

WEST VALLEY
THE SUN
San Bernardino County's Newspaper

1 ★ The Sun — San Bernardino County

BUSINESS

Sunday, July 29, 2001

With downsizing, it's time to upsize networking

There is an art to networking. With the downsizing in our economy, it is important to brush up your networking skills.

Most jobs, about 60 to 80 percent, are found through personal efforts such as networking. According to a recent survey, most people will change jobs eight to 10 times and will change careers three to four times. For example, a friend had a 20-year military career. After service, he began his career in the human-resources field for about five years. Then when that job was eliminated, he is now teaching at a university.

It is important to keep your networking group active at all times. For instance, you should

belong to some professional associations as well as community organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club and Toastmasters. If you have not been active with any organizations, here are some tips.

Usually in the local newspapers, there is a weekly business section that outlines various clubs and associations such as the Rotary and Kiwanis that always are looking for new members. Attend these meetings and collect business cards. Be prepared to give business cards also. If you are a job seeker and do not have business cards, you can make some through your computer with cardstock paper that you can purchase. I've seen busi-



ness cards that look like a condensed resume. When you are in career transition, always carry a stack of resumes in your car. You may never know whom you might bump into in the grocery store or at a bank. Walk back to the car and give them your resume.

Whenever I meet a business professional and exchange business cards, I try to put the date I

met this person along with the occasion. Then I file these cards in a plastic three-hole punched holder and organize them in a binder. When you meet someone that you really want to get to know further, follow up and set up a breakfast or lunch meeting.

One important rule in networking for job prospect is: Never directly ask for a job! If you are going to call someone that you haven't spoken with in a long time, say something like this: "Hi, Jim, this is Harry Smith. Remember that we used to work together at XYZ Company two years ago? I know it's been awhile since we've spoken. Due to a company reorganiza-

tion, my position has been eliminated. So I'm in transition. I'm going to be in your area next week and I'd like to stop by and say hello. I just had my resume redone and I'd like your opinion on that. Please call me back at (800) 555-0000."

Job seekers: Be prepared to spend 60 percent to 80 percent of your job search time networking — and good luck on your job search.

Marie Hayashi Reichel is a management consultant and author. She is the managing director of ABP Associated in Upland. This column appears occasionally. Send questions to Corporate Perspective, Business Section, The Sun, 399 N. D St., San Bernardino 92401.