

# NETWORKING

Many have heard the term networking and thought, “This is only for the well-connected.” This is **NOT** true! **Networking does not require that you know lots of people - it only requires that you want to know more people than you do now. All you need is preparation, time, and a lot of effort.**

## Benefits of Networking

- Explores and clarifies your major or career choice
- Gives you advice about your job search
- Validates your choice of career
- Refines your interviewing skills
- Uncovers information about a specific employer or job

## Getting Started

Know yourself. To facilitate this self-assessment, consider your skills, interests, personality, and values. Take a few minutes to reflect on these areas or schedule an appointment with your Career Services Adviser for more advice.

## Determine your purpose.

If you are in the early stages and exploring majors or career directions, then your purpose is to gather information about jobs and careers of interest to you. If you are in the later stages and looking for full-time employment, then your purpose is to obtain advice on how to conduct your job search and to get job leads.

## Develop a list of potential contacts

Be creative! This list should include: classmates, parents and family members, parents of classmates or roommates, professors and other advisors, as well as current and former employers. Additionally, gain new contacts through guest speakers, career fair representatives, members of professional organizations, and web-based networks.

## 30-Second Personal Commercial

Networking happens in a variety of settings. There are formal settings, like information sessions or career fairs, and there are informal settings, like when you run into a recruiter on an elevator, or find yourself unexpectedly speaking to a potential career resource. How can you make a positive impression in a short amount of time? Prepare your own personal commercial! Having a planned response that highlights your experiences and strengths in a concise (30 second) blurb will help you portray yourself as confident, prepared, and memorable. If you forget a detail, it's OK. Just get down the major points you want to convey. In your commercial, you want to include the following: Your name, year in school at KSU, and the skills and experiences you have that connect you with that employer (for example: a related internship, leadership experience, or a class project).

## Example

You know that Children's Healthcare of Atlanta will be at the Career Fair. You decide to approach the recruiter to discuss research positions. You don't know much about the exact positions available, so you only describe your overall research qualifications. “Hi. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm a third-year Biology student at Kennesaw State University, and I'd like to find out about your summer internships in research. I've completed (and enjoyed) numerous science classes with labs, including biology and chemistry. Last summer, I volunteered with Emory University Clinic, so I am familiar with the hospital environment.”

**# 1 Networking Rule:** When contacting new resources, be sure to explain who you are, how you found them, and what you would like to discuss. Do not discuss job openings unless your referring source has specifically indicated that this is appropriate!



# INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

An Informational Interview is an opportunity to spend time with someone who is a professional in a career field of interest to you. It can help you build your network, tap into the hidden job market, and learn about a specific company. You must be prepared to ensure that you show respect for the time and energy put forth by the professional!

## *Setting the informational Interview*

### **1. Identify a professional to contact in a career field of interest to you**

- Talk to roommates, classmates, professors, family, neighbors, co-workers, professional organizations, and your Career Adviser to identify individuals of interest.
- Contrary to popular belief, most professionals are honored to talk with students about their experiences. Alumni are often eager to assist current students as well.

### **2. Research the professional and his or her organization/industry**

- Do your homework so that you can identify why you are contacting this person.
- Prepare a list of 8-12 questions to ask.

### **3. Contact the professional via phone** *(or in writing, if done well in advance)*

- Speak directly to the person. If that is not possible, explain to a secretary why you need to speak with this person, and ask what the best procedure would be to contact him/her.
- Have a written telephone script ready so that you can explain why you are calling and what you hope to get out of the meeting.
- Determine a convenient time for you to meet with this person at his/her work site.

### **4. Prepare for the informational interview**

- Call to confirm the appointment the day before the actual interview. Obtain directions and parking information.
- Choose an outfit to wear to the interview. Men should wear a nice shirt, tie, blazer, and good shoes. Women should wear a dress or skirt/pant suit and hose and heels. Remember, you are visiting a place of employment and need to look business like.
- Put together a portfolio with paper and pens and copies of an updated resume to take with you. Be sure to write down your questions in the notebook!

