

## How to Become a Networking Ninja

With around 80% of jobs never advertised, networking is now the number one skill you need to master to be successful in your job search. Now, if that just made you groan or shift uncomfortably in your chair, you're not alone. Many job seekers we speak to don't like networking or just think that they are "no good at it".

If that sounds like you, don't worry, we've got you covered. Here we will discuss three different types of networking and provide you with a subtle yet extremely effective approach that not only gets results but also makes you feel less awkward when both connecting and leveraging the contacts in your network.

### General networking

This style of networking happens when you reach out to people you already know. They might be close friends, past work colleagues, people that you spent some time with at a conference, someone you studied with, friends of friends or people you have regular contact with but aren't necessarily "friends" with.



The obvious ease of approaching these people is that they already know you and they are familiar with you and to you, so sparking that conversation is easier. It also means that they are more likely to want to help you – and this is where it can become tricky! Very few people like asking for help, but it is also true that most people LOVE to be helpful!

Where do you start? The easiest way to start the conversation is something along the lines of, *"You may have heard I've been caught up in the changes happening at **[INSERT COMPANY]**, and I'm considering my options. I was wondering if we could meet for a chat as I'd love to know more about the **[INSERT INDUSTRY THEY ARE IN]** industry".*

The top tip here is to make sure you end every networking conversation with, *"Who else do you think I should be talking to?"* What you don't want to do in this scenario is make your network feel like you are relying on them to find your next role for you – you are merely asking for them to suggest who else you could be speaking to.

### Networking events

You can be forgiven for thinking these are more intimidating or only applicable to "serious networkers" who are looking for new clients and business, not job seekers. But the beauty of these events is that everyone is there to meet people who will potentially become a network connector, someone they can go to for advice, help, support and introductions to others.

As a job seeker, you can find influential people at many events, including general business events and industry-specific events, that may be able to link you to people and future opportunities. The link to your next role is very likely to come from someone that you have not yet met.

Wondering how to start a conversation? Here are some starters:

- “What bought you here tonight/today?”
- If there is food, “have you tried these? They are amazing!”
- “Did you have far to come today?”
- “Hi, do you mind if I chat to you for a bit – I’m not great at this networking malarkey!”
- “I’m feeling a bit overwhelmed by all that information – did you have one favourite nugget?”
- “So, on a scale of 1 – 10 – how terrible is the Chardonnay/coffee/juice?”

## Social Media Networking

Social media networking, in many ways, is less intimidating – you are behind a screen after all – but keep in mind, it can be time-consuming, particularly if you want to get the most out of it.

When it comes to job seeking and employment research, LinkedIn is, by far the most crucial tool to be utilising through your job search. Potential employers and recruitment agencies will often use LinkedIn as an avenue to research you as a candidate. For this reason, you must keep an updated profile and take opportunities to showcase your expertise and experience by posting status updates, publishing articles and participating in LinkedIn groups.

But while LinkedIn is one of the main social networking tools, don’t neglect your others either. Make sure your Facebook, Instagram and other platforms have high-security measures on them and feature images and stories that you would be happy for a potential employer to see.

Also, look at what industry influencers are using. Does Twitter or Instagram have more traction in your industry? If so, adjust your social networking approach accordingly.

Remember that commenting on others posts and sharing your insights on them is often the way to build relationships on these platforms, so be as proactive as you are targeted in your social networking approach.

Need more help to master your networking skills? Head to [www.mycareermymove.com.au](http://www.mycareermymove.com.au) and check out our online career coaching programs that cover this and more, plus they are tailored to where you are at in your career - [Starting Out](#), [Starting Over](#) or [Starting New](#).