TRANSITION SKILLS

LESSON 12-18 ▲ PERSONAL NETWORKING

**LEARNING GOALS/OUTCOMES**

* Explain why a person’s network is often regarded as their most valuable professional asset.
* Identify future circumstances where personal networks may help in the achievement of goals.
* List the advantages of maintaining a record of personal contacts.
* List the types of information stored in a typical contact sheet.
* Begin to develop a personal contact list.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

* **Student Handouts:**
* Network Contact List
* Journal Page

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

1. **Students identify types of network contacts.** Write, “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know,” on the board. Tell students that this statement is usually said in a sarcastic tone. However, it speaks to an important truth. Ask students what that is. Encourage students to recognize that the most common way that people find work and other opportunities is through personal networks. Rather than complain, tell students they are wise to establish good relationships with a wide range of people.

Ask for a show of hands: how many students have asked someone for a recommendation for a post-secondary program or for a job? From among those who have asked for a recommendation, ask them to list the types of people they asked. Students may say that they asked a teacher, an employer, a volunteer coordinator, a school counselor, or another significant adult. Note their answers on the board.

Based on this list of the types of people students have called on in the past, ask each student to list the names three to five significant adults that they either have or could ask for a recommendation. Have students write those names on a piece of paper.

1. **Students** **explain why a person’s network is often regarded as their most valuable professional asset.** Divide students into groups of three or four. Ask them to imagine that they have moved to a new country where they don’t know anyone. There is no communication by phone, Internet, or mail, so they have no ability to contact anyone they have known. How would they find a job? Ask the groups to brainstorm a list of all the things that would be difficult if they didn’t know anyone. (Students might note that it could be difficult to find a place to live, to find a job, to develop a social life.) Ask the groups to brainstorm a list of all the positive things that knowing someone, that is, having a network, can do for them. Ask for volunteers to share their ideas on the benefits of a network and create a list on the board.
2. **Students identify future circumstances where personal networks may help in the achievement of goals and list the advantages of maintaining a record of personal contacts.** Tell students the story of James, a student who was bullied in high school by another student named Ian. James left high school to work at a local business. Fifteen years later, James was the CEO of the business. While he was reading through the resumes of people applying for a sales job, guess whose resume was in the pile? Ian had applied for a job at the business. James noticed that Ian had a pretty good resume, so he invited him in for an interview. When Ian entered the room, he recognized James and was very friendly, telling James how much weight he had lost since high school. When asked by his wife how the interview went, James said that Ian was actually a very good candidate for the job. When asked if he was going to hire Ian, James smiled and said, “What do you think?” Sometimes that old saying is true: what goes around, comes around.

Tell students that Ian failed to recognize the importance of building personal networks. As a result, he missed an opportunity he might otherwise have won. Encourage people to appreciate the value of building good relationships with all the people you meet.

Ask students in their groups to list all the possible situations where a personal network could be helpful. James’ story gives them the first one: assistance in finding a job. There are many other ways that networks can help. Give students a few minutes to list as many as they can. Encourage them to recognize less obvious ones like assistance in finding a place to live, support with a personal loss, help in meeting new people in a new city, advice on world travel, assistance in hiring someone, or investors in an idea for development.

After reviewing the many ideas from the various groups, ask groups to identify the five most important reasons for a person to have a diverse and wide network. Advise students to select from the various choices covered in the review. Ask a spokesperson from each group to name one of their top reasons.

1. **Students begin to develop a contact list.** Ask students if they think their current contacts (that is, their present-day adult supporters and school contacts) are diverse enough to help them over the next several years. If not, what can they do to expand their contact list from high school and/or in their first year after high school?

Remind students that to keep their networks active after graduation they will need to know how to contact those people. That can be complicated if they move away to go to college or to join the military. Obviously, they may keep in touch with people virtually, through Facebook, for instance. But, for more formal assistance, such as for job or scholarship applications, they will need a way to reach their contacts in the real world. Ask students to list the types of contact information they might want and write their answers on the board. Tell them that now, before graduation, is the time to make sure they have good contact information for the people on their network. Distribute the *Network Contact List* and ask each student to identify at least six people in their network and start to compile contact information for those people.

1. **Students write a thank you to one person in their network who has helped them this year.** During senior year, as students make their plans for post-secondary, their networks play a particularly large role. Ask students to use their Journal Page to answer the following questions:

* Who is one person who has helped me this year?
* What would I write to thank that person?

Encourage students to copy this letter and deliver it to the person as a thank you.

**STUDENT PRODUCTS**

* **Completed *Network Contact List***
* **Completed *Journal Page***
* **Draft of a Thank You letter to one person in their network**

TRANSITION SKILLS

LESSON 12-18 STUDENT HANDOUT

NETWORK CONTACT LIST

Six months from now, how will you reach the significant people in your network? Before you leave high school, complete the following for at least six contacts.

**NAME:**

Title:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

**NAME:**

Title:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

**NAME:**

Title:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

**NAME:**

Title:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

**NAME:**

Title:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

**NAME:**

Title:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

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LESSON 12-18 STUDENT HANDOUT

JOURNAL PAGE

**DATE:**

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***Q1:*** Who is one person who has helped me this year?

***Q2:*** What would I write to thank that person?

***Answers:***