

Use friendly discussions to advance your career

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By Brenda Koritko

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Think about all the different people that you chat with on a regular basis. This group most likely includes family, friends, classmates, neighbors, and co-workers. Then, think about the people that you have pleasant, often personal, discussions with from time to time. This group might include your hair stylist, parents at the local baseball field, merchants in your community, or people in your religious community. Next, review any lists or rosters you have for professional organizations, social clubs, or athletic clubs. These lists will help you remember folks you meet occasionally.

Just by completing these simple tasks, you have completed the first step of effective networking. You have identified your existing network, and you are ready to begin organizing your networking strategy using the information you have gathered to create a dynamic contact list. You know people that know people. It is easy to expand your network quickly once you identify your core group of great connections.

Don't focus on where the people you have identified work. When you have finished listing all the people in your existing network, rank these people by how comfortable you feel with them. Plan to build your confidence by contacting the people at the top of your list first.

Keep a handwritten record, or enter your information in a database. Make this decision based on what is the most convenient way to make sure that you have easy access your information. Include some, or all, of the following information in your record: referral source; contact and organization name; the date of your meeting; key information gathered; follow-up action/s, and the date you sent a thank you letter.

Family and friends are a valuable resource. Plan to ask the people you know for advice, opinions, information, help, ideas, research, or suggestions. How many times have you shared information with the people on your contact list? How many times have they spoken to you about their families, mutual friends, or the challenging and exciting events that they are experiencing in their workplace? I am guessing the number is beyond measure, and that you have access to an endless number of rewarding opportunities to explore.

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It's okay to use these opportunities to advance your career. Asking family, friends, and acquaintances for help will not get in the way of your friendships. Actually, it's the opposite. You may be surprised at how many people are more than willing to provide valuable contact information and talk about their jobs or industry. Think about how happy you would be to offer information that could help any one of the people on your contact list.

One of the most important advantages of using your personal network to explore rewarding opportunities is that you will have the name of a mutual acquaintance to use when you contact potential employers. For example, "Jane Doe suggested that I contact you as someone who would be a good person to give me some career advice." Then, when you connect with this person, you also introduce the potential for connecting with their contacts and the opportunity to use their name in the next introduction, and so on. The power of networking is that people you may never meet may help you

advance your career.

Find a networking style that you are comfortable with, and take some time to prepare a few different introductions. Think about what you have to offer that would interest the person you are contacting. For example if you are contacting a friend's friend at your local Chamber of Commerce, highlight your corporate experience, "Hi, my name is Jack Doe. I am a project manager working on the ABC project for our municipal government. Prior to this project, I have had great success completing projects for both EFG Corporation and HIJ organization."

Networking involves establishing and nurturing relationships, sharing information, and having discussions with interesting people, including career related discussions with friends or family. You are prepared! It may seem too simple, but when you are prepared to ask the people you know to help in your job search, you increase the likelihood of discovering rewarding opportunities.

Brenda Koritko is the author of *I Manage Me* a timely ebook providing techniques to help you achieve your immediate career goals with benefits throughout your career. Secure rewarding opportunities with companies that are actually hiring. Click here to get more information <http://www.imanageme.com>

Career Enhancement Tools For Stress Management

By Joyce Jackson

Career Enhancement Tools

No matter what your career, you will periodically face stressful situations from time to time. Handling stress in the workplace is challenging. Those that manage it well will be top candidates for career advancement.

Stress management requires skills and techniques. These are learned over time in a work environment or through career enhancement courses.

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The first effective step in stress management is to "carve" away at it a little at a time. Solving stress issues with a "rip the bandaid off" approach more often than not creates even more stress. Take a step-at-a-time approach to solving the issue.

Second, most stress at the office starts at home. Take a look at your personal life. If you can narrow down the issues there as to what is causing the stress you can then begin to work it out slowly. Once things are running better at home they will be better in your work arena, too.

Third, your job and career can be a stressful one. If it is, decide either how you can handle the stress better or think of changing careers. You may need outside help with this decision and this is where a lot of other career enhancement tools come in to play: by providing help and information for this type of decision.

It's also important to know many people experience severe stress in their careers. You are not alone. Career-minded individuals who are focused on success tend to stick with their jobs over the long haul. In order to advance and prove your value when the next round of promotions come, you must be able to deal with stress effectively.

Finally, a few quick tools to help with stress:

1. Avoid Stress

Stay focused on your work. Exceed expectations by demanding excellence from yourself even if no one else does.

2. Be Organized

Keep a day planner and use it!

3. Talk Less

Professionals focus on doing their work. Gossip creates stress. Playing "he said she said" is not only tacky but dangerous. Danger will cause stress.

These little tools will help while you look for larger and better solutions in handling stress on your way

to career advancement. There is also career enhancement information for your use at [Career Enhancement Basics](#).

Joyce Jackson has spent 30 years in the career enhancement field as a consultant and expert. Her extensive experience and advice is available on her blog at [Career Enhancement Basics](#).

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