

Networking

One of the most effective job search strategies is networking. Networking is essentially utilizing and building relationships to expand upon career and social opportunities. It is essential to remember that networking is not asking for a job. It is about developing relationships with people in order to achieve career goals. It is an on-going process which continues as your circle of contacts grows. Experts estimate that between 70 - 80% of jobs are never publicly posted and are obtained through networking. "It's not what you know, it's who you know." While networking can be overwhelming and intimidating for some, you don't have to be a schmoozer to gain results. You can begin by talking with people individually about your skills, interests, and career goals, and then expand to meetings, informational interviews and networking functions. So how do you start? You may think your network is limited right now, but you probably have more contacts than you realize.

The first step is to create a list of networks that you already have—begin filling in the boxes below. Starting with these lists, you can begin to seek out people who are involved in areas about which you would like more information. You can call or email contacts to request a brief meeting or an informational interview to find out more about what they do. A guide to informational interviewing can be found in the Career Education Center (CEC) and on the website at www.up.edu/career.

Friends, relatives, neighbors

**Professors, major department staff,
school administrators**

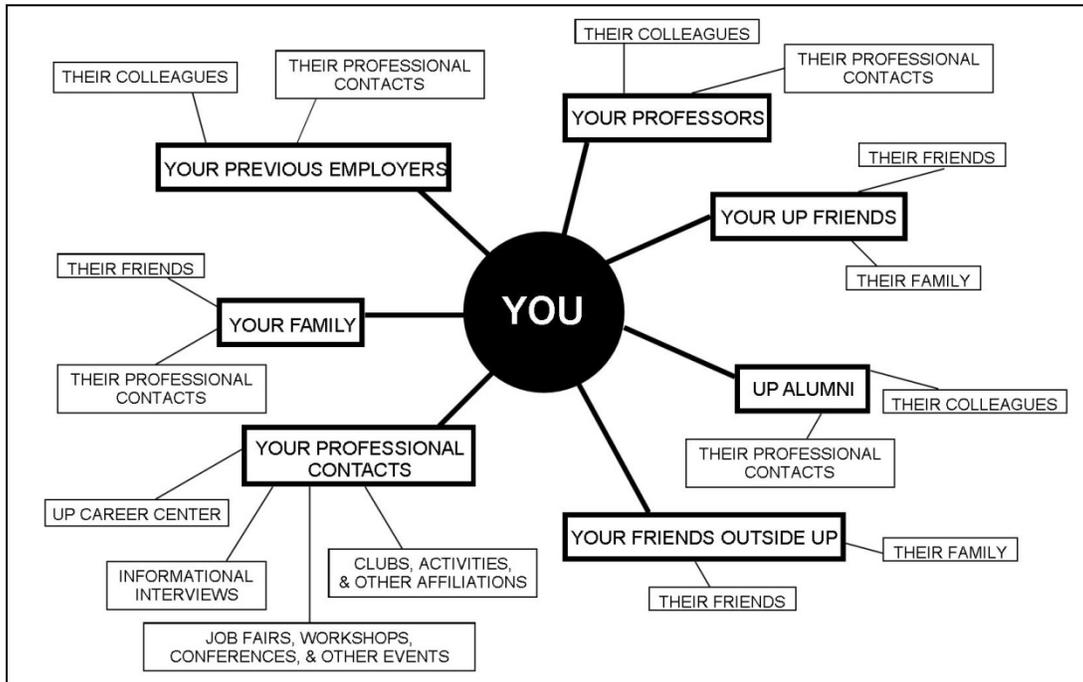
**Coworkers, customers, supervisors
(past & present)**

**Alumni, religious, professional
associations, student organizations**

**Community & political groups,
volunteer organizations**

**Personal business connections
(doctor, dentist, coach, hair stylist,
banker, CPA, etc.)**

The process of networking involves discovering and utilizing existing connections between people. Genuine networks often stem from friendships or business relationships. Below is a chart that illustrates how your network can help you to connect with innumerable contacts.



Where Can I Network?

In formal and informal settings, you will interact with and become known to people who can provide information about the world of work, possible careers, job or internship openings, personal contacts, and employers who are hiring. A few examples of places where networking can occur are: corporate functions, volunteer events, on a plane, in the classroom, and professional conferences. The CEC also maintains a list of professional associations and local organizations that sponsor opportunities to connect with professionals in your areas of interest. Please stop by to obtain a copy of this list and learn more about professional associations.

How Do I Prepare For a Formal Networking Event?

1. Prepare yourself mentally for the event so that you will be able to exude self confidence and enthusiasm.
2. Identify the goals you want to achieve at the networking event before you go (e.g., to learn more about a career, to develop internship leads, etc.)
3. Wear appropriate attire. When you go to a networking event you need to dress in business clothes. You don't need to wear a tuxedo or formal dress, but a suit and tie or a dress or pant suit is good. People will trust you more if you look professional.
4. Prepare business cards. Business cards are important because people won't have access to your name, number, and email address without them. Your business card is a sure fire way for people to remember you and should contain the following information: Name, email address, website (if applicable), phone number, degree/field of interest. Search online for free or cheap sources for printing business cards.
5. Prepare a 30 second introduction or elevator pitch to use when meeting people. This should include your name, that you are a current student/recent graduate/professional and some statement to make you memorable or interesting, or at least to break the ice, e.g., "Hi, my name is _____. I am currently a junior at the University of Portland, majoring in English, with a minor in Psychology. This past summer I did an internship with the Portland Tribune and I hope to expand my role with the campus newspaper this year. Ever since I can remember I have always had an interest in writing and I feel certain that this is something I want to do in my future career." Practice your speech so you can communicate it with confidence.



