



Networking and the Informational Interview:

Is interacting with other people to exchange information and developing contacts, especially to further one's career

Why network?

- "95% of people said that face-to-face meetings are a key factor in successfully building & maintaining long-term relationships." -Harvard Business Review
- **85% of jobs are never advertised publicly;** Most positions are either filled internally or using the existing network of the hiring managers/recruiters
- Networking is a method for tapping into the hidden job market

Networking Forms

Informal networking—Sharing with friends/ family/ colleagues/ classmates etc. that you are job searching

Formal networking—Job fairs or networking events, informational interviews, and connecting with industry/sector professionals

Online networking—the use of online networking forums (Facebook, Glassdoor, LinkedIn, or creating online profiles on websites— Charity Village)

Networking Do's

- Build relationships – start the conversation/ relationship and find ways to follow-up
- Be memorable – in a positive way
- Be interesting and interested – make sure you are actively listening, show interest in the other person, allow them to shine
- Make connections, find business connectors – work on finding professional connections
- Expand your network and your opportunities - don't just go and talk to the people you already know, branch out, introduce your connections to new people
- Gather information – listen and try to absorb as much as possible, learn from what your contacts are saying, make notes on every conversation
- Obtain job leads (job fairs)
- Have fun - don't forget to have fun, you'll have better conversations and make more meaningful connections if you're relaxed and having a bit of fun

2 things to start the connection

1. Help them grow their network by introducing them to someone who can help them (sometimes that person is you)
2. Send them something that you spoke about (either send a quick email/note or send them a resource, video link, etc., related to your conversation)

Networking Don'ts

- Make it all about you and what your contact can do for you
- Make it about bragging and listing all of your accomplishments
- Asking for a job

Tips for making a great first impression

- Learn to give a proper handshake
- Dress professionally and appropriately for the industry/sector
- Smile!
- Maintain proper body language
- Be positive and confident
- Follow-up with a thank you email within 2 days

FIRST IMPRESSIONS MAKE LASTING IMPRESSIONS

The 30 Second Pitch

The most important thing you can do to be prepared is to be clear on:

- What you have to offer
- What you want others to know about you

One way of doing this is by preparing a 30 second pitch or elevator pitch.

Your 30 second pitch should answer 4 questions:

1. *Who are you?*
2. *What is your expertise? (experience in field, proof of your talent)*
3. *Why are you here?*
4. *Why should the person you're speaking to care?*

Example:

My name is Lionel Laroche. I am a human resource consultant specializing in cultural diversity training. For the past 13 years, I have provided cross-cultural training and consulting to many public and private sector clients including regulatory bodies, professional associations and immigrant settlement agencies. I am best known for analyzing in-depth the challenges brought on by cultural differences and suggesting practical solutions. For example, I provided training for 700 managers for a company with high immigrant employee turnover and received a rating of 4.6 out of 5.

Source: *Multicultural Business Solutions*

Networking Checklist

1  Copies of your resume	2  Calling Cards	3  Professional Outfit
4  Pen and Notebook	5  Prepare questions in advance	6  A goal for the event
7  Comb, Breath Mints and Tissues	8  Keep Track: Who, What, Where, When Why	9  Positive Attitude

Still not into networking?

1. Volunteer – take up a cause that is related to your industry/sector
2. Invite someone to coffee – a low pressure way of having an informational interview
3. Work an event – offer to work registration at an event that industry professionals will be attending
4. Participate in an activity
5. Re-connect with old friends, colleagues and acquaintances

Easy Questions to Start Networking

- How did you get started in your current career?
- What do you like most about your job? What are the biggest challenges you face?
- Would you choose the same career path if you had to do it all over again?
- What brought you to this event?
- How do you feel about getting together next week for a coffee - it would be great to learn a bit more about your business and see if we can help each other?

The Informational Interview—what is it?

- Interviewing designed to produce information—What kind of information? The information you need to choose or refine a career path, learn how to break in and find out if you have what it takes to succeed
- An expanded form of chatting with your network contacts
- It's the process of spending time with one of your network contacts in a highly focused conversation that provides you with key information needed to launch or boost a career
- Great for students and career-changers to gain information before entering the field

Proof in Numbers

- One out of every 200 resumes (some studies put the number as high as 1,500 resumes) results in a job offer
- One out of every 12 informational interviews, however, results in a job offer

Who to ask for an interview?

- People you already know: friends, fellow students, present or former co-workers, supervisors, neighbors, etc.
- Professional organizations, organizational directories, and public speakers are also good resources
- You may also call an organization and ask for the name of the person by job title

There is no limit who you can and cannot try contacting. People like to help out with job information.

How do you ask for an interview?

By E-mail: Include an introductory letter, written much like a cover letter without the job pitch, is a great way to get your name out there.

Letter should include:

- A brief introduction about yourself and why you are writing to this individual
- A brief statement of your interests or experiences in the person's field, organization or location
- Why you would like to converse. Be straightforward; tell him/her you are asking for information and advice

The last paragraph of the letter should always include how and when you will contact this person again. Make sure to follow as you said and never expect the person to phone you.

Always proofread all correspondence and save copies!

By Telephone:

"Hello, my name is _____. I'm conducting career research in your field. I would like to meet and talk with you for about 30 minutes so that I can find out more about your field of expertise."

Prospective interviewees are generally more than willing to take 20-30 minutes to answer questions about their career and field.

What do you ask in an interview?

The interview could be spent finding answers to a dozen or so prepared questions focused on the interviewee's career and field. As the interview progresses, you may find additional questions will come up spontaneously based on what you need to know.

Pay careful attention to what's said by the person you interview. Ask questions when something isn't clear. People are often happy to discuss their positions and willing to provide you with a wealth of information.

Tips for Informational Interviews

- Do some research before the interview
- Arrive early and dressed professionally
- Bring your resume
- Always try to get referrals
- Be a good listener
- Always send a thank you letter or email