



TEN COMMANDMENTS OF NETWORKING

I. Do not ask for a job

In your network contacts (letters, emails, telephone calls) always state that you are interested in expanding your network and learning more about the dynamics of the contact's industry. This is what every network contact can readily do to help. VERY few, almost none, will know of specific positions for you. If they do, they will surely mention it, so you do not need to ask. Do ask for 3-5 names of contacts that can help you expand your network. This is what they can do easily.

Even with executive search people, you should talk in terms of industries of interest and broadly defined roles as next steps in your career – not specific titles.

II. Always include/attach your resume

No one keeps your resume on file, especially network contacts. Executive search people may do so, few do. All claim to have databases, but few of these work well, they are always out of date, and you should never depend on them. Every email should have your resume attached. Your resume file name should be: **resume john doe.doc** which makes it easy to store, **find**, & forward.

III. Update, update, update every 30 days

Network contacts and executive search people have many things at the top of their priority list and many more things in their mind. Rarely is your resume and your search included in these.

Therefore you must remind all participants in your network of your activities. Further, **brief** updates to your prime target contacts will create a tremendous image of professionalism because so few people do this. Each update creates another opportunity to connect with the role you seek.

IV. Use a list of target companies with all network contacts

A target list of companies is easy to put together and group by relevant industry segments (e.g., 3 to 5 segments with 4 to 8 companies in each). This makes it easier for your network contacts to think of names in these companies or similar companies. The target list also provides a strong image of professionalism in your communications alternatively, provide a list of characteristics of the contacts that you want to add to your network – *make it easy for your network to help*.

V. **“As you requested” starts all updates to executive search firms**

Most executive search firms receive several hundred (some even several thousand) emails per week. To get yours past the clerk sorting through them, address a specific person and use this phrase in your first sentence and underscore. This is not subtle, but it does work. When you are not interested in a position presented by an executive search person, ALWAYS provide the name of five (5) contacts (including 1 or 2 possible candidates) to assist them. This will definitely create a positive impression in the mind of the search executive.

VI. **Track all contacts on spreadsheet (or equivalent) to trigger follow-up**

Use a spreadsheet with one line per contact -- include name, title, company, telephone number, email address, last follow-up date, next follow-up date, who gave you this name, and quality of this contact (a,b,c). Outlook, ACT, or equivalent contact manager software can also be used.

Use such a tool to manage your network, especially the updates every 30 days. Sort on the next follow-up date weekly to create your new “to do” list.

VII. **Position yourself to the market as willing to relocate, why?**

1. Contacts across country lead to opportunities in your backyard.
2. You can always say no – but “no desire to relocate” cannot be why
3. Few of all such contacts will result in offers, so don't worry about traveling all over.
4. **Who knows!!!** You may find the perfect position & all good news!!

VIII. **Track your “hits” to measure your performance**

“Hits” are search people calling about a specific assignment or network contact discussing possibilities in their company. Use a spreadsheet to closely control your follow-up -- every 2 weeks. Your “hit rate” is a good measure of how your program is doing: 1 hit/2 wks = good, 1 hit/wk = very good and 2 hits/wk = excellent. You can also keep your “score” by tracking the number of new additions to your network each week – maintain a chart/graph of both measures. Adding 25 contacts per week is a good level to achieve and exceed.

IX. **In interviews keep responses brief/specific, get into “consulting mode”**

Have a “2 minute drill” response to “tell me about yourself.” Answer all questions in brief, let your interviewer ask for more. But never leave a response at “yes” or “no.” As your interviewer seems to be “winding down” his/her questions, ask about the issues their company faces and how they are being approached – i.e., get into the consulting mode.

Showing empathy for and curiosity about the company's issues is always intriguing to your interviewer. Few people do this, so you will set yourself apart from the other candidates. But, don't offer simple, quick solutions, lest you appear naïve or even insulting.

Who knows, maybe you will be offered a 3-5 day consulting assignment to assist. If so, DO IT!!!

X. Always have a positive attitude and always offer to help

Always have positive views of your departures from prior employers – never comment on negative personalities. Identify positive reasons for your network program and potential outcomes. Convey a positive attitude throughout your interview. Employers will be glad to see someone with a positive outlook, especially from someone they likely expect to have negative feelings. Finally, at the end of your discussion, phone call, or network email, always offer to assist in any way possible. When they call, do help!!