

## How to increase your job opportunities through successful networking



Would you like to increase your job opportunities using networking?

Would you like to know some of the key strategies used by successful networkers?

Networking is a key strategy used when promoting or growing a business and changing jobs or careers.

Research from the US Department of Labor, found that 63.4% of all workers find employment via informal job search methods (such as through friends, family or their network). In comparison, only 10-15% of workers find work using the services of a recruitment agency.

So networking is important. What are the key principles of networking and how do you make the most of a networking event when you find one you want to attend?

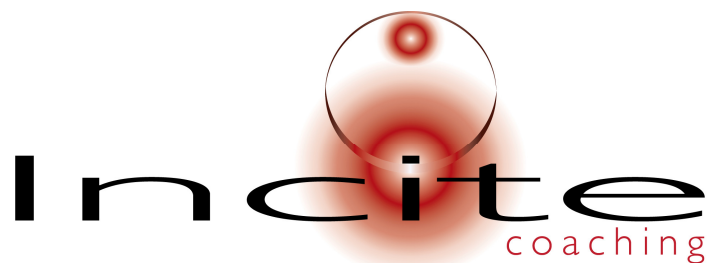
### Keys to successful networking:

**Build a relationship.** Ruth Thirtle from Your Abundance Now, and Assistant Director of Business Networking International (BNI) says, "Networking is all about building relationships. We do business with people who we know, like and who are like us. Networking is about having conversations to find common ground with people so that they become people that we like. Networking is about forming trust and helping one another toward our goals; it is not about throwing our product or service at everyone in the room and just seeing where it sticks."

In order to use networking to help your career transition, think about all the people that you know. Make a list of their contact details and group them into like groups. Include ex-colleagues, friends, family, members of groups, people you know through your kids, school friends, those people you have studied with etc.

A common misconception is that if your friends/family are not in the area or industry in which you are looking for work, they can't help. Quite often new job opportunities don't come through your own network, rather through your network's network, so include everyone.

Begin to make contact with everyone. Send emails, arrange catch ups or coffee, get in contact via linked in or other social media tools and begin to rekindle your relationship.



**Keep in regular contact.** To build a long lasting, trusting relationship, you need to stay in contact with your network. Having one conversation will not guarantee that you will get the job that you want, and the chances are that you won't build trust immediately. Keep in touch regularly. Send an email, give them a call or catch up for coffee and show a real interest in what they are doing or achieving.

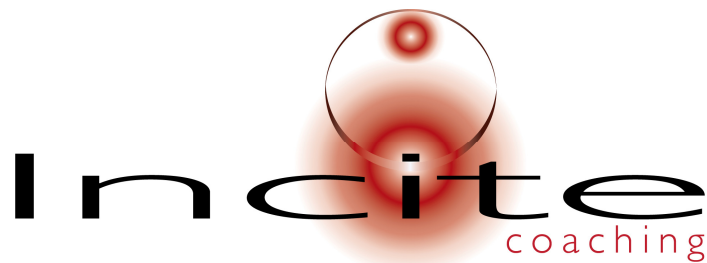
The more you are in contact with them, the easier you will find it to have new things to contact them about and to keep your relationship alive. Send cards and postcards. Not for birthdays, Easter or Christmas, when everyone else does. Send them at random times throughout the year. Send a card if you know they have a big project they are working on or just to let them know you are thinking about them.

**Add value first.** In order to build a trusting relationship, you need to give. What can you do that will demonstrate that you are trustworthy and worth hiring or helping? It may be as simple as assisting them achieve one of their goals by connecting them with another person, it may be sending them some useful information. Whatever it is add value before you sell, sell, sell, otherwise you could scare them off.

**Have a strategy and keep a record.** If you were running a business, you would have a marketing plan. When using your network to find a new job, you should have a networking plan. Know who you are going to contact and how you are going to approach them. Once you have made contact, keep a record. What was the outcome? When do you need to follow up? What action steps do you need to make as a result of the meeting/contact? Excel spreadsheets work well, although choose a strategy that works for you and you will commit to keeping updated.

**Be specific.** Once you have developed relationships with your network, and have added value to them, you can begin to ask for their help in achieving your goals. Be specific about what you want. Saying to somebody, "I would like to meet a contact in Commonwealth Bank who can help in my career transition" is much more tangible and memorable than saying "I'd like to work for a big company and would appreciate you putting me in contact with anyone you know."

By detailing the specific companies you would like to work for, your network is able to determine if *they* know somebody who works for the organisation, or if they know anybody who may know a person who works there. You will be even more appealing to a potential line manager, if they are told that you specifically want to work for their business.



**Email thanks.** After any networking event or meeting, always follow up to cement the beginnings of your new relationship. Drop them an email to say that it was fabulous to meet them, include some of the information that you discussed and suggest a time for another meeting if appropriate. This simple act is quite often overlooked and has tremendous power in taking your new relationship to the next level.

To explore how you can use networking successfully in your job search and to explore networking strategies that will work for you, contact the team at Incite Coaching on 02 9560 4407 or email [info@incitecoaching.com.au](mailto:info@incitecoaching.com.au) Visit [www.incitecoaching.com.au](http://www.incitecoaching.com.au) for more information on Incite Coaching and other relevant articles and resources.

**Jennifer Collier** is Director and Career Coach with Incite Coaching Pty Ltd. After working in the Recruitment and HR industry for a number of years, and with qualifications in Coaching, NLP, hypnosis and performance consulting, Jennifer and the Incite team offer a tailored approach to help you through your transition.