

CPA Ireland's Guide to Networking

This is the fourth in a series of articles by CPA Ireland aimed at providing you with a comprehensive guide to improving your job prospects, with advice on your CV, cover letters, networking skills and much more. Here, we discuss one of the most important aspects and often the most beneficial way of finding a job: networking.

Networking Your Way to Success

Nowadays, relying on finding a job on just searching through the newspapers and jobsites is no longer enough. Many jobs are filled by word of mouth or by contacts made through networking and the more contacts you make in the industry you want to work in, the more opportunities you will encounter.

- **List Your Existing Contacts**

Who do you socialise with, where do they work and who do they know. Consider all of the following: fellow students, ex work colleagues and employers, lecturers and college groups, sports memberships, friends, acquaintances, neighbours and old business contacts like clients and suppliers.

- **Identify Possible Networks**

Target industries and sectors you are interested in, search for upcoming events, conferences and seminars and join professional institutes where possible. Be prepared to really have to put yourself out there.

- **Use the Internet**

Social networking is becoming an integral part of our communications so it is important to use these to reach a wider audience. LinkedIn is a great way of showing off your professional portfolio and can be viewed as your online CV. Facebook and Twitter, while they are a more personal, informal method of communication, can also be used as your professional platform.

- **Face-to-Face**

Make an effort where possible to meet people in person rather than just talking over the phone or online: face-to-face contact has a much bigger impact.

- **Follow Up**

Follow up meeting someone with an email or a phone call, get connected on the relevant social networking sites and make sure if you promised them anything, such as information, that you deliver on it. Make sure to ask them first when would be a good time to get in contact, so whether it's a certain day, week or month, etc, you won't be disturbing them during a busy time.

- **Network with Names**

If you are attending an event where there is an opportunity to network, have a clear idea of who you want to speak to and what you want to achieve from the

conversation. Knowing the names and faces of the important people in the business will help, ensuring you have no identity mishaps and know who to talk to.

- **Keep in Touch**

Once you have a good professional network built up, it's important to stay in contact with all of them on a regular basis as people are more willing to help you if you have a relationship built up, not just when you need them.

- **Everyone's Equal**

Finally, recruitment agency, Robert Walters, advises that the key to good networking is to 'be open, prepared and courteous; treat everyone as equals and expect to give as much as you receive.' The CEO of a big company may be the most casually-dressed or youngest person in the room, so never judge a book by a cover and see everyone as a potential addition to your network.

CPA Ireland is one of the main Irish accountancy bodies, with more than 5,000 members and students in the island of Ireland. The CPA title is the most commonly used designation internationally for professional accountants and the Institute's qualification enjoys worldwide recognition. Its current membership operates in public practice, industry, financial services and the public sector and CPAs work in over 32 countries around the world.

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