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When searching for a job in recent months, Mark Richards '85 quickly put the transitive equation to the test:

A. I need to know as much as I can about what jobs are available, and what's the best way to land the job I want.

B. While not everyone I meet can help me directly, I am meeting a lot of talented people.

C. I can help others looking for a job by organizing all the information I've been gathering about companies, careers, résumé writing, interviewing skills and other job search tips.

It all follows very logically that:

A. Richards created candidateschair.com, a job search Web site so impressive that *The Wall Street Journal* interviewed him, and so thorough that the U.S. Department of Labor directs job hunters there. (Talk about information!)

B. The founder of a start-up company browsing candidateschair.com emailed Richards with a nice congratulatory note about the value of his Web page as a resource. A quick exchange over the Internet led to a face-to-face meeting, interview and Richards's new position as CFO with Maximum Communications. (What you know—accounting and business management in this case—is important, too.)

C. Richards and other alumni volun-



Adam Konezewski

(Center) David Rom '91, president and owner of Platinum Bank, with Tom Hickey '10 (L) and Kellen Blaser '10 at the CSB/SJU Career Expo reception for students and alumni in November.

teers eagerly share job-search tips with alumni from Saint John's University and the College of Saint Benedict in an ongoing series of job-search seminars launched a year ago in the Twin Cities. (Pass that power on!)

All this adds up to one simple but powerful tool: Networking. For Saint John's, it's a given.

"There is a powerful network waiting for each of us to tap into," Josh Otto '01, a member of the SJU Alumni Association Board of Directors told SJU and CSB students at a career expo in late 2008. "I can tell you this from personal experience as I've leveraged our alum network to find my first job out of college as well as my current consulting job" with Organizational Concepts International.

"There are a number of Minnesota private colleges whose alumni connections

are strong," says Tim McNamara '77. "St. Olaf is one of them, as well as St. Thomas. But it is my experience that the Johnnie connection is stronger than any other."

McNamara helped Brady Markell '04 find a job with him at AgStar Financial Services. "I didn't know Brady from Adam," McNamara recalls, "but after getting an email about him from the alumni office and reading his résumé, I had no reservations about recommending him for an interview.

"That is the power of the Johnnie connection. If the alumni office or another Johnnie asks, 'Can you help this guy?' that's all I need to hear," continues McNamara.

"All I did was get Brady 'in line,'" he notes, "maybe not even at the front of the line. Once he got in the door, Brady did the rest. He certainly won the job on his

edge
is

Power

THE JOHNNIE NETWORK

By Thom Woodward '70

The transitive property of math is pretty simple:

If A equals B, and B equals C, then A equals C.

That holds true with the following:

A. Information is power.

B. It's not just what you know, it's also whom you know.

C. Power to the people.

own merits and qualifications, but having someone who championed his name to human resources made a big difference.

"I know he'll return the favor to another Johnnie when given the opportunity," McNamara concludes.

"The CSB/SJU network is so powerful," Richards, the networking guru, remarks. "Johnnies and Bennies have a vested interest in helping students and alums. I don't see that kind of connection in other networking groups."

Richards sees networking as a three-legged stool. Who do you know? Who knows you? Who should you help?

You Know Whom?

It's exponential—from the faculty resident to the handful of Johnnies who

studied together for final exams to the dozen intramural teammates to the 300-500 men in the entering first-year class to the 1,200-1,800-member SJU student body to the 24,000 alumni—and this doesn't include the gazillion folks they are connected with through LinkedIn. Or the Bennies.

Matthew Morrison '98 and Jhon Manning '92 know Fr. Don Talafous, OSB, alumni chaplain. Fr. Don knows John Chromy '64, vice president for external relations for CHF International, a development and humanitarian aid organization.

"The two Johnnies we have hired," Chromy says, "came to my attention via Fr. Don, an old and trusted Saint John's friend. Both Matt and Jhon had kept in touch with Don during and after their

Peace Corps service. Each had expressed an interest in continuing his career in the field of international development work, so Don referred them to me by forwarding their résumés.

