



Networking Guide

What is Networking?

Networking is a process of cultivating and maintaining relationships. It can be formal or informal, and can take place at any time. It's talking to a professor, chatting with a family friend, or making conversation with someone on a plane. You've probably already participated in networking. **Networking is not** an annoyance. Do not feel like you are bothering, pestering, or using people. Most individuals love to talk about their careers and themselves.

Why Network?

Networking allows you to access the hidden job market. Statistics show that 80-90% of jobs are not posted online or in papers, but circulate through occupational and personal connections. In addition, networking allows you to receive information about different career fields, employers, and job titles as you explore different careers.

Who is in your Network?

- Family members
- Friends
- Friends of parents
- Parents of Friends
- Neighbors
- Members of orgs/clubs
- Faculty
- Classmates
- Teammates
- Roommates
- Supervisors
- Co-workers

Do's and Don'ts of Networking

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly pronounce your name, smile, and establish eye contact • When attending a function, make a goal to meet five new people in an hour • Ask for a business card and follow up, jot down notes about the person on the back • Take the initiative to approach others and introduce yourself • Take risks. The person next to you on a bus might be a fabulous contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect instant gratification • Start a conversation by talking about yourself • Sit exclusively with a friend at an event • Eat and talk • Use your phone in the middle of a conversation

Expand your Network

- Join a professional association in your field
- Attend local community events
- Connect on LinkedIn
- Job shadow
- Conduct informational interviews
- Alumni associations
- Classmates, connect with who *they* know
- Community clubs
- Reconnect with former employers and co-workers
- Meetup.com, free local hobby/interest groups you can join
- Hobby groups, e.g. hiking, yoga
- Members of sports clubs, e.g. health club, softball team
- Members of your church, temple, synagogue, mosque
- Trade shows, seminars, or workshops you've attended
- Political groups
- Service or fraternal organizations, e.g. Rotary, Kiwanis
- Volunteer associations, i.e. Big Brothers, Big Sisters
- Campus panels, fairs and events
- Industry conferences

Components of your Professional Image

Elevator Speech is an exceptionally useful and versatile tool in numerous situations:

- Events designed specifically for networking
- The casual networking opportunities we encounter nearly every day, plane flights, and waiting in line
- Career or job fairs
- Cold calls to employers
- Opportunities within your own company to talk with higher-up management, let them know you're doing a great job, and position yourself for promotion
- Job interviews where the elevator speech can provide the answer to at least two common interview questions: "Tell me about yourself" and "Why should I hire you?"
- Check out the Career Center website for elevator speech samples

Attire

Business attire is strongly recommended for attendance at job fairs, networking receptions, and interviews. Business casual attire is often appropriate for employer information sessions, panel discussions, and informational interviews.

LinkedIn

- Commonly referred to as the "professional Facebook," LinkedIn is a free professional networking site that allows you to connect with potential networking contacts, research companies, and join interest groups
- Employers frequently check candidate's online presence before granting them an interview: 85% of employers say positive online reputation influences hiring decisions.

Business Cards

A business card can be a convenient tool for both you and the newly-found contact. Keep it concise, easy to read, and professional. The design can reflect the culture of the field or industry you are exploring. You can make inexpensive cards on websites like VistaPrint.com.

Networking Events

Tips for attending

- Practice your elevator speech ahead of time!
- Express interest in the new people you meet. During the conversation, get to know the person first. Don't just focus on what you need, focus on the other person's goals and how you can help.
- Arrive early so you can mingle with people as they arrive.

Starting and ending conversations

"Cute shoes, where'd you get them," or "Did you catch the game yesterday?"

"Hi, I'm _____. Is this your first time at one of these events?"

"I really enjoyed learning about your work, can I get your contact info, to schedule a time for us to finish our conversation?"

"I'm going to get some food, it was great meeting you!"

Following up

An initial meeting with someone does not establish a connection unless there is a follow up. Stay in touch and not just when you need something. Developing *relationships*, not just contacts, should be part of your long-term career plan.

Maintain and Nurture Connections

- Thank everyone who has helped you
- Congratulate them on career accomplishments
- Invite them out to coffee or lunch
- Periodically follow up. Keep them updated
- Follow them on: LinkedIn/Twitter/Facebook
- Share relevant career industry articles you've read
- Check in just to say hello, and ask how they've been
- Send holiday/birthday greetings