



Making the most of networking.

Networking is often thought of as a necessary evil when job hunting, and many eager job seekers spend precious time reaching out to friends, friends of friends and professional contacts to ask for job leads, career advice and introductions. After all, thousands of employment opportunities are created and filled without ever being advertised, and networking is the key to uncovering these hidden job opportunities. It's the smart approach to seeking a job.

However, many people neglect to continue to network and maintain their contacts after they have been hired. Why? For many people, the end game was getting the job. Besides, who has the time to continue to network when you've got a lot on your table at the new job? It's no secret that networking demands effort, but networking is more than just a means to an end. In the accounting industry, next to an education, networking can become the single most valuable investment in your career. Not only does it create employment opportunities, it also generates new business opportunities.

Your contacts can continue to be of value to you in your new job, especially at firms that encourage their employees to be more active with networking. At Freed Maxick & Battaglia, CPAs, PC, the #1 ranked accounting firm in Western New York, emphasis is placed on networking after the hiring. Ask any partner in an accounting firm about the value of networking. They will tell you it is an important factor in growing their firms. Think of the advantages you'll have at your new job if you are able to bring to the table, your own built-in network of advisors, referral sources and prospects. Try to look at the big picture of your career. Networking is most effective when it's practiced full time, not just when you're unemployed.

It is important to follow up with the contacts you called on to assist you in finding your job. Thank them for the time they spent with you and continue to cultivate these relationships; but don't expect to get without giving. The worst thing you can do is to repeatedly take from people without reciprocating. Send information, articles, referrals, or opportunities their way. If someone has helped you, express your gratitude and return the favor if possible. Your diligence in networking will pay off again in the future. Whether they are potential employers, your mentors or friends, your contacts are your link to professional success.

Ronald J. Soluri, CPA, Vice Chairman and Director of Personnel of Freed Maxick & Battaglia, PC, offers some tips for keeping and expanding your networking contacts:

- **Keep track of your networking efforts:** Keep a record of all the contacts you make, what the result was and any follow-up that is needed. This will help you organize your time and monitor your progress.
- **Keep in Touch:** A monthly email to everyone, a phone call or brief note now & then can become a good investment in your career.
- **Join professional associations.** Attend seminars, conferences and conventions where you are likely to meet people with similar interests.
- **Volunteer:** Join a charitable organization
- **Help others seeking advice:** Remember to assist those who ask you for career advice or assistance. Remember where you came from.
- **Network at work:** Seek to do projects within your company that put you in contact with people you don't interact with on a daily basis. Keep your good qualities visible. This will help you and benefit your company.