



Networking is getting a lot easier.

Now you can network even when you have a limited base of connections... and you can do it fast.



## 13 How to network a much easier way

Now you can network by using an entirely new and faster approach.

Networking is a pyramiding strategy... one where you capitalize on one name to gain an interview with another. The most popular style of networking involves seeking *informational interviews*.

Your purpose here would be to get an appointment with executives and ask them to share with you some information about their industry challenges.

Naturally, if you happened to be well connected, and you maintained a list of contacts into the hundreds, that could help give you a fast start.

Unfortunately, the problem with this is that it usually takes a long time! And, some people find it demeaning to approach friends and acquaintances to ask for help in finding a new career position.

Nevertheless, it does work if you have the time and inclination to approach your job search this way. Hopefully, some of your discussions will result in referrals to another executive who might have something for you... and be able to use your talents.

While this traditional networking can work, besides taking time, networking people with a new job in mind has become overworked. Just about every executive has been networked over and over again. What's more, who has 45 minutes to an hour to devote to someone else? Or even 30 minutes?

## Networking the new way

The growth of the Internet and social networking sites such as LinkedIn, Zoominfo, Zing and others, combined with personal marketing websites and the use of email... are ushering in a new era of networking. And, it is a much easier and more effective way to network.

“Only  
**6%** of all  
professionals  
network more  
than 15 people.  
Now you can do  
that in less than  
an hour. //

All you need are some superior resumes and an attractive personal marketing website that display your formal credentials, accomplishments and transferable skills in an impressive way. Then, instead of asking for “an informational interview,” you can just send off a well designed email with a link to your website.

People on the receiving end will get it and be impressed and you will have their time. And, you can use this method to contact hundreds of people in a very short time... people who have a high probability of being able to help you.

What kind of people? I’m not suggesting that you do this with your genuine personal contacts and real friends, who will look forward to visiting with you on a personal basis. However, they would also be very interested in seeing your personal marketing website.

But we all have what I refer to as acquaintances on another level. Here I’m referring to people who might be golfing partners, politicians, lawyers, ministers, investment bankers, etc., people who might legitimately be able to easily refer us to others based on a short telephone call (*after seeing your personal marketing website*).

You can also target industries of interest and get contact information on key executives who would be good targets. Influential alumni have also proven to be very responsive to this approach.

Other possibilities to contact include executive directors of associations who have many “lines” into their industries. Editors of business magazines and newsletters may also have an inside track on the needs of specific organizations.

Other good executives to target can be those who have been quoted in articles. This makes an introduction easy and natural. Also be sure to track down lost contacts in past organizations.

As far as informational interviews go, you can do that while abiding by some time tested rules. For example, your discussions must be kept brief, and you need to have your list of questions prepared. You will do better when you have researched a firm and are asking for feedback on ideas that may benefit them.

## Networking through references

Mark was a VP who wanted to become a CFO. We helped make Mark aware of the power of his references. When Mark heard his company was to be sold, he felt his salary was \$20,000 less than it should be.

Did his boss feel bad about paying him less than he was worth? Absolutely! Could Mark ask him to act as a reference, and would he raise him to the level he wanted, in return for staying for the last two months? Definitely.

One of the major keys to effective networking rests with your ability to create superior “networking letters.” Some examples in this chapter will give you the idea.

## A sample letter for requesting a reference

Dear Dr. Sovern:

*It seems like years since we last talked, but I hope that all is well with you. Since graduating from Columbia my career has taken some interesting turns.*

*For the first three years I worked as an assistant to the PR director at Merrill Lynch. My earnings there allowed me to finance a graduate degree.*

*Two years ago a unique opportunity was made available to me from the Clairol Corporation. Despite my relatively young age, I now have two years experience as manager of PR.*

*Unfortunately, it looks as though the company will be sold in the next few months. As part of our impending merger, all staff positions will be under review, and that prompts this letter:*

*If it is convenient, I would like to use you as a reference in case I do need to consider a new move. To bring you up to date I am including a link to my personal marketing website... so that you can review my most recent resume. Any thoughts regarding improvements would be a great help.*

*I will give you a ring on Tuesday and look forward to speaking with you again.*

*Very truly yours,*

**Paul Richards**

*Paul Richards*

Now, the boss had a friend in an accounting firm. Mark asked his boss if he would approach his friend as a second reference. Together, they had lunch. The accountant was happy to be a second reference. In the same way, Mark developed a third reference, his own brother-in-law.

When he launched a campaign, he had a good interview with the president of a small paper company. A conservative man, he asked for three references. Mark recontacted his references, so they were ready. After his boss had given him a glowing reference, the president mentioned that he was still uncertain.

When the second reference was called (the boss's friend), he told the president that in the right situation Mark could help save \$1 million in taxes, and control costs. He had repositioned Mark as a broader-based financial executive.

Next, Mark's third reference supported the others and added a few points. The day after the last reference check, he got a call from the president, and guess what? His message was, "Mark, what will it take to get you?" He ended up as CFO at a much higher income.

