

Networking



NETWORKING 101

1. What is networking?

- Developing relationships with working professionals in order to achieve career goals.
- An on-going process which continues as your circle of contacts grows.

2. What is NOT networking?

- Networking is NOT asking someone for a job.

3. Why should I network? Is it necessary?

- Networking is a powerful tool and it is one of the most effective ways to find jobs and internships nationwide.
- Networking can help you find your first job or internship, and many more opportunities in the future as well.
- Networking is a two-way street—being part of a network means assisting and informing others just as they do for you.

NETWORKING FACTS

- Networking is a crucial tool necessary to access unadvertised positions (termed the “hidden job market”)
- Nearly half of all job connections are made through networking

How Do I Network?

1) Who is in my network?

- Family, friends, neighbors
- Social groups such as student organizations or clubs
- Professors, staff members, advisors
- People you have met during internships and volunteer work
- Alumni networks

2) What should I tell my network about myself?

- Information about your experiences, achievements, why you are interested in a particular field.
- Remember, the people within your network may eventually recommend you to a colleague, or even hire you themselves.

3) What information can I request from members of my network?

- Ask about a field in general or about a particular organization.
- Ask if they know of other people with whom you could discuss industries or opportunities
- Ask how to strengthen your job qualifications.

How Do I Add New Contacts To My Network?

1) A traditional letter

- Establish a primary connection at an organization by sending your contact a letter and resume. State in your letter that you will be following up with a phone call so he/she is not caught off-guard.

2) A phone call or e-mail

- Introduce yourself to an organization and request a face-to-face meeting. Remember, you are only looking for advice and information (not asking for a job).

3) Social settings

- Receptions, parties, and conferences are prime examples of social situations where networking can lead to information and opportunities.

4) Using LinkedIn

- Create a free profile on LinkedIn, and then request to link to new contacts.

What Should I Say When I Make That First Phone Call?

If you have been referred by someone else:

"Hello, my name is ____ and I'm calling on the recommendation of _____. She told me at the _____ Conference that you would be able to give me some valuable information on the (your area of interest). At your convenience, may we schedule a time to talk?"

You do not know the person:

"Good morning. My name is _____ and I am a student at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. I got your name from ____ (state how—ex. news article, internet, job fair). Before I formally begin my job search, I am looking for advice on how to research the field and what you might do in my situation. At your convenience, may we schedule a time to talk?"

Tips for Networking in Social Situations and Making the Initial Phone Call

The First Phone Call

- Demonstrate a positive attitude.
- Pronounce the person's name correctly
- Don't be afraid to ask, "Would you be the best person to speak with regarding _____?"
- Communicate your referral, if you have one, to establish something in common immediately.
- Be direct and state clearly that you are asking for advice or information. (Remember you are not asking for a job.)
- Always ask if the individual has a moment to speak with you or if you should call back at a more convenient time.

Social Settings

- Approach strangers and introduce yourself with a smile and a handshake.
- Try to use an opening line based on the current social situation and try to end your opening line with a question.
- Don't take it personally if someone does not want to talk to you or becomes pre-occupied with something else.
- Make eye contact when talking to the person—it shows sincerity and interest
- Be careful about telling jokes. Do not tell any ethnic, sexual, gender, or political jokes.
- Wait for an appropriate opportunity or for the end of the conversation to ask for a business card.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

What Is Informational Interviewing?

- Information interviews are meetings you arrange with a contact in your career field of interest. Ideally, this contact holds a current or prior position in the field.
- Your contact person should have the most current and impart valuable information about the field in which you are interested.
- He/she can refer you to other professionals with a similar background.
- Your contact person may also give you advice on how to search for jobs.
- He/she may also discuss openings within their own organization.

Steps for Conducting an Informational Interview:

1. Identify the occupation or industry about which you would like to learn

Assess your own interests, abilities, values, and skills, and evaluate labor conditions and trends to identify the best fields to research. Career Services offers a number of assessment and interest tests that can assist you with this step.

2. Identify people to interview

Start with lists of people you already know—your personal network. Contact them by letter, phone, or email and then ask to schedule interviews at their convenience. Be patient if they do not get back to you right away. Remember they are doing you a favor.

3. Prepare for the interview

Research the field prior to the interview. Decide what information you would like to obtain about the occupation/industry and prepare a list of questions.

4. Conduct the interview

The interview typically last from 20-30 minutes

5. Thank your contact

6. Ask for a business card if one is not offered to you

7. Write or e-mail a thank-you note

Examples of Questions to Ask in an Informational Interview:

Background/Prior Experience:

- How did your career path lead you to your current position in this organization?
- Where have you worked before? Would you recommend that I contact any of these organizations? If I should, may I use your name as a referral?

Preparation:

- What kinds of prior experiences are absolutely essential? How did you prepare yourself for this field/position?
- What credentials, educational degrees, licenses, etc. are required for entry into this field?

Career Exploration:

- Can you describe a typical work day in your organization?
- What challenges have you encountered in this job?
- What do you feel is the most rewarding about the work itself?
- Are there any new trends in your profession/industry that will change the nature of the job or provide new opportunities?
- Can you describe the other occupations that can overlap with your position and your career field?

Internship/Job Inquiry:

- How do people find out about jobs within your company? Are they advertised in newspapers, by word-of-mouth, or by the Personnel Office/Human Resources Department?
- What departments within your organization tend to hire (interns/entry-level jobs) and how often?

Is there room for promotion?

- How much do wages or salaries vary in your work by employer, region, or industry?

Professional Advice:

- How well suited is my background for this type of work?
- What educational preparation would you recommend?
- What kinds of experiences, paid employment or otherwise, would you most strongly recommend?
- If you had to do it all over again as a college graduate, what would you do differently?
- Can you recommend any trade journals that would give me greater insight into issues/trends in the profession? What professional associations would you recommend as part of my job search and networking initiative?

How Do I Stay Connected With My Network?

- Keep a list of everyone with whom you've spoken and the information they provided you.
- Periodically inform the individuals in your network of the progress you have made in your job search-you never know when there will be a job opening!