate it for you. If they ask for your resume, offer to also send it electronically so that they might forward via email to prospective employers and colleagues on your behalf.

6. Close the meeting at the scheduled time.

7. Thank the person for their time. Ask for 2-3 other names of people in the field. Be sure to ask the initial contact if you can use his/her name when you contact the names he/she gave you. Repeat the process above for each new contact.

8. Write the initial person a thank-you note immediately.

9. Be sure to follow-up on all leads and write thank-you notes to everyone who helps you.

10. Remember all you need is a nod of recognition to take your resume from the bottom of the pile to the top of the pile. If you don't have contacts now -- make them!

If you have any questions or concerns about networking or informational interviewing, contact the UK Nursing Career Resource Center to set up an individual appointment, practice interview, etc. with the Nurse Career Consultant sue.strup@uky.edu.