

The 20-Minute Networking Meeting: Professional Edition: Learn to Network. Get a Job.

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The 20-Minute Networking Meeting should prove extraordinarily beneficial to job seekers at any level.

In *The 20-Minute Networking Meeting* by Nathan Perez and Marcia Ballinger, two executive search firm professionals reveal an invaluable five-step process for successful networking.

Most job seekers recognize that creating a solid résumé and performing well at an interview are essential elements for securing a position. But finding the right position in the first place is a challenge because of the “hidden” job market—“job openings that are not advertised or publicly announced.” This is where networking becomes so important, but according to the authors, “the vast majority of networking meetings are near-complete failures.”

Thankfully, Perez and Ballinger offer a well-structured, elegantly simple yet comprehensive five-step process to vastly reduce the chance of failure at networking. Before they even walk through the steps, though, the authors provide useful commentary on the importance of networking, common networking myths, and why networking is difficult for most people. This material is not just helpful, it demonstrates a compassionate understanding of the anxiety networking causes most people, and it will likely assuage many fears. The authors also explain the rationale (and support it with informal research) for restricting networking meetings to just twenty minutes.

The process itself breaks the networking experience into five specific steps, each of which (except for the final step) is assigned a specific time in minutes. Every one of the first four steps is described in a fair amount of detail, using actual examples where appropriate. Step five (“Great Follow-Up”) addresses how to follow up after a networking meeting. This last step should be just as useful in a nonnetworking business situation, for it very clearly lays out some excellent follow-up tactics, again with actual examples. The authors then use an ingenious way to summarize the five steps: they include a full example, part script and part description, of an actual twenty-minute networking meeting, with reactions at the end from the two participants.

The book’s appendix contains several worthwhile additions, such as a networking “readiness exercise,” a checklist to help one make a “great first impression,” a tracking sheet for following up, and a list of ideas for things the networker can give away as a thank-you.

The “Professional Edition” of *The 20-Minute Networking Meeting* contains insights garnered from career experts and other business professionals. Other editions include the “Graduate Edition” and the “Executive Edition.”

The writing is consistently lucid; the text is presented in a professional yet informal manner, so the book is quite easy to read.

The counsel the authors provide could be surprising to some who may be skeptical of networking in general or will scoff at the notion of a twenty-minute meeting. However, it is obvious from the credentials of the authors that they are highly qualified authorities whose advice should be taken seriously. *The 20-Minute Networking Meeting* should prove

extraordinarily beneficial to job seekers at any level.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (February 1, 2017)

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