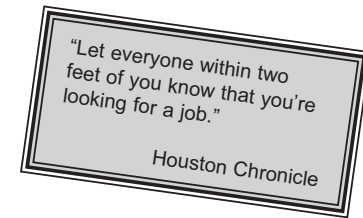


Connecting

Most people get jobs because they have “connections.” This isn’t “cheating.” It’s the best way to find work. Connecting is the process of giving and receiving in all your relationships. Connecting means knowing people, helping them, and letting them help you. And it goes on before, during, and after your job search. Job hunting simply makes the process more deliberate. Question: With whom should you connect? Answer: Everyone you know and meet.



Who: Connect with everyone you know and meet, including:

- Friends
- Family
- Teachers
- Your neighbors, hairdresser, grocery store manager, and community leaders
- Your children’s teachers and friends’ parents
- Everyone those people know

Focus especially on people who work in the fields or organizations where you want to work.

How: During the job search, connect with a purpose.

- Tell everyone you know and meet about your job search and where you’re applying.
- Ask if they know anyone who might have information about openings.
- Meet as many new people as possible. Accept all invitations to social gatherings and be open-minded.
- Do volunteer work; it’s a great way to make contacts.
- Join professional organizations in your field.
- Schedule informational interviews.
- Promptly return every phone call you receive.
- Keep track of every person you meet. Write notes to remind you of opportunities, shared interests, and any follow-up you need to do.
- Be honest, respectful, and responsible with each person you meet—don’t use anyone.
- Be genuine!

- Ask for help: Be specific about what you need (such as, information or a referral) and ask for only one thing at a time.
- Set and keep goals, such as “I will make three contacts today.”
- Put others’ opinions in perspective (their experience may not paint the whole picture).
- Put others’ needs first—meet where and when they want.
- Be appreciative. For example, do a favor for someone who really helps you or pay for his or her lunch.
- Send thank you notes and follow-up letters after meeting with someone.
- When you refer someone to a friend, notify your friend and thank him in advance.
- Update the people who have helped you on your progress.
- Keep making and maintaining connections once you’re employed; it makes the next job hunt easier.
- Stay in contact with e-mails, calls, and holiday greetings.
- Mentoring — Find someone to guide you in your school and career directions. Check out the programs available through your current or future school, as well as this site: <http://www.peer.ca/mentor.html>
- Interning — A great way to test your career plan is through an internship. Paid or voluntary, you get to work in the job or occupation that you’re interested in while you’re in school and, occasionally, right after you graduate.

Connecting (continued)

Ask Yourself: Who Do I Know?

Inner Circle
Family, friends, and neighbors



Work
Former supervisors, co-workers,
and professional association
members



Recreation
Coaches, gym staff, team
members, and hobby
partners



Yourself

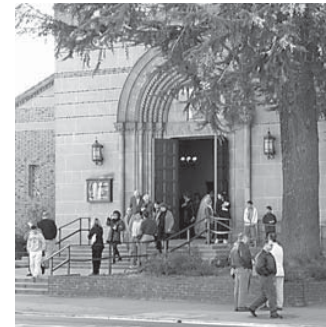
School
Teachers, counselors, office staff, students'
parents, fellow students, maintenance staff,
and administrators



Services
Hairstylist, postal carrier, dry
cleaner, butcher, mechanic,
accountant, and travel agent



Community
Volunteer organization
members, self-help group
members, and religious
community staff and members



Frequently Asked Questions About Connecting

Here are answers to some questions you may have about connecting:

What if I don't know many people?

You probably know more than you realize. Use the graphic on the preceding page to jog your memory.

How do I use connecting for job hunting?

Here is a simple plan:

1. List 25 people with whom you could talk about your search and your abilities. Use the graphic on the preceding page to make your list. Include people from different backgrounds and different lines of work.
2. Start with the people who have changed jobs in the past three years; they can best relate to your situation.
3. Talk to all 25 people about the type of job you want. Ask if they have any information that could help you or if they know someone who does.
4. Thank each person, follow-up on the information, let them know how it turned out, and offer to help them when they need it.
5. Return the favor: Help them when they need it!

How do I combine connecting with other methods?

Connecting and prospecting, for instance, go hand-in-hand.

1. If you know where you want to work, you can start there and try to connect with people in that organization. For example, if you want to work at Southwest Airlines, you might ask everyone you know if they have a friend or relative who works there.
2. If you get the name of someone who works where you want to work, contact that person and ask about possible positions. Ask to meet him or her. Send a thank you note for that person's time, even if it doesn't seem to lead anywhere. Ask them to refer you to someone else who might have more information about openings. Eventually, you'll find the information you need.

