

## **Graduate Opportunities Videos** **Andy Lopata – Successful Networking**

**Andy Lopata:** Hi I'm Andy Lopata, I'm an author and business networking strategist. 70 or 80% of job vacancies are filled by recommendation or referral. The wider and more diverse your network, the more likely it is that you can find the right connections to get the job that you want. But in order to make the most of that opportunity I suggest you build your network, with a wide range of people with diverse backgrounds who can spread the net, so that you can get the connections that you really need. It's also important to reach out to your personal networks. After all, surely your family and your friends are the people that want to help you the most. One of the best ways to reach out to people, particularly your more extended family and friends, are online networks – the social networks like Facebook, or the more business focussed networks like LinkedIn.

**Voxpop:** Networking is something that students are learning to do quite informally, whether it's through groups, organisations with the university, part time jobs or volunteer work. You're constantly meeting new people and building up a database of contacts that you have and I think that's something most students bear in mind.

**Andy:** Networking is about relationship building. Let's say for example you go to a networking event, and you meet someone there who is ideal for you, your dream employer – get chatting to them, make an impression on them, make a positive impression. There is no harm in saying to them at that time “I would really be interested in working for your company, would it be possible to come and see you and get some advice?”

**Charlotte (case study):** My dad was talking to someone that he works with about my situation and that I wanted to get into PR but wasn't having much luck with it. And then just purely this guy said “oh my wife works in PR and I'll get her to get in contact” so I sent her my CV and then I got word back from a couple of PR companies and then I contacted them for work experience placements and it just sort of spiralled from there really.

**Andy:** Once someone's helped you with a connection whether it be your initial contact or the person they've connected you to, or further along the line, always keep those people fully abreast of how you're doing, of what your progress has been. Your next job may be your first but it almost certainly won't be your last. Stay in touch with the people you meet there, and stay in touch with the people who help you along the way. Some of them will be incredibly valuable to you as mentors.

Your networking doesn't finish when you've got your placement, the network that you build will stand you in stead over the years to come. You need to be staying in touch with everyone that you connect with, both personally and through work as you build a network going forward. In famous lines the poet John Donne said “no man is an island” and the truth is that we can't achieve everything we want to do on our own. Ask the people around you how important other people were in their success. You need the support of others to achieve your goals in your career, you need to start now. Build a strong network, build a diverse network, communicate well with that network and you'll find that you'll achieve so much more. And you'll find the job that you're looking for.