



NETWORKING AND YOUR JOB SEARCH

In last month's newsletter, we introduced the topic of networking and provided a basic definition (building relationships of trust that produce direct and/or in-direct benefits to both individuals). This month, we'll help you get started by covering the basics and offering a few suggestions on how to begin. The first step is to understand that networking is a two-way process and you only get out what you put in. Don't approach networking as a magic solution that will result in an immediate opportunity.....that's not how it works. It's a skill and a long-term process that you must invest time and energy with the intent of helping others along with yourself. If you're not willing to make an investment or help others, we suggest you not attempt to harness the power of networking as it may result in negative consequences. Remember last month when we asked if you've ever purchased something because someone you trust recommend it or purchased something after having a positive experience? Well, this month we ask the opposite

question – have you ever avoided a product or service because someone you trust told you about a terrible experience or formed a negative opinion after having a personal experience with a product or service? The same can happen if you are disingenuous and attempt to exploit others through improper networking. Assuming that you're genuinely willing to cultivate relationships and invest in others along with yourself, then you're ready to explore the power of networking. The first step in this process is to conduct an honest reflection of yourself and think about what you have to give and how you might improve with the assistance of others. Since you're reading this newsletter, my assumption is that one area you could use assistance is with your career or employment. Think about what you have to give others and be honest. Truth is that it might not be much if you're just starting out...that's ok. In this case, what you might offer is an opportunity for others to pay-back what they've received knowing that you will continue this legacy. When I was a young man, I had an opportunity to be mentored by the CEO of a large organization. He was a busy man and the only reason I received an hour of his time was

because a family member (someone he trusted) ask him to meet with me. He agreed and told me within the first 5 minutes that he expected me to make time later in life to do the same for others. By agreeing, I offered him a chance to share his story and lessons with future generations. He was incredibly generous and helped map out my career. His recommendations were based upon his experiences along the way to becoming a CEO – some were good and others were personal and painful. He shared openly and helped mold the first 10 years of my career after college. I share this to highlight that everyone has something to give others; if nothing more than a chance for them to tell their story and make a difference in the lives of others. Another intangible you might offer is the chance to interact with someone that looks, thinks, or acts differently from them. You might be younger, older, more/less educated, from a different part of the country or world and therefore see the world differently. Offer to give them your honest opinions in return for their time. During the follow-up to a job interview, a candidate once told me that “real diversity isn't looking different and thinking the same, it's respecting



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that someone looks, thinks and acts completely different and accepting this.” That was a powerful discussion and I’m a different person as a result of these words. Another way to add value in the networking exchange is to offer something that’s not work related. For example, if you’re an avid golfer, ice skater, photographer, blogger etc.....you can offer to share your experience in exchange for time with others. You might be surprised how many people will be interested in talking with you. Once you get clarity on what you have to offer and what areas you need help, it’s time to take the next step....finding people with whom to start a conversation (being networking). I know some of you don’t want or like to interact with strangers – trust me, I understand. If this is the case, I encourage you to start within your comfort zone. Think about the people you know (family, friends, co-workers, neighbors) with experiences that might help your development. Maybe you’ve talked briefly about these topics with them and can easily re-introduce the conversation, or it could be slightly more difficult yet worth the effort. The individual might also know someone with greater insights or expertise on the topic of interest. You’ll never know unless you start the conversation. I keep saying “networking” but I’m really just talking about having a conversation on topics of mutual interest. This is obviously the starting point and networking can be much more complex, but it’s about an exchange in which everyone gets something of value. You might learn more about a compa-

ask the hiring manager



Follow-up to last month’s question—I don’t understand why referencing my notes during the interview might result in being penalized by the hiring manager.

Answer: We generated a bit of interest and discussion with our response to last month’s question – thanks for the follow-up questions and comments. Some of you said that bringing notes to the interview clearly shows your level of preparation. We agree, however, maybe not the level of preparation you want to communicate. For example, hand-written notes might have been drafted while sitting in the lobby and therefore send the opposite message. Several pages of typed notes communicates preparation, however we’ve found that candidates who rely upon multiple pages of typed notes often don’t rehearse or practice answers. As a result, these individuals often take valuable time shuffling through pages, can’t connect responses from multiple pages quickly, or simply begin reading from their notes during the interview. All of these outcomes are negative. The best solution is to prepare to a level where you don’t need notes. Study your resume and have at least one copy; if you get stuck, use your resume to remind you of the key points. In our experience, this is a much better solution compared to bringing and relying upon or reading notes.

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ny or career and they might learn more about you, your hobbies, or just feel good since they were able to share with someone else.

That’s a great transition point so we’ll put this article on hold un-

til next month. If you have questions related to networking that you’d like us to address in a future newsletter, let us know by sending an email (service@interviewskills101.com).

Sign-up to receive our monthly email and receive a promotion code for use at an upcoming workshop.

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