Most of the time, important references will be the people you reported to in the past, or the person you currently report to or their superiors. Choose the highest level reference, as long as you get an enthusiastic endorsement, and avoid people who don't communicate well. Also be sure to give them an idea of what to emphasize about your background.

## Selecting your references

References you select should know your achievements and have no hesitation in making strong statements. What they say is very important, but the enthusiasm and conviction they project is more important. Let them know

## A sample networking letter to an old friend

Dear Sherrill,

*It isn't often, unfortunately, that I write letters to old friends. There's a good reason for doing so now and it involves a favor.*

*As you may know, I have had a successful consulting practice over recent years. However, I have decided to seek out a new line assignment as president of a small corporation, or as marketing executive with a larger firm.*

*As part of this new direction, I am interested in expanding my acquaintances at the level of CEO. Considering your long history in the area, it seems that you may be able to provide me with a few select introductions.*

*Ideal contacts would be with CEOs of firms having significant growth potential. A company facing a turnaround situation could also be interesting.*

*In any event, I hope to move swiftly in securing appropriate contacts. With this in mind, I am including a link below to my personal website listing my credentials. Please feel free to forward it to others.*

*Please give my best regards to Phil. Thanks in advance for your time.*

*With my best regards,*

**Gordon Edwards**

*Gordon Edwards*

that you have high regard for them and their opinions, and they will want to do their very best.

Also, make sure that your references know the full story. Here's an example. A woman who worked for me left to complete her MBA. She was competent, had a quiet manner, but could be forceful. When she started interviewing, she brought me up-to-date. She called after an interview to tell me that she felt they had some concerns about her quiet nature.

Armed with that information, I was ready when I was called by her potential boss. Before the question was asked, I mentioned that sometimes people could be deceived by this woman's quiet nature, but that she could be very assertive. The person responded that I had put to rest his one concern.

References can be your best sources of referrals. Leave each person a half-dozen resumes. Reassure them that you won't use them too many times. After calling them, send a brief note that shows your appreciation and summarize a few positive things they can say about you. You can even make a list of questions that employers might ask and suggest answers for them.

By the way, let references know as soon as you have used their names, and ask them to let you know when they have been contacted. Employers will sometimes ask them for the name of someone else who is familiar with you.

## Handling questionable references

If someone is likely to give you a bad or lukewarm reference, you need to bring it out in the interview and supply enough good ones to offset it. For example, if the interviewer asks to speak with a reference who will be questionable, defuse the situation by explaining that you had differences of opinion on company directions. Remain

totally objective and unemotional, and never imply negatives about that person. Also, if you are doubtful about what a reference might say, you might have a friend do a mock reference check to find out what is being said.

If the reference is neutral, don't hesitate to ask the person to furnish more positive information. If necessary, explain that any negative input is keeping you from winning a position and enabling you to support yourself and your family. As a last resort, you may have to imply that you will seek a legal remedy.

### Fundamental guidelines for executive networking

- Only network with superior materials. List people you want to see, in industries of interest, and find a way to meet them.
- Always know what you want to say, the questions to ask, and the strengths to emphasize.
- Be sure to exchange cards and talk with people wherever you go. Let them know you are thinking about something new.
- Try to leave every meeting or discussion you have with new names.
- Always remember the names of the front office and send a non-standard thank you note after each meeting. For example, mention an article you have seen where the firm is mentioned.
- Remember, people know when they're "being networked." That doesn't mean they won't help, but don't try to fool them.

### A classical networking letter to an "influential person"

*Dear Mr. Kearns:*

*As President of Mellon Bank and a person well known in financial circles, you have insight into many firms. That is the reason for this letter.*

*My most recent executive assignment has been as CFO of Carter Inc. In that position, my achievements contributed heavily to the following results:*

- *A major profit decline was reversed and our earnings have jumped 30%.*
- *A reorganization was put into effect and a new system was installed.*

*Earlier, I held several responsible positions with Henredon, a manufacturer of quality furniture.*

*Now, after careful thought, I have decided to seek out new opportunities in Pittsburgh. I know you are busy, but thought perhaps you could share my background with an associate who could benefit from my experience. CEOs or board members of consumer product manufacturers would be logical possibilities.*

*With this in mind, I am including a link below to my personal website listing my credentials. Please feel free to forward it to others. Thank you in advance for your help.*

