

**TITLE****Networking****Length**

Variable

**Essential Skills**

Oral Communication, Thinking Skills, Working with Others

**Prerequisites**

None

**Course Description**

The process of developing, cultivating and using a network can make a huge difference in one's life. In fact, we all already have an informal network that provides support and entertainment as well as getting us through tough times. Networking is probably the most effective way to find jobs.

This course examines networks and networking and provides an opportunity for participants to:

1. Explore the concepts of a network and networking.
2. Identify your own network.
3. Build and cultivate your network.

## Skill Statement

Target, access and manage the people in your circle of friends and acquaintances when looking for a job or seeking better employment.

## Implementing Environment

### Skill Component 1: Explore concepts of networking.

#### Performance Criteria

- 1.1 Define a network.
- 1.2 Define networking.
- 1.3 Describe the advantages of networking.

### Skill Component 2: Identify your own network.

#### Performance Criteria

- 2.1 List friends.
- 2.2 List acquaintances.
- 2.3 List neighbours.
- 2.4 List relatives.
- 2.5 List meetings, conferences, etc. to be attended.

### Skill Component 3: Build and cultivate your network.

#### Performance Criteria

- 3.1 Describe ways to extend your network.
- 3.2 Describe ways to strengthen your network.

### Course 18: Resources/Content

- [Backgrounder: Networking](#) ..... 18/3

# Backgrounder Networking

Adapted from: <http://www.rileyguide.com/network.html#netprep>

## What is a Network?

You probably have a network that you don't even recognize.

According to Merriam-Webster, one of the definitions of network is *a usually informally interconnected group or association of persons*. These associations can be personal relationships with friends, family, and others you meet in an informal gathering. They can also be business relationships you develop with vendors, customers, supervisors, subordinates, and even competitors you encounter during the course of your career.

You are networking when you:

- attend meetings and conferences.
- visit with other parents during your child's sports or Pow Wow events.
- volunteer for clean-up day on the Reserve.
- visit with other members of your social clubs or religious groups.
- talk with your neighbours.
- strike up a conversation with someone else waiting at the veterinarian's office.
- search out friends (current as well as former) on Facebook
- re-connect with former colleagues.
- talk to sales persons visiting your office.

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## **In Terms of a Job Search, Networking is the way to Go!**

Networking is consistently cited as the Number 1 way to get a new job. You know how everyone says that "*80% of the jobs available never get advertised?*" This is how you find them and get them!

There is evidence that referrals make up 26.7% of all external hires (new employees hired from outside the organization), with one hire resulting from every 15 referrals, making this category the most efficient source by far.

Those who make the actual hiring decisions would much rather talk to someone who has been recommended by someone they already employ. This saves the hiring manager considerable effort sorting through all the resumes and phone calls an advertisement will generate.

## **Networking Using the Internet.**

The Internet can begin casual relationships that turn into wonderful networking opportunities. Since we aren't face-to-face with the other person, the stress of making these new connections is reduced. It is very important to begin these relationships the right way. Since we can't use our voices or body language to express ourselves, we are limited to making sure the words we use and the ways in which they are presented properly represent our intentions.

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## Advantages of Online Networking

- There are thousands of discussion groups and community forums covering hundreds of subjects.
- You can "break the ice" before meeting someone in person.
- You can listen, engage, or be engaged as you wish. No one can see you sweat, and you don't have to feel like a wallflower since no one can see you standing off by yourself.
- Many recruiters are lurking the lists to find potential candidates.

## Disadvantages of Online Networking

- Networking online is just as difficult as networking in person! It may actually be even more difficult because you can't establish a true connection online.
- First impressions count even more. Be very careful with your first public posting.
- Your online behaviour matters more than you think.

## Good Behavior on the Internet

1. Stop and learn the rules of behaviour in effect in this particular group and follow them!
2. Look for a list of Frequently Asked Questions (the FAQ) so you don't ask the same questions that everyone else has many times before.
3. Listen patiently to the discussion groups you have joined and learn the tone, language, and culture of the group.
4. Never post your resume to the list nor openly tell the entire list you are job searching and ask if anyone can help you unless the group is specifically set up for this kind of service.

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## Where to Network Online

Discussion boards and social networking sites are opportunities for networking, discussing recent developments in an occupation or industry, and asking questions of each other. Anyone involved in a job search or career exploration can benefit from following these online public discussions, learning about current trends and developments and the interests and concerns of those involved.

Discussion Boards are like your office water cooler. Conversations can be highly professional or very informal. Numerous websites and online services offer you the opportunity to create your own virtual meeting space.

Social Networking sites like Facebook are a little different in that they work the "six degrees of separation" concept to the extreme, using the Internet to turn who you are, who you know, and what you know into a monster-sized spider net of connectivity. Some may be more casual, while others are focused on more formal linkages.

## Building Your Network

Once you identify people you want to contact, prepare your initial contact carefully. Be polite and double-check for grammar and spelling errors before sending your message.

1. Contact the person directly and not through the list.
2. Be concise. Identify yourself, state why you are contacting this person, and list some of your interests and where you noticed some connection with his or her interests.
3. Do NOT send this person a copy of your resume. You are networking, trying to establish a relationship that extends far beyond just "please help me find a job." Just relax and let the relationship build to a point where a resume will be requested or you feel comfortable asking for advice on preparation.

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4. Request a follow-up to this email, via phone or email. Give your contact the choice of how to continue.

If you are trying to make a connection through a site such as Facebook, add a personal message to your request. Again, keep it concise but also cite your connection, such as "*I recognize you from last year's Pow Wow. May I add you to my network?*"

## Identify Your Network

adapted from <http://www.successful-blog.com/>

When you think about networks, think about people. Networks is about meeting people, building relationships.

