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## Advice includes: Build a contact base, volunteer and be social

*By Jenny Munro  
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It took meeting a chain of six different people, but Steve Schultz attributes his present position as president and chief executive of a start-up knowledge-based company to that networking.

He's not alone.

About 85 percent of all jobs are filled through networking, said Myles Golden, president of Golden Career Strategies Inc. Between 40 percent and 50 percent of those jobs were created after an employer identified someone he wanted in his company.

Even in an economy like today's where jobs are tight, "there's always jobs. There's always attrition," he said.

Golden said he suggests that his clients join a Rotary Club or other civic organization, a Chamber of Commerce, the Commerce Club or other organizations. His recommendation is five or six networking events or 15 to 20 personal contacts weekly while job hunting.

"I wish I would have done it better through my whole career," said Schultz, who had worked at Sealed Air-Cryovac as head of a division.

Simply put, networking is developing a broad base of contacts, he said. It gives a person a broader understanding of the community, the industry or the company in which they're interested.

"It's about helping people and letting them help you," he said. "People actually network all the time."

"There's a big misconception about networking," Golden said. "It's not hitting on someone. It's a value transaction."

In Schultz's case, he eventually met an inventor who needed a businessman to run his company.

"We were able to meet each other and meet each other's needs," he said.

The inventor was unable to get money from SCLaunch for his startup company -- without a businessman running the company. Schultz needed a job.

Anaxtal Silicon, an early-stage startup, is the result. The idea behind the company is to manufacture solar-grade silicon for use in solar photovoltaic cells, the building blocks of solar panels.

"It's a growing industry," he said, and the company faces all the difficulties and opportunities of any startup company.

Schultz's recommendation to anyone is to network.

"It works from the bottom to the top," from jobs on a factory floor to jobs like he found, he said. "Jobs like I was looking for often are not advertised. Although it works at every level, it's essential at the top."

He admitted, however, that networking is not something most people want to do.

In fact, "networking is something that most people try to avoid. I tried to avoid it," he said.

And that brings up Golden's first rule of networking: "Do it."

He suggested that people start building a group of people they respect and let that be their core network. These are the people most likely to know the networker's skills and talents. This core will introduce the networker to others, and it builds from there.

But don't ignore anyone, he said.

"It's amazing what people have locked in their brains. To rule out someone, I think, is an error," he said.

Golden Career Strategies also helps people figure out how to network. Volunteering is a great way to build a network base. People see you working there. The networker is giving something back.

When talking to a contact, "you don't want to push or rush them," he said. "Desperation will kill you every time."

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