

GET THE JOB

Networking Without Feeling Awkward

Simple Ways to Build Connections That Actually Work

Networking often gets a bad reputation — awkward small talk, forced introductions and the pressure to “sell yourself.” But in reality, effective networking is about building relationships, not delivering a pitch. Whether you’re job hunting, changing careers or exploring new industries, a thoughtful approach to connecting with others can open unexpected doors.

BEGIN WITH WHO YOU KNOW

You don’t need to attend a formal event to network. In fact, many valuable connections come from casual conversations with people you already know. Former coworkers, classmates, neighbors or fellow volunteers can all offer insights, referrals or encouragement.

Mention your job search naturally when catching up with someone. You might say, “I’m exploring new opportunities in healthcare administration. If you happen to hear of anything, I’d love to stay in the loop.” This approach is simple, low-pressure and often more effective than scripted introductions.

Community events, professional associations and local chambers of commerce also



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offer good chances to meet people in your field — often with less formality and more room to connect meaningfully.

BE CURIOUS, NOT SALESY

When you meet someone new, focus on learning about them. Ask questions about their work, how they got started or what advice they’d give

someone entering the field. Most people are happy to talk about their experiences and appreciate genuine interest.

You don’t need a perfect elevator pitch. A friendly introduction and a clear idea of what you’re looking for is enough. Being authentic goes a long way — people remember conversations that feel real, not rehearsed.

FOLLOW UP AND STAY IN TOUCH

If someone offers advice, an introduction or a helpful tip, don’t forget to say thank you. A short note, a phone call or a thoughtful update shows appreciation and professionalism.

You don’t have to follow up constantly — just check in occasionally to maintain the

connection. If you land a job, let them know. If their advice helped steer your thinking, share that too.

Networking isn’t just for job seekers — it’s for anyone interested in learning, growing and contributing. When you focus on building trust and staying curious, networking feels less like a chore — and more like an opportunity.