I. Reading

Networking for Career Success

Networking is another stepping stone to taking control of your goals for your future. In the modern world, in fact, networking is becoming more and more important as we are seeing the amazing growth and popularity of many online networking avenues such as Facebook™, MySpace™, Twitter™, and LinkedIn™ to name just a few. Most of us are becoming quite familiar with social networking; however, the kind of networking that will be especially important for your future success is professional networking.

When we talk about professional networking, we are talking about the relationships that you are building with people who can somehow contribute and support your academic and career success. Maybe your current supervisor realizes that you are taking online classes in order to advance within the company and has supported you in this endeavor. This supervisor is an important part of your network. Maybe a classmate who is working on a similar degree program has suggested a class that you should take. This classmate is an important part of your network. There are many different ways to build a professional network; however, it takes time and ongoing effort, so it would be a good idea to start building or adding to your own professional network NOW!

Advantages of Professional Networking
Career Opportunities

Many jobs are now found through professional networking, so it will be important for you to start building a strong network of friends and colleagues well before you are ready to make a career change or look for a new job. According to the United States Department of Labor, approximately 70% of all jobs obtained in the country are secured through networking.

Advice & Support

There are many people out there who have been where you are now. As you add more people to your professional network, you are also building a strong support base for yourself. It is amazing how many people will be willing to offer you ideas and insights that will help you to reach your goals.

Confidence & Trust

As you begin to build a strong network, you are building a foundation for your own success. Your network will consist of people who support you, people who know what you are capable of, and people you can trust and rely upon.

Powerful Networking Tools

Please explore the following resources to find out about powerful networking tools that are within your reach!

LinkedIn ~ LinkedIn is an amazing online resource that provides a wide variety of networking tools and opportunities. Read more about LinkedIn at the following site: [http://workbloom.com/linkedin/linkedin.aspx](http://workbloom.com/linkedin/linkedin.aspx)

WorkBloom Networking Center™ ~ Take a Web Fieldtrip to learn more about building a personal network. Go to [http://workbloom.com/networking-center.aspx](http://workbloom.com/networking-center.aspx) and review the home page as well as the links to Networking Basics and Networking Tips.

Kaplan Career Resources ~ Access the Career Resources area by selecting the University Information tab located across the top of your KU Campus page to the right of the Community Center tab. You will find many different resources in this area.

Read the article "Networking in a Nutshell" [PDF 261KB].
Review the following websites for additional networking tips:

- About.com™, Successful Job Search Networking
- QuintCareers.com™, The Art of Career and Job-Search Networking
- The Riley Guide™, Networking and Your Job Search

**Kaplan Career Network** ~ The Career Network tab is located across the top of your KU Campus page to the right of the University Information tab.

- Ongoing Career Discussions- Select CareerNetwork on the left side of the page- This will display the latest 5 jobs as well as let you do a job search. You can also discuss careers with others on the left hand side.

- Career Profile – Select CareerNetwork 2.0-Go to the dropdown menu in the top left corner with the green down arrow. Select career information and then scroll down to see the different resources at your disposal. You can also discuss careers with others on the left hand side.

**Kaplan Student Life** ~ Access the Student Life area by selecting the Community Center tab located across the top of your KU Campus page to the right of the My Studies tab. Explore this area to see how you can begin building a network of classmates, instructors, and professionals by getting involved!

- Clubs & Professional Groups
- Honor Societies
- Personal & Professional Growth Workshops
- Student Organization Fair

**Building Your Professional Network**

Use your goal setting and critical thinking skills to begin building or strengthening your professional network now while you are still in school. Before you know it, you will be completing your degree and focusing on the next stage
of your career development. A strong network of family, friends, relatives, classmates, colleagues, and co-workers will be critical to your ongoing career success. Use this three-step approach to
ABC’s of Networking

A. Act Now!
Probably one of the most important things you should understand about the whole networking process is that it is something that takes time and effort. If you wait to begin building your network, you will be putting yourself at a definite disadvantage. Start building your network now!

B. Build a Strong Foundation
Even if you do not realize it, your network already exists at least to some extent. However, it will not thrive and flourish unless you pay close attention to it and care for it. Therefore, it is extremely important that you begin to recognize the critical elements of your network and to utilize them. You have family members, friends, and relatives who are at the core or first degree of your network. You now need to make sure this core group is strong and reliable by strengthening your relationships with members, helping members when you can, and also seeking help from members when you need it. Remember, a strong network is based on a firm commitment from all members! You should also keep in mind that this group is the foundation of your network, so you must constantly strive to add to and treat it as the platform upon which you will build a more expansive network.