"I called Matt and Jhon and interviewed them by telephone, then guided them to the CHF International Web site and provided them with insights into the kind of skills, experience and commitment being sought. Matt and Jhon in turn formally applied for specific positions," Chromy continues.

"I provided my interview notes to our HR department along with the recommendations from Fr. Don. This in turn caused our HR staff to pull their résumés out of the many CHF receives, conduct telephone interviews and eventually



Cary Musech '80

invite them to our Washington D.C. offices for face-to-face interviews," Chromy recalls.

"In each case Matt and Jhon then sold CHF staff on hiring them by their calm confident

manner, their international experience as Peace Corps volunteers, their knowledge of the country in which they had served and their commitment to international work. Matt worked for CHF for about six years in Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, and Jhon Manning has been on our headquarters staff for about eight years and has done short term stints in numerous countries," Chromy says.

Doug Imholte '87 knows classmate Tim Gallagher at RJF Agencies, a risk management, commercial insurance and employee benefits firm in the Twin Cities founded by two other Johnnies. "I was in the process of selling my business 18 months ago," Imholte says, "and looking at moving back into a strategic sales position. Tim Gallagher mentioned I should connect with Tim Fleming '82, RJF president. As a valued member of the organization, Tim's referral was helpful. He even happened to 'pop in' to Tim Fleming's office during our first interview."

"There was a great connection with Tim Fleming," Imholte says. "They were looking to expand their sales force with experienced individuals who had the shared values of RJF, values that mirror the Saint John's Benedictine values we learn as students. I started with RJF in September

of '08 as a sales executive and couldn't be happier."

Tom Steinke '88 knows the CSB/SJU chemistry department and the caliber of its graduates. He emailed the alumni relations office with information on job openings at Johnson Screens last summer. His message—along with his contact information—was forwarded to recent alumni chemistry majors and to faculty.

Then there's this twist on the theme. Brian Kueppers '89 and Pat Maurer '89 knew each other from their freshman floor on 2nd Tommy and as students in the management program at Saint John's. It was Cary Musech '80 who helped bring them together in a business venture just two years ago.

Musech heads Tonka Bay Equity Partners in the Twin Cities. His firm invested in Apex Print Technologies in St. Paul, a firm founded by Kueppers. Looking to grow the company further, Kueppers knew he needed help from someone with strong operating experience and a technology background. He suggested to Musech that Maurer could fill that role, but Musech had reservations about hiring a college buddy.

After Musech interviewed Maurer, he saw a perfect fit and these three Johnnies created a new bond. Today, Apex is growing and prospering with Maurer as president and Kueppers as CEO.

Saint John's "Universally"

With Johnnies living and working around the globe, Saint John's University Alumni Association might be called Saint John's Universally. It doesn't take Interpol, however, to track an alumnus down. Alumni Office staff point to several avenues to find a friend or extend a network.

JohnniesConnect is the online alumni database. Once registered with a user name and ID number, SJU and CSB alumni may be found through a simple search on name or class year. The "search for alumni" link leads to "advanced search" which provides alumni lists by town or major or occupation.

To make JohnniesConnect most effective, Michael Halverson '01, institutional advancement director of operations, asks all alumni to register in the CSB/SJU exclusive database and to keep their pertinent contact information updated.

JohnniesConnect may be found at alumniconnections.com/olc/pub/SJNU/. An ID number is available through the Web page or by calling 800-635-7303.

For social networking, the SJU Alumni Association recommends Facebook. LinkedIn provides various outlets for business connections including the official SJU Alumni Association group with the "MN" designation, a CSB/SJU group started by an alumnus and subsets like the SJU football alumni group. The official site, Halverson explains, "gives us the vehicle to post Alumni Association and Alumni Office announcements while the other sites allow alumni to post their own notices.

"Johnnies are always encouraged to sign up for the Alumni Association LinkedIn group, and many alumni sign up for multiple groups so they can be in constant contact with classmates and friends."

