

DO YOU KNOW PEOPLE IN YOUR NETWORK that can help you accomplish your career goals? If not, you might be missing out on helpful information. A Social Network Audit will help you determine if you are presently accessing information from your network in just seven steps. The process involves listing your career goals and mapping contacts within your network to them to determine if there are some pathways to information that you are not taking advantage of.

ARE YOU TAPPING INTO YOUR NETWORK?

By John-Paul Hatala, PhD

7 Steps to Conducting Your Own Social Network Audit

STEP 1: Identify and list your career goals. Now is the time to start thinking about what you want to do after graduation. One of the best ways to organize your goals is to label them (1) main goal and (2) sub goal. The following is an example of an individual looking for a job: >>

Name of goal: (1) Main Goal – Find a job
Description: Find a job in my field
Target date: February 15, 2007

Name of goal: (2) Sub Goal - Résumé
Description: Write a functional résumé
Target date: September 12, 2006

Name of goal: (2) Sub Goal – Information interviews
Description: Contact employers in my field for an informational interview
Target Date: October 22, 2006



Image provided courtesy of University of Toronto - Commerce Career Development Centre



I believe community service should be a job perk.

In researching my first job after university I'm looking for what's best for me. But I'm also looking for a company I respect. A company committed to giving back and changing people's lives for the better.

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Take a piece of paper and start listing your goals. For each main goal, list all the supporting goals - this will make the task of achieving goals more manageable.

STEP 2: Start thinking about those contacts that can help you. What are the different types of contacts that presently exist within your network? For example, list a family member, friend, work contact, school contact, or neighbour. Indicate whether you know the contact directly, or through someone else. It should look something like this:

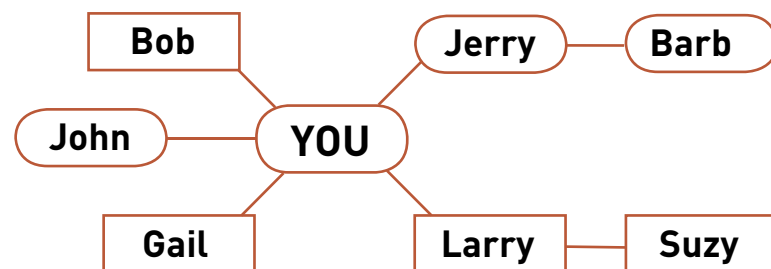
Name of goal: (1) Main Goal – Find a job	John Smith	directly
Description: Find a job in my field	Barbara Young	thru Jerry Ward
Target date: February 15, 2007	Jerry Ward	directly

In addition, indicate the frequency of contact you have with each individual. For example, if you see "John Smith" every day and "Barbara Young" every six months, it's possible that Barbara will share a lot of new information with you. It is also important to contact individuals within your network who you are not frequently in contact with in order to identify new information about career possibilities. Your piece of paper should now look like this:

Name of goal: (1) Main Goal–Find a job	John Smith	directly	every day
Description: Find a job in my field	Barbara Young	thru Jerry Ward	every six months
Target date: February 15, 2007	Jerry Ward	directly	every month

STEP 3: Make a list of all your other contacts that are not attached to a goal. Think of any agencies, service organizations, support groups, churches, or special interest groups that may help you.

STEP 4: Take another piece of paper and start mapping out your contacts. Simply put your name in the middle of the paper and draw a circle around it. Then draw a line and put another circle for each individual that you have attached to a goal. For those individuals in your network who are not attached to a goal, put a square around their name. If the individual is a contact of someone else, draw a line from his or her circle/square with the name attached to it. Your map should look something like this:



Are there any contacts that you are missing? Why are the contacts in squares not linked to any goals? Do you need to find out more information about them? Do you know the people they associate with? Start thinking of the people your contacts know and determine whether they can help you achieve any of your goals. When you have identified new contacts, go back to your goal list and add their names.

STEP 5: Identify contacts that can refer you to individuals that can help you reach your goals. Develop a plan on when and how you will contact these individuals.

STEP 6: Ask yourself the following questions:

- Are there as many contacts in my network as I thought?
- Are the majority of my contacts "strong ties" (like immediate family and close friends)?
- Do I know many people and do not contact them frequently?
These "weak ties" typically provide you with new information.
- How many contacts in my network are directly linked to me?
These contacts can link you to other individuals in their organization.
- How many of my contacts are tied to an organization?
- How many times have I requested referrals from my contacts?
- How many contacts have referred me to another contact?

STEP 7: Continue growing your network. Do not worry about linking contacts to goals right away, as this will come with time. The goal is to know your network and identify the type of information your contacts can potentially provide.

Congratulations! You have just completed your Social Network Audit. Interested in conducting your version online? <http://www.socialnetworkaudit.com>. **Start tapping into your network today!**

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