My Strategic Networking Plan

Handout available for download on the YRRP website at www.yellowribbon.mil/cms/event-handout

Goal #1: Develop My List of Existing Contacts

TASKS	TIME FRAME (Start Date – End Date)
Existing Relevant Contacts:	
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
Existing Personal Contacts:	
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
Existing Association Contacts (non-family or friends):	
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
Sources/Online Networking Sites/Groups: (Plan to use to add to existing list of association contacts)	
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____

3. _____ _____

4. _____ _____

5. _____ _____

Goal #2: Increase My List of Relevant Contacts

TASKS	TIME FRAME (Start Date – End Date)
Email/call my existing personal contacts to explore whether they know anyone whom I could add to my existing list of relevant contacts.	_____
Email/call my existing association contacts to explore whether they know anyone whom I could add to my existing list of relevant contacts.	_____
Use online networking sites to make new connections with relevant contacts who surface from my search.	_____

Goal #3: Schedule Information Interviews

TASKS	TIME FRAME (Start Date – End Date)
Determine which relevant contacts I want to email and which I want to call.	_____
Determine which relevant contacts I would be able to visit versus those whom I would have to interview by phone.	_____
Acquire contact information for each relevant contact.	_____
Develop my email and phone script for requesting information interviews.	_____
Request information interviews with my existing relevant contacts.	_____

Goal #4: Prepare for My Information Interviews

TASKS	TIME FRAME (Start Date – End Date)
Research each relevant contact's organization and position/role.	_____
Develop my POWERful list of information interview questions.	_____
Get directions for the face-to-face information interviews.	_____

Goal #5: Successfully Conduct My Information Interviews

TASKS	TIME FRAME (Start Date – End Date)
Begin the information interview strong via thanking my relevant contact and greeting him or her with positive energy.	_____
Ask my POWERful list of information interview questions.	_____
Be attentive, and take notes on the responses to my questions.	_____
End the information interview by thanking him or her again for his or her time, and ask if he or she has any other referrals that he or she could make.	_____

Goal #6: Follow Up and Stay Visible

TASKS	TIME FRAME (Start Date – End Date)
Send a thank you letter or email to my relevant contact and reiterate my interest in the career field/organization.	_____
Personalize a thank you letter by revisiting key highlights of what was discussed during the information interview.	_____
Ask if he or she knows of any colleagues who would be willing to conduct a similar information interview.	_____

Create and maintain a spreadsheet or database of everybody I conduct an information interview with and all of my relevant, personal, and association contacts. Keep their contact information accessible and, take notes on each interaction I have with them and determine what my next steps will be. _____

Remain visible to each relevant contact by checking in once in a while and/or inviting them to connect on a professional networking site. _____

Information Interview Questions

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The following list of questions should be asked during information interviews. This list follows the POWER acronym that features an effective progression of questions. There is some strategy associated with conducting Information Interviews and networking. Do not begin an interview by asking about internships or jobs a prospective employer may offer. One of the main goals of Information Interviewing is to build strong relationships with contacts in your career field. A great way to build strong relationships is to follow POWER. Establish a solid list of questions using the progression that follows:

P **Person** you are interviewing
O **Organization** of your contact
W **Work field** of contact
E **Explore opportunities** with their company or within the field
R **Referrals** to other contacts and organizations

When using POWER, first ask questions about the person, their organization, and the work field prior to exploring job or internship opportunities and requesting referrals.

Questions...

About the PERSON

- What is your position title? Are there other titles for similar jobs?
- What are your day-to-day duties and responsibilities?
- How did you get the position you currently have? Describe your career path.
- Describe a typical work week. How many hours do you work each week?
- Is there travel associated with your job? How much?
- What do you like and dislike most about your job?
- Is there flexibility regarding the hours you work and where you work (e.g., out of the home)?
- What are your biggest challenges in this job?
- With which departments or people do you work most closely?
- How do you see the results of your job?
- To whom do you report?
- Whom do you supervise?
- What is your management style?
- In what professional organizations are you active?
- Given your experience and education, what other careers could you pursue?
- What are your long-term career goals?
- What personal characteristics and skills are most essential to perform this job well?

About the ORGANIZATION

- Describe the culture of the organization.
- What is your company's mission?
- What is your company's vision for the future?
- What are the big projects your company is currently working on?
- What is the company's philosophy regarding customer service?
- What is the company's philosophy regarding diversity?
- Do most of the employees buy into these philosophies and live out these philosophies daily?
- Who are your competitors?
- How do you differ from your competitors?
- How much flexibility do you have in terms of dress, travel requirements, vacation schedule, place of residence, etc.?
- Does your company/organization offer training programs or internships?

About the WORK Field

- How did you originally get into this field?
- What is the employment outlook for this type of work - now and in the future?
- What are the opportunities for advancement or job mobility?
- What is an average time frame for an employee to advance from position to position in this field?
- Do you have to change companies to progress in this field?
- What is the typical beginning salary range? What is the range in five years?
- What are some of the major trends or issues in the field today?
- What are the major challenges in the industry?
- Which organizations are considered to be the best in the field?
- Has there been much downsizing in your field?
- What kind of work schedule does this career require?

About EXPLORING Opportunities

- Is my background well suited for this type of work?
- As you review my resume, what tips would you provide?
- What credentials, degrees, licenses, experience, or training are required for entry into this field?
- What educational preparation do you feel would be best?
- What kinds of college experiences are valued most?
- How does your company notify the public of openings?
- What general advice would you give me regarding pursuing opportunities with your organization and others in the field?

About REFERRALS

- What trade or professional associations should I contact? Would I be eligible to become a member?
- This has been a great experience for me. I would like to meet with other people in this field to receive additional perspectives. Do you have a colleague in the field who may be willing to talk with me?
- Whom else would you recommend I contact for more information about this career?