Additional information is available at sjualum.com or by calling Halverson at 800-635-7303.

Who Knows You?

As McNamara indicates, he didn't know Brady Markell. But Markell made himself known through the alumni office. Peter Hoxmeier '09 is getting known through the job search series in the Twin Cities.

"Since graduating from Saint John's, I have been using the Johnnie network to find job leads, Hoxmeier says." The Alumni Association has helped me get contact information for other Johnnies in the work force.

"It has been my dream job to work for Polaris Industries" Hoxmeier continues. "During a job search seminar I mentioned this to Thom Woodward '70 in the alumni office, who was able to give me contact information for Mike Dougherty '89, a Johnnie at Polaris. I called him and set up an informational interview.

“During the interview I was introduced to two other great Johnnies, Ben Hooley ’04 and Sean Bagan ’98 and a Bennie, Jodi Jostock ’00, who all work together at Polaris. I learned how they came to work for Polaris and what they love about their jobs. I asked them how I could get my foot in the door at Polaris and what they look for in new candidates. This ended up being one of the best interviews I have had, and I left smiling.

“The job market is rough,” Hoxmeier allows, “but the Johnnie network is a lifeline. Even if I do not get a job with Polaris, I am building connections that will help me in my future.”

Other easy ways to get known by SJU and CSB alumni are to attend events (Hoxmeier was at the October SJU President’s Reception in Edina) and volunteer for Alumni Association programs such as class committees and regional chapter boards.

Helping Others

It’s another simple premise for Imholte: “I very much appreciate the Saint John’s community and like to network with as many Johnnies and Bennies as I can. These are extremely valuable connections, and I’m always searching for ways that I can give back through the alumni network.”

Richards and other presenters at the

ongoing job-search series are ready, willing and eager to help alumni, parents and the extended Saint John’s community.

Otto says, “I’ve experienced time and time again that alums truly want to go the extra mile for students to answer questions and help identify career interests and opportunities. Coming back to campus and talking with the students gets us fired up and reinvigorated in this community.”

He cites evidence from the 2008 Career Expo: at least 80 alumni took time off work in order to connect with current students there. “As alums of these great schools,” he said at the event, “we are here to invest in your futures and ours.”

John Guild ’68, a retired Target vice president, only needs to step back to his graduation to know students can use help from alumni.

“I remembered not having a strong sense of what options ‘are out there.’ Fortunately, Target and I found each other,” Guild says, “and I started working for them the day after I graduated. I ended up spending 33 fabulous years with the company, being part of Target’s explosive growth from 12 stores to about 1,200 when I retired nearly 10 years ago.

“It was those old memories of my senior year and the uncertainty that I felt that motivated me to find a way to help



Tim Fleming ’82 of RJF Agencies, sees Benedictine values as a strength in job applicants.

upper-class students make a better, more informed decision relative to their careers.”

During his final 10 years at Target, in the ’90s, Guild was in a position to assist the personnel department with recruiting efforts. “As a growth company,” he says, “Target continuously needed to add new talent, both in the stores organization and in our merchandising division at headquarters in Minneapolis.

“I knew Saint John’s, Saint Ben’s and Target could all benefit from a stronger partnership. I knew that the values of Target and CSB/SJU overlapped significantly. Honesty, integrity, hard work, teamwork, sense of service to others and the community were all values both organizations shared. All that needed to happen,” he says, “was getting the key players together...and then finding the strongest candidates.”

Guild senses the satisfaction other alumni feel when lending a helping hand. “A few years ago,” he says, “I was happy to learn that Target Corporation is the largest employer of CSB/SJU graduates, with 38 members coming from the Class of 2006 alone. That constitutes five percent of the graduating class.

“I was pleased.”

Thom Woodward ’70 is the alumni relations ambassador at Saint John’s.



John Chromy ’64, CHF International, on the job in Afghanistan. Chromy’s connection to Fr. Don Talafous, SJU alumni chaplain, led to several Johnnie hires.