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How Do I Network at an Event?

Most people are not born minglers. Practice and preparation will help you develop the skills it takes to be effective at networking events or other serendipitous opportunities. As difficult or awkward as it may feel at first, the ability to meet and make a positive, professional impression on people will become ever more important as your career advances and develops. Here are some tips to get you started.

Ask questions!

Most people are flattered if you ask questions about what they do and how they got there, and if you ask for their opinions and advice. Remember that everyone knows people in their field, but also in other fields and often in other geographic locations, so many times people you already know can connect you to valuable contacts.

Talk about yourself and your goals!

The more you talk about your skills and interests, what you have done, what you would like to do and where you'd like to do it, the more likely people will begin to see links between themselves and you.

Plan for networking!

Anticipate when you will be in a position to network and plan what you want to ask, what you want to communicate about yourself and how. For example, you might plan to take resumes to a job fair, but it would be awkward to take resumes to a social or sporting event. If you want to build your network in a particular field or area, two of the most effective strategies for doing so are connecting with professional associations and informational interviewing. See the handout on Informational Interviewing for more information about this networking strategy.

Event Strategies

1. Arrive at the event on time. This will allow you to maximize the time available to meet new people.
2. Set a goal of meeting and gathering business cards from at least five people at each event.
3. If you are given a name tag to wear, place it on your right lapel. This way, it will be directly in a person's line of vision when you are shaking hands.
4. Be sure to give everyone you meet a firm handshake. If you are carrying a beverage, carry it in your left hand wrapped in a napkin so that your right hand will not feel cold and clammy when you offer a handshake.
5. If you arrive at an event alone, look for anyone who is not already engaged in a conversation, make eye contact, and then introduce yourself to that person, using your 30 second introduction. Ask each person you meet questions that will get them talking about themselves and listen for common areas of interest to discuss. Examples of topics to develop are the event you are attending (or the sponsoring organization), the person's business area, current cultural, sports or news events.
6. Try to remember the names of the people you meet. The best way to do this is by repeating a person's name two or three times as a natural part of your conversation.
7. Smile often, and convey genuine interest in the other person and in what is being said.
8. If you wish to enter a conversation that is already taking place, walk up to the group, make eye contact with those speaking, listen to what is being said, and then introduce yourself and ask an appropriate question when there is a break in the conversation.
9. When you are ready to exit a conversation, let the other person or persons know that you are happy to have met them, ask for their business card, and move on to the next conversation.

Sample Opening Lines

- Hello, my name is....
- How long have you been associated with this organization?
- How do you know the host/guest of honor?
- How long have you known the host/guest of honor?
- When did you graduate from UP?
- Have I missed anything (if you know you're a few minutes late)?

Following Up

- Write reminder notes on the back of business cards—where and when you met, topics discussed, business areas, etc.
- A key to networking is making yourself memorable. Writing thank you notes is a way to make you stand out because so few people do it. A thank you note can be as brief as three sentences: Describe the event (“It was a pleasure to speak with you at last week’s association luncheon”), Describe something that made the event unique (“I truly enjoyed discussing recent developments in online marketing with you”), State your next action step (“I will call next week to see if you might be available for lunch”).
- Follow through. If you tell a person you will call in a few days, do it.

Relationships that begin with the goal of providing information can develop into leads to actual positions. The key is to keep your network updated on your progress. Keep track of your communication with each contact.

Non-Stop Networking

Networking happens every day, whether in a formal setting or informal environment. For informal networking, employ the same strategies as formal networking but with a more casual approach. It is important to use the same follow-up strategies, including thank you notes. Networking does not end when you land a job, either. Successful professional relationships are built over time and it is very important to continue to expand your network.

Additional Resources

The resources below and many others are available in the Career Education Center:

- Key Career Networking Resources for Job-Seekers (<https://www.livecareer.com/quintessential/networking-resources>)
- Networking Tips; How to Work a Room (<https://career.berkeley.edu/Article/021011b.stm>)
- Networking Made Easy (<http://www.mcgeorge.edu/documents/cdo/handout9.pdf>)
- Networking & Mingling (<http://www.marquette.edu/csc/undergraduate/documents/Networking.pdf>)
- Networking 101 (<http://careers.cua.edu/res/docs/networking-handout.pdf>)
- Networking (<http://www.niu.edu/Careerservices/jobtools/handouts/Networking.pdf>)
- Never Eat Alone (Keith Ferrazzi)
- A Foot In the Door (Katharine Hansen)
- Masters of Networking (Ivan R. Misner & Don Morgan)
- The Savvy Networker (Ron & Caryl Krannich)