Paralyzed Veterans of America

PAVE

Paving Access for Veterans Employment

Networking Ins and Outs

Honing your networking skills will serve you well throughout your professional career – these networks will take time to develop. So be patient. By meeting new people, you will learn from others about your profession and companies you're interested in.

The Ins and Outs of Networking

Ensure success with preparation:

A good start is analyzing your skill set – write out your strengths and weaknesses. Break down your previous positions to be able to explain job duties. Relate your education to how it can help you with a new position. Start a database of work experiences to explain how you react to different situations.
Create your elevator speech – you should craft an elevator speech that you give to a potential employer within a two or three minute time frame. Picking your strongest points will be very important. Examples could include your work experience and education.
Practice your elevator speech – give your speech to someone you know. She/he can provide important feedback to help with your content and delivery.
Do your research – find out which companies will be attending the event, what each company does, and what positions are available.

Expand your network:

Locate a networking group – check with the Chamber of Commerce, local job services, your closest PVA Chapter, or other local organizations such as your place of worship.
Identify industry and trade groups – many larger companies offer a multi-faceted approach to finding people to work for them. Trade groups provide a good resource to find experts in your field and potential employment opportunities.
Utilize networking sites and apps – these can be used to create new opportunities, including job searches. Some of these sites include: Meetup, Eventbrite, and Eventful.

Get your name out there:

Publish your own Blog.
Contribute to someone else's Blog.
Research public speaking forums.
Work with a community workshop.

Utilize social media to widen your reach:

Use social media to help you expand past your in-person relationships – social media allows you to be able to start, solidify, and build from new and previous contacts. Use sites like LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook to reconnect with people you already know or who have recently met, as well as to network with others, such as people who work at the companies you're interested in.

Paralyzed Veterans of America

PAVE

Paving Access for Veterans Employment

Networking Ins and Outs cont.

Connect with different types of industries:

Keep your options open concerning who may be interested in your skills.
Different industries have multiple departments and needs.
Company size, diversification, and location could offer new opportunities.

Set long term goals:

Nurture your contacts – you may need to use your network for future opportunities.
Find a mentor.

Use your personal connections:

Be clear and direct about your intentions.
Pick the right person that will follow through with your request.
Be prepared to do the follow-up work from information you receive.
Set your boundaries about how many favors you ask for.

Have a good follow-up plan:

Send a quick email to build your line of communication.
Remember birthdays of your contacts to keep line of communication open.