

## Networking Advice

### Calling Contacts

In the current highly competitive job market, it has become absolutely necessary that you foster relationships with your professional contacts. By getting to know more people in your field, you open yourself up to limitless career growth and development, as well as an expanded knowledge base in your field.

The following individuals are included in your network:

- Friends
- Family
- Friends of Family
- Family of Friends
- HCA Alumni
- Fellow Students
- Former Employers and Colleagues
- School and Administrators
- Career Fair Contacts

### Calling Contacts

Before Establishing Contact:

- Do some research and develop a target list of companies for whom you would like to work.
- Identify a contact within your target list using your network, including alumni, faculty, classmates, family members, and friends.
- Send your contact an e-mail expressing your interest in further conversation. Mention that you would like to arrange for an informational interview to find out more about the company or industry.
- Follow-up by phone. Though the idea of calling a contact can be intimidating, with planning, preparation and tact, calling can be an effective means for finding out about opportunities, both current and potential.

Before Making the Call:

- Research the company and the contact: the more background information you have, the more confidence you will have in directing an effective networking call.
- Develop your 'call script' based on your goals.
- Be sure to identify yourself in the script and include what you have in common with the contact.
- Practice the script over and over until its delivery feels comfortable.
- Have your call script, company notes, contact name, CV, calendar and note pad readily available when you call.

During the Call:

- Do not call during business hours perhaps. Place the call before 9:00 a.m. or after 5:00 p.m.
- Project the utmost confidence and professionalism in your voice.
- If you are connected to the contact, mention your name and deliver your call script.

- Be upfront about why you are calling; people may get annoyed if your intentions are unclear.
- If person is short with you or does not seem interested in continuing the conversation, ask if there is a better time and/or day to call then end the conversation quickly.
- Don't be hesitant to ask for someone else who could also help.
- Have a script prepared in the case you are leaving an answerphone message.

#### After the Call:

- Make a note of conversation details. Create a spreadsheet that tracks what you spoke about, what you committed to in the call, when you called, and when you are going to call them back. These notes can be helpful when shared during an interview with the company.

#### Additional Tips:

- Smile on your end - it will help you to come across positively.
- Treat the Assistant or Secretary with courtesy - they could help you get your foot in the door.
- Stay confident throughout the call; Avoid sounding unsure or hesitant.
- Be succinct - do not take too much time getting to the point.
- Summarize your conversation before closing.
- It may be helpful to take notes on the cold calls and then track them in a small notebook.

### **Developing Your 'Call Script'**

A well-thought out and practiced calling script is an essential tool in establishing a connection with a networking contact. Be sure to fully develop and practice your calling script in advance of establishing a connection.

Consider the following areas when developing your script:

1. Brief Introduction:

(Name, year in college, academic discipline).

2. Prior communication:

(Letter, e-mail, answerphone message).

3. Create a bond by clarifying your connection:

(peer/family/faculty member in common, alumni of HCA, read article about person, heard person speak on panel, met person at networking event).

4. Explain the background supporting your interest in speaking with this contact:

("I am finishing my degree in Photography and am interested in pursuing a research position within the photojournalism upon my graduation").

5. Explain what are you asking:

("I understand that you are a Director in Design at XXXX. I am contacting you because I am pursuing my bachelor's degree from Hereford College of Arts and I am interested in learning more about becoming a graphic designer").

6. End the call and close the deal:

("If you are available, I'd like to set up a brief meeting next week at a date and time that is convenient for you").