NETWORKING FOR COLLEGE: 6 TIPS FOR NETWORKING SUCCESS

Evan West
Abridged from Lifehack

Networking in college is one of the most important things a person can do to ensure success. Many students don't realize the necessity of networking in college. Some simply aren't confident enough to enact a networking strategy. Others don't consider networking to be an important part of creating future success. Networking helps you to form relationships so future employers will see you as a friend instead of as a risk.

Here are a 6 tips to help any college student kick-start their lives with networking:

Network With Your Career Goals in Mind

The career you want to pursue will influence the course your networking should take. For example, if you decide that you want to spend your life writing for National Geographic, then it's important that you focus on building relationships with individuals in the journalism community. You want to connect especially to those people at National Geographic. Set career goals to give your networking direction.

Admit You're a Student

When you start networking, don't hide the fact you're still in college. Being a student gets you in the door more easily. People in the business you plan to pursue are more likely to help a college student out because you being in college means you won't be looking for a job. Don't hide that you're a student; start any networking attempt by admitting that you're still in college. It will open more doors for you.

Get Off Campus

When it comes to networking, it's better to get off campus. Email individuals in your desired field and arrange a phone call. Use this to start friendships with individuals that can help you gain a better understanding of the field you'll be entering. Also, saving up to attend conferences that are held in your area will enable you to meet and befriend even more people that can help you move towards future success.

Use Your Current Contacts

Most people's early experiences in networking start with their friends and family. College is a great opportunity to use these connections to broaden your network even further. Start asking people you already know if they know anyone in the field you want to pursue. Then ask for an introduction.

Give Before Expecting to Get

It helps to hear every problem someone you're close to has as an opportunity to offer a solution. The more you network, the more solutions you can offer, and the stronger all of your relationships can become. You can connect your friend who's struggling with algebra with your friend who tutors algebra and both of your friendships will become even stronger. Always offer value. Then, when you need help with your network, the people you know will be more willing to lend you a hand.

Get an Internship

Interning not only builds a portfolio and a reputation in the field you're interested in, you also forge tons of one-on-one relationships at the same time! No amount of cold-calling and job shadowing can do what an internship can, and it's never easier to intern than when you're enrolled in college.

Use these tips to get your networking kick-started. There is no substitute for networking in college. Nothing will jump-start your career faster, and no skill will be more beneficial to you throughout life. There's simply no way to overstate the importance of networking and starting at it as soon as possible.

What about you? What sort of opportunities has networking in college opened up for you? What sort of advice would you offer to other young networkers and what sort of mistakes would you warn against?

Evan West is a freelance blogger. If you enjoyed reading this article why not hire him to write for your own blog? You can find him at Evan West Writing.