

MAKING USE OF CONTACTS

A questionnaire designed to help you think about how you use contacts in everyday life

You are presented with three situations below where you will have been required to make a decision and take some action. To what extent did you use other people to help you make the decision and take the appropriate action? Think carefully about how you acted in each situation then select the appropriate statement and list the people who helped you.

SITUATION 1: Choosing, and applying for, my course at university

Tick the box* next to the statement which most appropriately describes how you chose your course and went about obtaining your place:

1. I made the decision entirely on my own and made the application without any help. *
2. I got a small amount of help from others in making the decision and/or with the application. *
3. I was helped a fair amount by others in making the decision and/or application. *
4. I got a lot of help from others in making the decision and/or the application. *
5. Someone else made the decision for me and completed the application form. *

If you ticked statement 2, 3, 4 or 5, circle those people, in the box below, who helped you or gave you advice and add any others that are not included in this list:

Parent, teacher, careers adviser, friend, relation, neighbour, ex-student of my college/school

Others: _____

SITUATION 2: Making my biggest ever purchase (e.g. car, computer, expensive holiday etc.)

Tick the box* next to the statement which most appropriately describes how you researched your options, decided what to buy, negotiated the deal and made the payment:

1. I researched, chose and purchased this item without any help at all from other people. *
2. I got a small amount of advice from others in deciding which item to buy. *
3. I got a fair amount of advice and help in deciding what to buy and/or making the purchase. *
4. I got a lot of advice and help from others in deciding what to buy and/or making the purchase. *
5. Someone else decided what I would buy and made the purchase for me. *

If you ticked statement 2, 3, 4 or 5, circle those people, in the box below, who helped you or gave you advice and add any others that are not included in this list:

parent, friend, relation, neighbour, fellow student, sales person/agent, expert (e.g. TV/magazine)

Others: _____

SITUATION 3: Obtaining my sandwich placement or my last vacation/part-time job

Tick the box* next to the statement which most appropriately describes how you found out about and successfully applied for this job:

1. I found out about and obtained this job without any help at all from other people. *
2. I got a little help from others in finding the vacancy and/or in applying & preparing for interview. *
3. I got a fair amount of help in finding the vacancy and/or in applying & preparing for interview. *
4. I got a lot of help from others in finding the vacancy and/or in applying & preparing for interview. *
5. Someone else got the job for me – little effort was required on my part. *

If you ticked statement 2, 3, 4 or 5, circle those people, in the box below, who helped you or gave you advice and add any others that are not included in this list:

Work placement officer, lecturer, careers adviser, parent, friend, relation, fellow student

Others: _____

SUMMARISE YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES TO THESE THREE SITUATIONS

Add together the numbers of the three statements that you ticked and record the total here
(i.e if you ticked statement 3 for situation 1, statement 4 for situation 2 & statement 2 for situation 3 your total is 9)

If your score totals 6 or less: you may not have used contacts, in these situations, as much as you could have done.
If your score totals between 7 & 12: you made considerable use contacts, in making these decisions & taking action.
If your score totals 13 or more: you may have been too dependant on others, in at least one of these situations.

Good networkers use advice and help from others to make their own decisions, then take appropriate action.

HOW DO WE MAKE BEST USE OF CONTACTS?

Either individually or in a group, ask yourself the following questions about the way you used contacts in the above situations.

- A. How easy was it to get appropriate advice and help? What factors affected how easy it was?
- B. How did the advice and help you received from others affect the decisions you made and the actions you took?
- C. Who were the most useful contacts in each situation? Why were they the most useful?
- D. Did advice you were offered sometimes conflict with that given by others? How did you choose the advice to follow?
- E. How important is it for the advice to be impartial? (e.g. when making your purchase, could you trust sales advisers?)
- F. In what other situations could advice and help from contacts be really helpful?

SELF ASSESSMENT & FURTHER HELP

Reflecting on this questionnaire, and other evidence, how good do you think you are at using contacts?
(*circle as appropriate):

* very poor quite weak reasonable good very good

Whatever your response to this question you will be able to benefit from further help with this skill –

- The better you are at networking the more likely you are to make the right choices and be effective in your actions.
- The Career Development Centre has further handouts and videos to help you.