### **5. During the interview**

- Arrive at least 15 minutes early, and announce your presence to the secretary. Be courteous to every one who you meet.
- Shake hands and introduce yourself.
- Be conscious of time. Do not spend more than the allotted time, unless the professional initiates extra time.
- At the end of the interview, thank the person for his/her time, shake hands as you leave, and gather business cards so you know where to send future correspondence.

### **6. Immediately after the interview**

- Find a quiet place to sit and write down all of the answers to the questions that you asked. Jot down information about any follow-up activities that were discussed or names of other professionals to contact.
- Within 24-48 hours, send an e-mail or thank you letter on professional stationary. No texting.

*Informational interviewing is NOT a sneaky way to ask for a job!*

# INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

## Telephone Script Ideas:

1. Provide a brief introduction of yourself for the professional. State that you are a student who is seeking advice and information on this person's career or industry.
2. Share the connection you have with this person (through your roommate, through a neighbor, the company website, LinkedIn, etc.).
3. Identify what you hope to get out of a meeting with this person (Information on the person's current job? Information on the person's career? Information on the general career field?).
4. Once the interview date has been established, verify the specific address, location, date, and time before you hang up.
5. Use this as a model, but make changes that work for you. The most successful networkers use a script that works for them and they stick with it!

## Openings and Bridges

*Some suggestions on how to start a dialogue and explain your interest in a position:*

**Ex.1:** "Because of your company's outstanding reputation and its leading position in corporate security, your advice would be most valuable to me at this time." "I have no expectations that you have a position at XYZ Corp. for me. Your comments and advice about the future prospects in the industry as a whole are what I would like to discuss."

**Ex.2:** "Your reputation as a civic leader, often quoted in local publications, has prompted me to seek out information about your background and career history."

**Ex.3:** "As one of the top executives in the field of \_\_\_\_\_, your expertise in what it takes to succeed in your industry must be sought often. Would you meet with me to give me the benefit of your guidance?"

## Suggested Questions:

- How did you get started in this field?
- What is your educational background?
- What are your major responsibilities?
- What is the most/least rewarding aspect of your job?
- Would you choose this career again?
- What advice do you have for a person attempting to break into this career field?
- What is a typical day like?
- What is the most common career path?
- What other obligations do you have besides your day-to-day work functions?
- What are some lifestyle considerations for this career field?
- What are some common entry-level positions in the field of \_\_\_\_\_?
- What kind of salary range and benefits could an entry-level person expect to receive?
- What type of individual (skills/personality) would be best suited for these entry-level positions?
- What are the most important factors used when hiring?
- What is the best educational preparation for a career in this field?
- Which classes and experience would be most helpful to obtain while still in college?
- What is the turnover rate for the organization? What are potential career paths within the organization?
- How do people find out about open positions in this field?
- What is the future outlook for this career?
- What are areas for potential growth/decline?
- How do you see jobs changing in the future?
- Which professional journals/organizations would be most helpful in evaluating the field?
- Who else do you recommend I talk with, and may I have permission to use your name?
- Can you recommend other types of organizations I might investigate or contact?

*Resource: Portions of this section were adapted with permission from The University of Virginia's Career Guide.*

# INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

## *Telephone Blocks*

You won't always be successful reaching your intended contact right away. Here are some common "blocks" you may encounter. These direct and polite responses can be very helpful.

**Block:** What is this about?

**Response:** I'm following up on an email/letter I sent last week. Is he/she in?

**Block:** Does she know you?

**Response:** Yes. May I speak with her please? (Option: She is a friend of my father's.)

**Block:** She is out.

**Response:** Okay, do you know when she will be returning calls?

**Block:** She is no longer with us.

**Response:** Who replaced her in the position?

**Block:** I'm too busy.

**Response:** I understand. When is a better time to contact you again?

**Block:** I don't think I can help you.

**Response:** Whom on your staff would you suggest I contact?

**Block:** We aren't hiring.

**Response:** I'm not looking for job openings at this time and want your advice only. Could you give me 20 minutes at 4:00 next Thursday, or make a telephone appointment with me?

