



ACPA Networking Guide

You have heard the word networking many times especially as it relates to the job search. However, networking isn't always about finding a job.

Networking is about *making connections* with people who can give you valuable information, give you a different perspective on a problem you have, provide you with new ideas when you find your creative self "stuck" or maybe someday hire you. Most important, networking is a long-term career development strategy.

Networking Strategies at ACPA

- ❑ Volunteer at the convention either in Placement or with the General Convention.
- ❑ Consider participating in the Convention Colleagues program and get advice from
- ❑ Get involved with the Commission or Standing Committee in your area of interest. Most have open meetings sometime during the convention. Attend that meeting and offer to help with committee work.
- ❑ Stay connected with that Commission or Standing Committee after the convention.
- ❑ Have friends, colleagues and faculty members introduce you to people who are in the same field in which you are interested.
- ❑ Talk to everyone: the person sitting next to you at a workshop (don't sit by yourself!); the person in front or in back of you when you are waiting in line; the person sitting next to you on the airport shuttle; people in the elevator; standing in line waiting to get food; in the restroom; in the gym; *anywhere!*

What Do I Ask or Say?

At conventions, people are excited to talk about their work. There are a number of topics you can ask about – be creative to find the information that is important to you. Ask them what they do for their job, where they work, how long they have been in the profession, what trends do they see happening in the field of choice.

You may also need to tell the person about yourself. Tell him/her about your current status (ie. graduating graduate student, career changer, mid-level professional seeking greater opportunity), where you go to school, the type of opportunity you are seeking and your qualifications. If you discover you "connect" with a person you meet you may want to give him/her a copy of your resume or your business card.

Remember you are seeking information, not asking for a job. The more people you connect with the better your chances of success.

Maintain Your Contacts

- ▶ Keep a file box or use a business card holder. Make notations such as when you met the person and a brief summary of the conversation.
- ▶ Update your contacts on your job search and other activities. Let them know when you have accepted a position or when you are back in the market again. Don't contact them only when you need something.
- ▶ Remember, networking is a two way street. Your career progression and advancement may depend on other people. Developing contacts should be long-term so as to benefit you for many years.