Networking

A successful career is a combination of demonstrating your knowledge and building relationships. The purpose of networking is to develop quality relationships with a few well-connected, respectable professionals who can speak to your work ethic.

IDENTIFY YOUR NETWORK:
A great starting point is to consider your inner circles. Here is a list of groups to review:
- Friends and family
- LinkedIn, Facebook & other social networking sites
- Past or present coworkers and managers/supervisors

You know more people than you think. Also consider:
- Your Career Services Advisor, staffing agencies, local job centers
- Chamber events, professional associations, volunteer opportunities
- Networking events or groups

Additionally, there are those occasional occurrences where you might strike a conversation while standing in line at Starbucks or watching a MN Wild hockey game. The person sitting next to you could be a manager or recruiter for the company you’ve always dreamed of working.

LEVERAGE YOUR NETWORK:
Put your networking into action. Here are some ideas to start:
- Start a conversation with your friends, family, and/or neighbors.
- Use LinkedIn and leverage connections by identifying yourself as an active job seeker
  - Research and “follow” companies and explore open positions
  - Connect with recruiters
  - Utilize the private “Job Seeker” settings
  - Connect with Groups related to your career field
- Attend a local career fair to explore and connect with recruiters even if your position of interest is not posted at that time.
- Seek out professional associations for events and/or meetings open to the public.
- Search for and get involved with networking groups in your community

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES:
Building your professional network opens the door to opportunities for referrals. A referral is a great way to get your foot in the door at a company. This is a great way to get your resume and/or application noticed.
Not sure how to ask your network for a referral? Here are some ideas:
- May I list your name on the application as a reference for position ABC?
- Do you think you know my work well enough to provide me with a professional reference?
- Would you feel comfortable giving me a reference?

We understand networking can be scary, but you need to put yourself out there and get started! Lean on your support team, keep your head high, and keep smiling!