

## CHAPTER 3

# NETWORKING

Networking is the best strategy to search for jobs and career opportunities.

**People do business primarily with people they know and like.**

- Resume and cover letters are too impersonal to convince someone to hire you.

**Online job postings draw large pools of applicants.**

- Comprehensive listing systems put you in competition with hundreds of others.
- Networking makes you a recommended candidate of a much smaller pool.

**The job you are looking for may not be advertised at all.**

- Networking leads to new information, leads, and the hidden job market.

**Connecting with new people infuses opportunities into your life.**

- Networking introduces directions you would not have otherwise discovered.



### IDENTIFY YOUR NETWORK

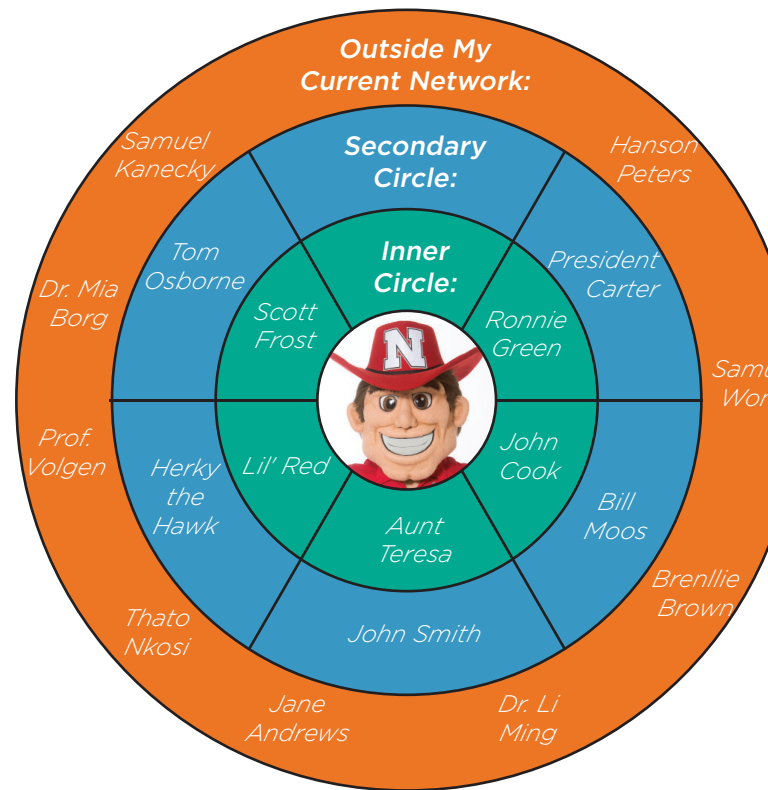
You already have a network and it is more powerful than you think!

Your **inner circle** may include your family, extended family and family friends, your friends' parents, your neighbors, and former teachers and coaches. These 'strong ties' can lead to new ties to build your network.

Your **secondary circle** includes those you could meet through people in your inner circle such as your sibling's co-worker, your best friend's boss, and your aunt's business partner.

### BEGIN BUILDING

Start reaching out by sending an email to people in your inner circle who may know something about the field you hope to enter. Ask for a meeting or phone call to learn from them about it and/or their employer. In such a meeting, called an informational interview, you will ask questions about the person's professional life, their field, and people in it who they know and would be willing to refer you to.



# OUTREACH EMAIL EXAMPLES

## INNER CIRCLE

To: teresa.jones@gmail.com  
Subject: Experience in Human Services

Hello Aunt Teresa,

I hope you are having a great week and I look forward to seeing you at the next family gathering. I am reaching out because I have just declared a Psychology major at UNL and would like to start gaining more experience for careers in human services.

My mom mentioned that you have been a long-time volunteer with the Center for People in Need and might have some suggestions on what type of experience I should pursue and where to look for it. Would you have time to meet with me in the next couple of weeks to talk about this? Thank you for your consideration. I hope we can touch base soon!

Sincerely,  
Herbie Husker

### Be concise.

Give enough context to make it clear why you are asking for a meeting or conversation but be brief.

To: teresa.jones@gmail.com  
Subject: Connections in Human Services

Hello Aunt Teresa,

It was fun to catch up with you at the picnic last week. As you know, I am graduating next May. I will be starting my first full-time job search this spring and wondered if you could help.

I am reaching out to you because I remember you sharing with me that you have some connections in the technology industry. I was wondering if you would feel comfortable introducing me via email to a few of your contacts, so I could start networking with professionals in that field.

Thank you so much for your consideration and please let me know if there is any way I can help you professionally or maybe around the house.

Sincerely,  
Herbie Husker

### Be direct and specific.

Clearly state why you are reaching out to them and what you are asking for.

### Offer your assistance.

Networking is about building relationships, not just getting something for yourself. Recognize you are in others' networks and can be helpful to them.

## SECONDARY CIRCLE

To: john.smith@organization.com  
Subject: Referral from Teresa Jones

Dear John Smith:

I received your email from my aunt, Teresa Jones, who recommended I reach out to you to learn more about account management in the technology industry. I am a student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln majoring in Psychology and am looking into this as a potential career.

To decide if it is a fit for me, I would like to talk to you about your career path and the skills and experience needed for account management. Would you be willing to meet with me or let me job shadow you for a couple of hours so I can gain a better understanding of it?

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I know your schedule is busy, so I understand you may not be able to get back to me this week, which is no problem. I will reach out to you again next week in the case that is a better time for you.

Sincerely,  
Herbie Husker

### Mention connections.

Reference your last meeting or shared contact in the first line.

### Maintain control.

State you will follow-up, otherwise you are left waiting for them to respond.