C. Concentrate on Future Connections
According to Lisa Chau in her article Networking, Social Media, and the Six Degrees of Separation (2012), one of the most important elements of networking is the focus on constant expansion. In other words, your network should be in a constant state of construction, and you should always be looking for ways to build out from your first degree contacts (friends, family) toward second, third and even fourth degree contacts. Maybe there is a neighbor you waive to as you are out walking your dog, how might you include this person as a second degree contact? Who else might you want to meet or get to know at some point? What kind of people could help you reach your career goals? These would be your third and fourth degree contacts. Start making a list of future connections now and work with your first and second degree contacts to build your future connections.

Apply the ABC’s of Networking by completing the following chart. Use this chart as a blueprint for building your professional network. Your goal should be to continue adding names in all three contact areas and to consistently increase your strength ratings by concentrating on building stronger contacts.

1st Degree Contacts: People you know well and can trust: Family members, friends, relatives and other close contacts.

2nd Degree Contacts: People you are acquainted with in a general sense, but would like to know better: Neighbors, teachers, co-workers, or people you see from time to time.
**3rd Degree Contacts:** People you would like to include in your network because they could help you to achieve your career goals: Managers, company owners, successful business people, or entrepreneurs.

**Network Strength:** Consider the strength of your relationship with this person: Rate as High, Medium, Low, or Pending.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Relationship/Title</th>
<th>Network Strength</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1st Degree Contacts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2nd Degree Contacts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3rd Degree Contacts</strong></td>
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**7 Practical Steps for Networking**

It is not hard to build a professional network, but it does take time, effort, and ongoing commitment. In fact, building a network is much like growing a tomato plant. In both cases, the first step is to plant the seed (Rothberg, 2013). However, you cannot stop there or the seed will never sprout and you will never get to reap the benefits of your plant or network. Really, the hard work comes once the seed is in the ground because it is totally dependent upon you for the care and nurturing it is going to need in order to grow into something strong. But what are the “seeds” of networking, so to speak? How do you get started? Stephen Rothberg, author of *Networking for College Students and Recent Graduates: Top 7 Steps You Can Take Now*, offers some practical steps you can take in order to build or strengthen your professional network:

**1. Volunteer Opportunities**

Volunteering offers a wonderful opportunity for you to meet and work with people from all different backgrounds and occupations. Maybe you already work in a volunteer capacity, but you have never thought of it as an...
opportunity to network. One of the best ways for people to get to know you is for them to see you in action and this is just what takes place during any volunteer opportunity.

2. Explore Internship Opportunities

An internship can be a great way to get a preview of the career field you are pursuing, and it can also provide you with many skills and contacts that will benefit you in the long run. Explore the Web for excellent resources on internships.

3. Consider Employment Opportunities

Work environments provide some of the most beneficial networking opportunities of all. If you are already working, find opportunities to network with co-workers, supervisors, and managers. Let the people you work with know that you are going to school and are serious about making some career advancements. If you do not already work, start thinking about possible part or full-time opportunities that would help you to build skills and contacts related to your career area.

4. Identify Mentors

A mentor can be anyone who can offer you practical career advice, guidance, and ongoing support. In fact, the person you select for your informational interview may actually end up being a mentor to you. Think about people you admire, respect, and trust; these are the kinds of people who can provide strong mentoring relationships. Reach out, ask them for guidance, and be up front in letting them know that you want to learn from them. Mentoring can be an amazing process!

5. Advisors & Professors

Your advisors and professors generally have a wealth of experience that lies outside of the office or classroom, thus then can be extremely valuable additions to your networks. Get to know them by asking questions, trusting them, and seeking advice and guidance.

6. Professional Student Organizations

Have your taken time to explore the many different student organizations offered here at Kaplan? Take time to visit the Kaplan Student Life area by selecting the Community Center tab located across the top of your KU Campus page to the right of the My Studies tab. Explore this area to see how you can begin building a network of classmates, instructors, and professionals by getting involved!
• Clubs & Professional Groups
• Honor Societies
• Personal & Professional Growth Workshops
• Student Organization Fair

7. Think Networking

Just about anyone you know can be a vital part of your professional network; however, it is likely that you often miss opportunities to add to your network because you are not “thinking networking.” In other words, you have to let people know about yourself, your career plans and your educational goals. Once they see where you are headed, they will begin to help guide you on your path. Never miss an opportunity to add to your network! That neighbor who walks her dog and waives at you, may be the best contact you could ever make.

Problem Solving for Academic & Professional Success

Problem solving is yet another skill that will be extremely important to your academic and career success. In fact, goal setting and problem solving actually go hand-in-hand because in both cases your focus is on achieving some final outcome such as reaching a goal or solving a problem. Quite often, as you strive to reach goals you will simultaneously encounter problems or challenges that you must solve in order to continue making progress towards your final outcome. A common mistake many goal-setters make is to give up on their goals when they encounter problems. This is not what you want to do! Of course, you cannot plan ahead for all of the obstacles you will encounter as you are striving to reach a goal and so it will be especially important for you to develop strong problem solving skills now, so that you will have the confidence and competence to solve problems as they arise.

