

Maintaining Your Network – After You Get the Job

By Accountemps

Your professional network proved invaluable in helping you locate and secure your current position. But what are you doing to nurture those relationships now that you aren't actively searching for employment?

A network is a living connection of people whose lives are continually changing. And it requires maintenance. Here are some strategies for staying in touch with current contacts, building new relationships and becoming a valued connection for others.

Network virtually

Given the prevalence of web-based social networking — and the growing use of these channels by businesses — there's little excuse for people not to stay in contact with their professional connections. One of the most popular online networks for business people is LinkedIn.

Post a profile on LinkedIn — and keep it up to date. Actively engage with your network by sharing relevant information, contributing to conversations, and commenting on others' posts and updates. And when you learn someone in your network has been promoted or changed jobs, take a moment to acknowledge that person's achievement with a congratulatory note.

Many professionals are also using more social-oriented sites such as Facebook to interact with both friends and business colleagues. Just be careful: If you invite professional contacts to view content you post in a more informal forum, make sure it's nothing you'd be embarrassed to have them view or know about.

Stay active in professional organizations

Talk to someone who is successful in the business world and you'll likely find they belong to at least one professional organization that is relevant to their industry. Participating actively in professional organizations, and attending the meetings, seminars and networking events they host or sponsor helps you keep abreast of what's happening in your field. It also allows you to connect with members who could evolve into valuable contacts.

Be there for your contacts

The people in your network likely helped you to land your current role, so don't fail to support them when they need you. Pass on job leads, referrals or meaningful business developments, as appropriate — and as long as you're not violating any confidentiality expectations. And if you hear of job opportunities or receive queries from recruiters you're not interested in pursuing, you may want to pass that information on to professional acquaintances you know are seeking work.

It's only a matter of time until you'll need to consult your professional network again — maybe not to find a job, but perhaps for advice or an introduction. Allowing these vital relationships to stagnate means you may not be able to leverage important connections at critical times. Also, being there for your contacts when they need you not only can be rewarding, but also will help to heighten your professional stature.

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