# OUTREACH EMAIL EXAMPLES

## OUTSIDE NETWORK

To: Jane.Andrews@organization.com  
Subject: Information on Sales in Technology

Dear Jane Andrews,

I am a junior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln interested in pursuing a career in account management, specifically of technology. I came across your profile in the University Alumni Association LinkedIn group and would like to connect with hopes of learning more about the field. Would you be willing to add me as a professional connection?

Sincerely,  
Herbie Husker

To: Jane.Andrews@organization.com  
Subject: Information on Chicago Market

Dear Jane Andrews,

I found your information in the UNL Alumni LinkedIn group and as a senior psychology student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I am interested in learning more about your career path.

I am specifically looking at the market in the Chicago area where your insight would be particularly helpful. I recognize this might be a very busy time for you, so if you are unable to respond this week, I will follow-up next week to see if that is a more convenient time to talk.

Thank you for your time,  
Herbie Husker

### Target Experts.

Your network should reflect your goals. Reach out to successful professionals in the field to guide you.

## ASK FOR ADVICE, NOT A JOB

In an informational interview, you want to gain insight into a field and/or organization, build a relationship, and gain an advocate. Asking for a job can make them feel pressured and leads to a short conversation. Ask for information, ideas, suggestions, and referrals to others with relevant information.

In his book, *The 2-Hour Job Search*, Steve Dalton suggests the TIARA method of developing questions for an informational interview. Examples:

- ⇒ **Trends:** What industry trends are influencing (field) right now? How has the economy impacted (field) in the last three years?
- ⇒ **Insights:** What skills were most valuable in getting where you are now? Where do you see (field) going in the next 3 years?
- ⇒ **Assignments:** What projects are filling most of your time right now? What types of projects do new professionals in (field) typically get?
- ⇒ **Resources:** What professional associations could be helpful to learn more from? Do you know any leaders (field) on LinkedIn or elsewhere who would be good to follow?
- ⇒ **Advice:** What types of experiences should I gain now to pursue this career? What coursework or training should I take to be ready for a position in (field)?

# OUTREACH EMAIL EXAMPLES

## NEW CONNECTION FOLLOW-UP EMAIL EXAMPLES

To: Ann.Beck@organization.com  
Subject: Career Fair Follow-up

Dear Ann Beck,

Thank you for visiting with me about account management positions with (organization) at the UNL Career Fair this afternoon. I was excited to hear new sales staff are given the opportunity to work with some of your bigger clients. As we talked, I began to believe even more strongly that my skills and experiences are an excellent match for that type of role.

As you recommended, I am sending you my resume (attached) and have applied for the Account Management position through the (organization) website. If you need more information or would like to discuss my qualifications for the position further, please contact me at (phone number) or (email).

It was a pleasure to meet you and get to know more about (organization). I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Sincerely,  
Herbie Husker

### Remind them of yourself.

Refer to something specific in your conversation.

To: Dan.Jones@organization.com  
Subject: Thank You

Dear Dan,

Thank you for your time and the great insight you shared with me this morning. I enjoyed not only learning about account management in the technology industry, but also getting to know about your own career path.

As you recommended, I will be pursuing experience in customer service to see if account management is a fit for me and to become more competitive for a variety of opportunities. I have also already requested membership in the LinkedIn group you suggested and look forward to joining the conversation and connecting with other experienced professionals there.

Thanks again for meeting with me this morning. When you are back in the city, please let me know so I can treat you to a latte at The Coffee Café next time!

Best regards,  
Herbie Husker

### Use an appropriate tone.

Address them by their first name only if your last conversation suggests it would be expected.

### Be timely.

Follow-up within 24 hours of your conversation.

### Stay in touch.

- Send thank you notes.
- Forward articles that may be of interest.
- Check-in just to ask how they are doing.

## STAYING IN TOUCH EMAIL EXAMPLE

To: Dan.Jones@organization.com  
Subject: (article topic in one word) Article and Follow-up

Hello Dan,

I hope all is well with you and (organization). I thought you would enjoy this article on (topic) (url). When I read it, you of course came to mind!

I recently accepted an internship at (organization) as a Customer Experience Specialist which will be a great introduction to the technology industry and what a career in it would look like. Thank you again for the information you shared with me earlier this fall. It helped me determine my next steps and lead me to this position.

The offer to buy at The Coffee Café still stands, so let me know when you are back in town!

Sincerely,  
Herbie Husker

### Reinforce ongoing connection.

Refer to future opportunities to connect.

# NETWORKING STRATEGIES



## MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU

**Be Considerate.** Respect their time and be polite and positive to make it a pleasant experience for them.

**Be Authentic.** Misleading someone about interests and goals will only hurt you in the long run.

**Be Professional.** Strike a professional, but conversational tone so they feel proud to connect you to people in their network.

**Ask For Referrals.** Ask, “Do you know anyone who is knowledgeable about (field) who you could introduce me to?”

## MAINTAIN AND BUILD

**Make connecting a priority.** Schedule time to reach out and strengthen relationships with your current connections and create new ones.

**Make connecting routine.** Networking is part of being a professional, not just part of a job search. Incorporate it into your life to maximize its impact in the short and long term.

**Manage what you learn.** Develop strategies to track and access the insight and information you learn about the field and your connections.

**Nurture your network.** Stay in touch with your connections at reasonable intervals, prioritizing those you value most. Help others when you can. Maintaining your network is as important as building it.



## MORE STRATEGIES TO EXPAND YOUR NETWORK

- Join professional and trade associations.
- Attend industry and professional conferences.
- Read industry journals to identify leaders in the field to reach out to.
- Develop a strong LinkedIn profile and join the UNL Alumni LinkedIn Group and professional groups.

