Alumni Career Matters

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Summer Networking Tips
If you're in a job search, you may be tempted to take the summer off, thinking nothing much happens, and all your contacts will be on vacation. Resist this temptation, and use the summer months to refocus your search efforts, and expand and work your network. Here are some suggestions:

- **Check back** with contacts you’ve made over the past few months; update your status, ask to meet for coffee – they may have more time in the summer, and new suggestions for you.
- **Volunteer** in the community; you may meet prospective contacts, and will boost your morale.
- **Expand your LinkedIn knowledge and activity.** Join groups, search for RIT alumni, research companies, add applications, polish your profile, make new contacts.
- **Learn a new networking technology.** Find out how to use Facebook and Twitter for professional networking.
- **Attend networking events:** There may be fewer events, but keep this a priority.

Look for “hidden” networking opportunities. Summer is filled with social events that are great for making connections. Use weddings, graduations, reunions, children’s sporting events, and festivals as a chance to make and renew contacts in a positive – not pushy – way.

Make sure you always have your business cards with you to make networking easier (see article below for more on business cards).

Have a great, productive summer!

Business Cards as a Networking Tool
When assembling your job search toolbox, don’t forget your business cards. Not meant to replace, but to supplement your resume, business cards are a convenient and inexpensive way to promote yourself, especially in settings where a resume may be less appropriate, such as a networking or social event. You can make up cards on your own using available programs, go to copy stores, or get them online at [www.vistaprint.com](http://www.vistaprint.com).

Make sure you include your contact information (email and phone number are sufficient), and add your social media links (i.e. LinkedIn URL), don’t put a picture, and use the rest of the card to highlight your key elements – whether a job objective, title, or unique selling proposition (your value statement or brand). You can also list your key qualifications or a brief summary of accomplishments; just make sure your card isn’t too narrowly focused to exclude you from a variety of jobs for which you may be qualified.
Positive Networking

Everyone knows that networking is a key part of a job search, but the way you network is equally, if not more, important.

Many people approach networking with a “what can you do for me” attitude. They attend networking events with a goal of handing out and collecting as many business cards as possible, then follow up with a quick phone call, requesting information and referrals from the contacts they’ve made (and often wonder why they don’t get more responses). While this is your ultimate goal, this method is short-sighted and can leave a negative impression with your contacts.

A more positive approach is to adopt a “what can I do for you” attitude, and focus on developing a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship. People like to work with, help, and recommend people with whom they feel comfortable, so take the time to really get to know people – who they are, what their story is, and what their needs are. This approach requires that you do more listening than talking, and really focus on the person you’re talking to, rather than searching the room for your next conquest.

Then try to determine how you can help them. This can be as simple as sending an article of interest, sharing a resource, or referring someone for a position in their company (that you’re not interested in, of course). Save your own requests for a future meeting, once you know them better.

Quality is better than quantity – have reasonable goals for meeting contacts at events, and spend time developing a relationship that will serve both of you over the long run. This process will take longer, but will ultimately lead to a stronger network and more results!

Values Assessment & Values Statements

If you’re in a job search, this is the perfect time to do some self assessment, beginning with your values. Identifying your most important work values is an important part of your overall career plan, because people who match their work to their values are inherently more satisfied.

Values are qualities or traits that represent your highest priorities and deeply held beliefs. You bring your values to all your work and personal interactions, and use them to make decisions and determine your life goals.

There are many resources for determining the values that are most important for you, including MyPlan, Prioritizing Life’s Values, and Life Values Assessment Test.

Once you determine your essential values, you can further define and clarify them by developing values statements. These statements state what the value means to you and how you will demonstrate it in your work and personal life.

For example, if your top values are problem-solving, creative, analytical, industrious, decision-maker, and intelligent, one of your value statements could be: “I will demonstrate my problem-solving skills by looking for innovative solutions that save money and help a company achieve its goals.”

Review and refine your values statements frequently and use them as a foundation for your future employment roles.
Working With Search Firms

Using a search firm can be a good part of your job search strategy because with little effort on your part, your resume will be submitted to openings that may not be advertised. Many companies now work with recruiting agencies to fill open positions, as this saves them time and effort.

It’s important to remember that search firms exist to help client companies find employees, not to help people find jobs (even though this is the end result). The client company pays their fee.

**Types of search firms:** Firms can offer a wide range of employment services to companies, including temporary and contract staffing, recruitment and permanent placement, outsourcing and outplacement, or executive level recruitment (headhunters). Firms are typically divided into large global companies or small specialists servicing specific sectors or industry niches, such as biotechnology, financial services, or information technology.

**Connecting with a search firm:** As with any potential employer, do your homework before selecting a search firm with which to work. Verify their legitimacy, review their website, and get information on their reputation by asking for references. Do not sign with a search firm that tries to charge you a fee; reputable agencies collect their fees from client companies.

Make contact with a specific person within the firm for your field of interest, and establish a good rapport with the recruiter, so they can best represent you to the client. Give specifics on the type of job you’re looking for. Make sure your resume is a good presentation of your skills and qualifications, emphasizing achievements, and keywords and skills related to your industry. The recruiter may ask you to rewrite your resume to their specifications.

**Maintaining a relationship with a recruiter:** Keep in contact with the recruiter, to demonstrate your enthusiasm, and once you accept a position at a client company, continue to ask the recruiter for advice, and keep them apprised of your career goals. Take the time and effort to maintain a productive relationship, and the recruiter will contact you first when they have future opportunities.

MyWebCareer

If you’re new to using online sites for a job search, or want to perfect your online presence, here’s a website that helps you manage your online “footprint”.

MyWebCareer provides a free online service that evaluates your social and business networking profiles, your overall network, and your search engine footprint to generate a personalized Career Score. Your Career Score provides insight into how colleagues and employers perceive and evaluate your professional competencies and achievements. Your Career Score is refreshed each month, and you are notified of any changes and actions you should take.
Resume Refresher
As you search for jobs this summer, make sure your resume will get to the recruiter’s “in” pile and get you interviews. Here are some things to consider:

1. **Target your resume** to the industry or type of job you want; research your industry carefully and understand the employer’s needs.
2. **Start with a profile or summary** loaded with key words for your industry.
3. **Focus on your key accomplishments and achievements**, demonstrate what you’ve done, to show what you can do.
4. **Clearly demonstrate your brand**, or what differentiates you from the competition; go beyond the basic qualifications and emphasize your “extras” (leadership activities, professional associations, website with samples of work).
5. **Have your resume reviewed**; our office is happy to review your resume, and try to get people from your targeted industry to review also.
6. **Distribute your resume effectively**; put it on your LinkedIn profile, Facebook and Twitter pages, your personal website, send to headhunters/recruiting agencies, family and friends, bring to networking events.

Resources for Alumni
Sites for Experienced Professionals:
- **6 Figure Jobs** – An exclusive career site for executives and senior level professionals
- **ExecSearches** – Listings for executives and senior management professionals
- **Netshare.com** – A confidential job site for $100k+ executives actively searching for new positions or passively tracking the job market
- **ExecuNet** – Site provides job listings and networking connections for executives and senior management professionals
- **TheLadders.com** – A site with job resources for $100k+ job seekers
- **Executives Only** – Provides pre-screened, executive level listings
- **Retirementjobs.com** – Provides jobs and career resources to seekers 50+
- **Retiredbrains.com** – Jobs, employment assistance, and resources for boomers, retirees and seniors
- **EmployExperience.com** – Resources for experienced workers

Does your resume accurately reflect your qualifications, and set you apart from the competition?