Think about it! Your academic and professional success are going to be directly tied to how well you set goals and solve problems. Completing a course with a passing grade, for example, is a common goal for students; it is also a goal that can be tied to many problems such as computer issues, time management issues, or even comprehension issues (I just do not understand this Assignment!). Problems such as these that might crop up along the way can seriously derail your progress and interfere with your motivation as well. Therefore, good problem solving skills are at the core of effective goal setting. Keep these four items in mind as you strive to be both an effective goal setter and an efficient problem solver:

• Define your problem or goal
• Brainstorm possible solutions or approaches

CS13 Unit 8 Reading page 7
- Evaluate and select **best** solutions or approaches
- Put your plan into action

The following website will show you different problem solving skills from the most general approach to more intricate business strategy techniques to help you achieve that focus:

**Problem Solving Skills ~ Start Here!**

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_00.htm

**DO IT!** is one example of a goal setting and problem solving strategy (adapted from Wehmeyer, 1998). You may want to use this strategy as you are focusing on setting up your interview with a professional and building your own professional network!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Define the specific problem or the goal</th>
<th>What is the specific problem or goal?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What would be different for you if you solve this problem or meet this goal?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who else is involved? What do they think?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outline or brainstorm different ways to solve the problem or reach the goal</th>
<th>What can you do to solve your problem or reach your goal?</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Identify the consequences of each plan through careful evaluation and choose the best plan.</th>
<th>What will happen if you follow each of these plans (identify advantages and disadvantages)?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What help will you need?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which is the best plan?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Take Action

- What are the steps you need to take to achieve your plan?
- Take the first step!
- Are you making progress toward your goal?

Celebrate Success

- When you reach your goal or solve your problem, celebrate your success!

II Challenge Activity:

Problem Solving In Action ~ DO IT!

Take some time this week as you are working on the interview with a professional assignment and thinking about your own career goals to apply the **DO IT!** strategy to a problem or goal.

**Define:** Take time to define a specific problem or goal. What exactly is it that you want to overcome or what is it that you want to achieve?

**Example:** Daniel is working on a degree in business administration in order to prepare himself for a career in management. As he is working on his degree, he would like to get a part-time job that will provide him with some general office experience.

**Outline:** Brainstorm some possible approaches you might take by outlining different strategies.

**Example:** Daniel creates an outline of possible approaches he might take in this situation: He can apply online by using monster.com. He can respond to job postings in his local paper. He can visit his local employment office. He can start networking by talking to friends about his job plans and seeing if they have any suggestions for him.

**Identify:** Consider the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy and identify the best course of action.

**Example:** After careful consideration, Daniel determines that a combination of networking and utilizing his local employment agency will produce the best outcome.
Take Action: Put your plan into action and move forward!

Example: Daniel will use the S.M.A.R.T. goal setting process to set specific goals, actions, and deadlines for himself.

Celebrate Success: Celebrate your success!

Example: Once Daniel lands his first office job, he will celebrate by purchasing his first briefcase!

III. Powerful Words for a POWERFUL Vocabulary – 7 words in 7 Days

Effective communication is not only an essential academic strategy; it is fast becoming one of the top skills employers are looking for as they screen potential employees. However, how do you become an effective communicator? The answer to this question is actually quite simple, yet it involves some serious commitment on your part. You have to practice and make a firm commitment to equipping yourself with the many different “tools” that you will need in order to express your ideas clearly and effectively in both written and spoken communication. This is where a powerful vocabulary can make a world of difference for you because words are the building blocks of communication. Therefore, the more words you are able to use, the more creative, convincing, and powerful you will be as a communicator. What if you could add just one new word to your vocabulary each day? Think about the progress you would make in a week, a month, or even an entire year.

Vocabulary Enrichment Resources

Merriam-Webster’s Word of the Day
http://www.merriam-webster.com/word-of-the-day/

Activity: Make your own flashcards: http://quizlet.com/

Unit 8 Vocabulary Words

Complete the vocabulary activities here
http://www.studymate.com?id=3fqp2jm2t
Sagacious: Having sound judgment; perceptive; wise; like a sage.

Querulous: Complaining; peevish; discontented.

Impetuous: Having sudden energy; impulsive; forceful.

Evince: To show clearly; to indicate.

Palliate: To make something appear less serious; to alleviate.

Vindictive: Revengeful; spiteful.

Astute: Clever; shrewd; intellectually observant.

IV. Successories

The information provided in the Successories area is designed to provide you with valuable tips, skills, and resources—all related to your ongoing success here at Kaplan and beyond.

This week, please take time to listen to the networking Seminar and review the following articles related to informational interviewing:

Networking for Results Seminar from KU Career Resources http://khe.acrobat.com/p27719794/

What is an Informational Interview and How Can it Help Your Career? http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/infointerviews/a/infointerview.htm

Informational Interviewing Tutorial http://www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html

How Informational Interviews Can Help Your Career http://advice.careerbuilder.com/posts/how-informational-interviews-can-help-your-career
References


