

Networking with Professionals

There's a great deal of truth to the expression: "It's not what you know; it's who you know." It's never too early to build a network of professional contacts. These individuals may lead to the most promising opportunities for gainful employment as well as assist young professionals with mentoring, networking and career advancement.

- 1) **Make a list:** Write down everyone that you know so as to not forget a potential resource.
- 2) **Add to the list:** Add the names of individuals who you think can provide useful information about the kind of job want.
- 3) **Prepare:** Know what you want from your contacts and how to get it.
- 4) **Approach:** Contact those most promising on your list for advice and information that can help in your career planning.
- 5) **Ask:** Find out what skills, education, personal traits, etc. are needed for the position.
- 6) **Assert yourself:** Don't be hesitant to ask your questions; these people may want you as a contact too.
- 7) **Tap in:** Ask your contacts for other people that could help you out.
- 8) **Leave an impression:** Give out your business card so people remember who you are.
- 9) **Return the favor:** Help your contacts network when you can or give them a relevant gift in return.
- 10) **Follow up:** Keep in touch with contacts; you may need them again.