



Building relationships can help you build your career.

Learn about opportunities through networking

By Michelle Reese, Tribune

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Networking during a job transition is an effective way to make contacts, and find others who are in the same situation as you.

Al Ingallinera has been a volunteer with the St. Patrick's Employment Support Ministry for three years. Since May, he has been the ministry coordinator of the Scottsdale-based group.

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"We're an all volunteer group, hosted by St. Patrick's Catholic Community. The events and services we offer are available to the greater community. There are no fees or donations. We're open to everyone," he said.

Ingallinera said the group teaches members how to be comfortable talking about their job situation to others, and it coaches them what to say.

"Networking is really about sharing information. It's not about asking someone to get you a job. Very few people are in a position to do that," he said. "Networking is series of small conversations to help people understand what you're looking for. Eventually you'll be matched up with someone who says, 'Tell me more.'"

Networking is about discovering companies that exist and what others like and know about those companies.

"Most people make the mistake of treating networking as a job interview and jump into sharing their abilities. What you need to do is share with people what you're interested in. Tell people what you're looking for so they can match you up. One of the most uncomfortable things a person can do to a stranger or colleague is acting like you're in a job interview and they have to say, 'I can't help you,'" Ingallinera said.

One main goal of the group is to help members learn how to find their target companies. These companies are the job seeker's ideal size, in the right location, in the industry they want to work in and may share the same values.

The group teaches that there are five areas a job seeker needs to share when networking. They are:

- The type of role you're looking for;

- The geography of your search;
- The size of the company you prefer;

And most importantly, the companies you're targeting.

"Through our events we try to help people develop a list of target companies and we try to teach them how to talk about their job search so they're comfortable talking to literally everybody they know.

George Fleming, a career coach for the past seven years, works with a number of networking groups around the Valley. He said the groups' No. 1 job is to get people comfortable with the process of networking.

"For a lot of them, its taking them outside of their comfort zone," he said.

He wants his clients to know that in networking, "You're not begging for a job. It's not as though your hand is out." Also, "You should never have to make a cold call. You should never have to call a total stranger. What it means is I meet someone because I have met you and you refer me to somebody else."

That's one of the goals of networking.

When searching through the advertisements for jobs, you should still be networking, Fleming said.

"If you're not networking, you're going to prolong your job search," he said. "Even if somebody finds a job through the wants ads, they should network into the organization anyway so they're not just one of the thousands of resumes that come in."

Maricopa Workforce Connections offers job clubs that also assist in networking.

For information on any of these networking groups, check out the Gilbert One Stop.

East Valley Networking Clubs

Monday

St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Faith Community, (480) 899-1990

Tuesday

Maricopa Workforce Connections Job Club, (480) 497-0350

Wednesday

St. Patrick's Employment Support Ministry – Connections Networking 7:00pm (every other week), (480) 998-3843

Thursday

Maricopa Workforce Connections Employer Seminar (2nd and 4th week), (480) 497-0350

St. Patrick's Employment Support Ministry – Speaker Event & Meeting 9:00am (every other week), (480) 998-3843

St. Patrick's Employment Support Ministry – Support Group Meeting 9:30am (every other week)
LDS Employment Resource Center (2nd and 4th week), (480) 829-8999

Saturday

Franciscan Renewal Center, Job Support Ministry, (480) 948-7460

Source: Maricopa Workforce Connections

Contact Michelle Reese by telephone at (480) 898-6500.