Love, friendship, camaraderie, influence, credibility, trust, authenticity all add up to relationships. People who know where we want to go and how hard we're working to get there can be a huge help.

The first step is to identify a list of networking contacts.

The list below may help you think about all the connections in both your personal and work life.

- Family (e.g., parents, godparents, spouse, siblings, in-laws, cousins, aunts, uncles)
- Sports teams (e.g., hockey, soccer, softball).
- Friends
- Neighbours
- Former neighbours
- Chief and Council members

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- Former Chief and Council members
- Classmates from high school or post-secondary institutions
- Former teachers or school administrators
- Guidance counselors from high school or post-secondary institutions
- Clergy
- Fellow job seekers
- Former co-workers
- Former customers or clients
- Former boss or supervisors
- Elders
- Mentors
- Service providers (e.g., doctors, dentists, lawyers, therapists)
- Social acquaintances
- Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)
- Volunteer activities

Prioritize how helpful each one would be in your search. List your closest connections and the people that are looking out for you the most as your *primary network*. List a larger circle of relationships that will help you if you ask as your *secondary network*.

Code each person on your list as one or more of the following:

1. **Hiring Authority:** someone with the power to give you a job.
2. **Job Lead Provider:** someone who can generate job openings.
3. **Connector:** someone who can open doors to other people that might be either a Hiring Authority or Job Lead Provider.
4. **Advisor:** someone who can motivate and give advice about job searching, your resume and cover letter.

Develop some kind of system for keeping track of information about your contacts.

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*It's career search  
suicide to keep your  
job hunt to yourself.*

## Building and Cultivating Your Network

adapted from <http://www.successful-blog.com/>

Networking is conversation with a purpose—a mutually beneficial exchange of ideas, positive energy, advice, referrals, leads or contacts. Be sure it's a fair trade and you are giving something back.

1. **Know what you know and know its value.**

What you know is important. Don't overvalue it. Don't undervalue it. Simply understand how common or rare your knowledge and your unique skill set are. Know where your skills and experiences are useful and think through who might be delighted to find someone who does what you do.

2. **Build relationships.**

Relationships grow in value and mature with age. Remember that relationships require time and attention.

3. **Learn to explain your expertise easily to people who have influence.**

Influencers naturally talk about folks who are great at what they do. Influencers get asked for recommendations. If no one knows what you do well, it won't matter who knows you.

4. **Be the first to offer help.**

Be interested in everyone you meet. Ask questions, listen actively, and be first to offer a favor without strings. People remember sincere curiosity and true generosity, especially from someone they've just met.

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Do things for others that helps them achieve their goals. When you run across an opportunity that is not the right fit for you, do not just move on. Instead, take a moment to forward the information to someone who could take advantage of the opportunity. Be a catalyst for success and others will reward you for it. Every generous act is an opportunity to share your expertise with those who might help you. Do it unconditionally.

5. **Watch for and welcome every wise teacher you encounter.**  
Mentors who come your way, offering experience and connections, see something in you. Let them help you discover what that is and what it could be if you let it grow.
6. **Show Your Appreciation**  
Strive to make sure your people know that you appreciate them and what they do for you. Take the time to write a note, make a phone call, or say something in person.
7. **Take every opportunity to reach out and to stay connected.**  
Know that listening and speaking with friends is how we keep them in our hearts and minds. Stay interested in them and most of them will stay interested in you.
8. **Do small favors.**  
A quick way to touch base with members of your network is to distribute an interesting article about careers or the workplace. Even better, send just a single person an article that speaks to his or her interests. Little actions like these can help you keep your relationships strong.

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*The recession has taught many people that their best opportunities come from their long-term and mutually beneficial relationships.*

*To stand out, you need to show others, by your actions, what kind of person you are.*

Thom Singer  
Professional Speaker, Sales Trainer and  
Consultant  
Austin, Texas  
[www.thomsinger.com](http://www.thomsinger.com)

## **9. Seek others' expertise.**

Don't be shy about reaching out to your network when you need advice or face a challenge at work. You certainly don't want to make yourself a pest or continually hound the same few individuals, but people usually enjoy giving their opinions and answering questions that relate to their expertise. It's a good way to keep a connection fresh and show your respect for someone. Just remember to return the favor when others contact you, by responding promptly to their requests.

## **10. Offer quick introductions.**

Networking websites make it easy to connect with people and help others connect, too. If you think two members of your network would benefit from knowing each other, take a minute to introduce them. They'll remember your efforts down the line.

## **11. Look everywhere.**

Engaging in conversations with people everywhere—whether it's at your local coffee shop or on a cross-town bus ride—is an easy way to make new connections. You never know—someone you meet could become a valuable contact.

## **12. Show a genuine interest.**

Get to know your contacts on a personal level. What are their favorite hobbies? How many children do they have? Where did they go to school? This will help you share relevant information and have more enjoyable conversations.

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Also use personal events—birthdays or vacation plans, for instance—as an excuse to touch base with people in your network. You'll find that contacts respond best when you show interest in them as people, not just as professional connections.

Find the right type of people who will help you attain your goals without bogging you down in the process. A network built from relationships that are carefully tended is likely to become a remarkable group of lifelong friends and colleagues.

Above all, try to engage in at least one networking-related activity a day. It could be as simple as emailing your congratulations to a contact who received a promotion. By making networking a habit and a constant presence in your life, you'll find it easier to build new connections and keep existing ones strong.