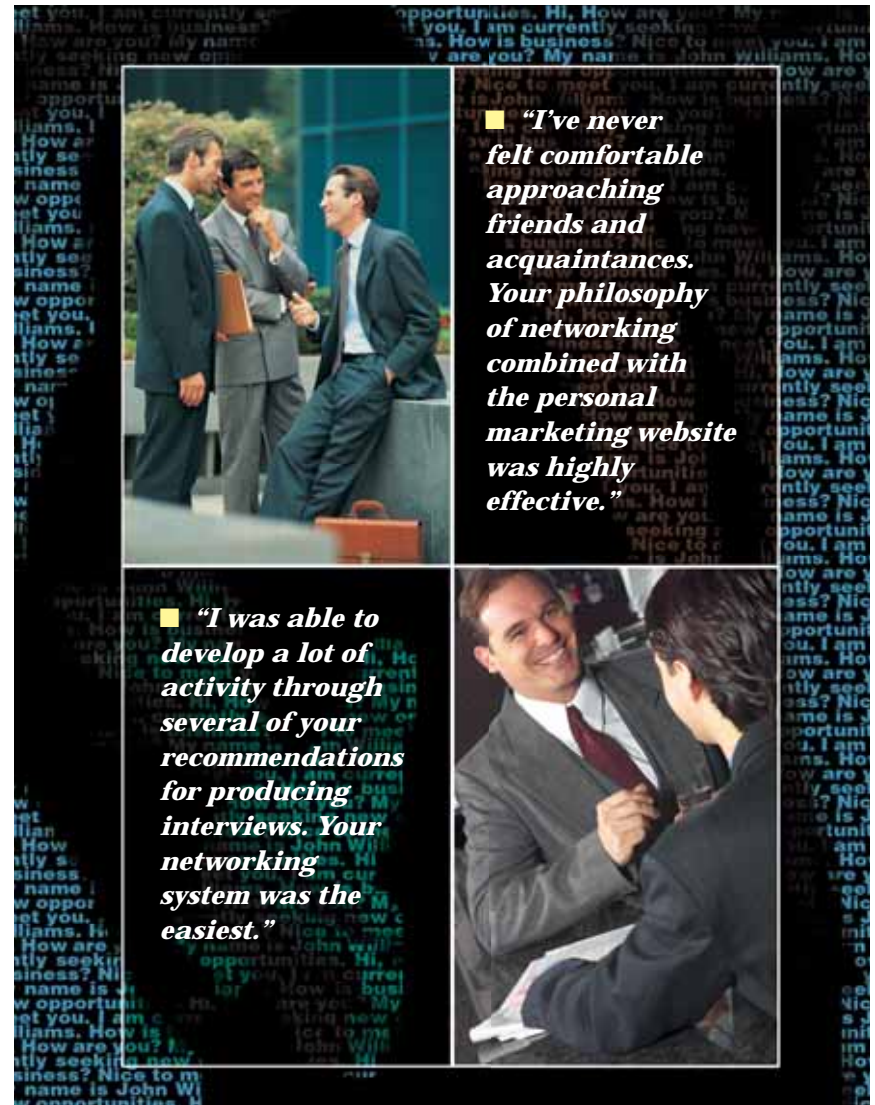
*With best regards,*

***Jonathan Smith***

*Jonathan Smith*

## What some people say about our networking approach

- *“Networking was essential for me. Before using your system, I never felt comfortable with the process, since I didn’t like asking for help. This time I sent out the CEO biography with a cover letter to 150 people. More than 10 percent gave me leads.”*
- *“I wanted to be in the high-end furniture business. Antiques and woodworking were my hobby, and my wife has a decorating business in North Carolina. Using your materials, we worked on her connections and my own, using two personal marketing websites. I had my first offer in six weeks, and a second 10 days later, and I have joined Drexel in a top sales position.”*
- *“My goal was to join an airline in a finance position. Having been an Air Force pilot gave me an advantage, but the key was networking, getting out emails that linked to my website, and using the phone. The position I accepted was with an airline in your backyard, Frontier. I will be moving to Colorado next month.”*
- *“Your system did a lot for me, but what really helped the most was learning how to use my 1500 person Rolodex here in New York. My materials were excellent, but the personal marketing website gave me an instant distribution system, and it multiplied my contacts many times over. I got a job as executive director of a major nonprofit. I had activity from many sources, but the best were through networking.”*



■ ***“I’ve never felt comfortable approaching friends and acquaintances. Your philosophy of networking combined with the personal marketing website was highly effective.”***

■ ***“I was able to develop a lot of activity through several of your recommendations for producing interviews. Your networking system was the easiest.”***

# Thanks to the Internet era and personal marketing websites, networking just got a lot easier!

*“Reach high, for stars lie hidden in your soul.”*  
—Pamela Vaul Starr

*“If at first you don’t succeed, try, try, try again.”*  
—W.E. Hickson



**#13 RECAP**

Network a new way... and get much better results

Many people don't like to do traditional networking... and it can take a lot of time.

But, the Internet and personal marketing websites are making networking a lot of people, beyond your contacts, easier and faster than ever before.

If you don't have a personal marketing website... try it. It works!

## Quick action steps for networking

JMAC makes it easy for people to identify and contact influential alumni, as well as executives in selected industries. On your own you can use directories to get this information. Also, be sure to join social networking sites and professional associations you consider appropriate, and refer people frequently to your PMW. Then, just follow our guidelines and adapt the letter examples to your situation.