**Block:** Call Personnel/Human Resources.

**Response:** Since I'm looking for advice about what types of jobs there are in advertising, I need to talk with someone who is working in the field. Whom would you recommend I contact?

**Block:** We just had a lay-off and aren't hiring.

**Response:** I understand. Your business experience is the only topic I'm interested in right now. Would you be willing to meet to discuss this?



*Resource: Portions of this section were adapted with permission from The University of Virginia's Career Guide.*

# SOCIAL NETWORKING

## MANAGING YOUR VIRTUAL IDENTITY

The explosion of social media sites has had significant implications for job seekers! Did you know the majority of prospective employers and recruiters regularly visit social media sites to source candidates and learn more about potential hires they interview?

Utilize the following guidelines to proactively manage your virtual brand in order to advance your career. Invest the time necessary to develop, monitor and enhance your virtual brand as it is a requirement for any professional who is actively or passively seeking employment.

**Profiles** – Think of your profile as your on-line business card. It is important for your profile to convey a professional message about you as a potential employee. Review and edit any information which does not meet this standard. After you complete this process, we encourage you to identify a professional you trust to review your information and provide you with feedback.

**Friends** – Keep in mind it is important to monitor the content on your friends' pages to whom you are linked. Review their profiles and any pictures they may post of you to determine if there is any inappropriate content you would like removed.

**Privacy Settings** – Facebook in particular has been known to change the privacy settings on user accounts often. As a result, it is important for you to review these settings regularly to make sure only friends have access to view your profile. Take a close look at the search, news feed, applications, photos, and video settings to determine how much information you want to share.

**Monitor New Information** – It is a good idea to use multiple search engines to find out what employers might be able to find if they search on your name. If you find anything which could be detrimental you can look into having it removed.

**Facebook**– This site has a more personal focus. However, many employers use the information you post to screen applicants. People's employment has also been terminated as a result of this site. Use Facebook with caution, and monitor your privacy settings.

**Voicemail** – Be sure the voicemail greeting on your phone is professional. Every form of communication sends a message to prospective employers. In addition, make sure your voicemail box is setup properly and that it is open to receiving messages.

**LinkedIn** – The focus of this site is professional networking and they have strict rules about how to use the system in order to connect with people. Learn how to leverage this site in order to expand your network. In addition, many employers are now posting jobs based on your profile so this could be a great tool if you are actively seeking employment.

**Twitter** – This site was designed to be an open forum. Know who is following you and tailor the content of your "tweets" to the right audience.

**Email** – Have a professional email address. Choose a host that avoids spam issues. For example, choose Gmail over Hotmail.

### Statistics

- Twitter has 200 million active users
- Facebook has up to more than 1.1 billion users
- LinkedIn has over 225 million users in over 200 countries.

*Resource: Georgia State University Social Media Page*

## USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

According to a recent survey, nearly 92 percent of college seniors have a social networking profile, but less than one-third have used social networks in their job searches. If you are looking for a job and not using social media to help you, you may be overlooking another avenue to employment. Many employers have a social media presence, and many use social networks to screen job candidates.

To use sites like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter in the most effective way possible, follow these 10 tips.

- 1. Develop a professional presence.** What do people find when they Google you? If the results aren't professional, take down those party pictures and create a professional persona. Set up a profile on LinkedIn, which is a 100 percent professional network, and add professional details to your Google+, Facebook, and Twitter profiles.
- 2. Fill your profiles with keywords.** All of your social media profiles should include key words and phrases that a recruiter or hiring manager might type into a search engine to find a candidate like you. The best place to find relevant words is in the job listings that appeal to you and the social media profiles of people who have the positions you want.
- 3. Use LinkedIn to find your path.** Not yet sure what career is right for you? Browse through LinkedIn. Comprised of more than 225 million professionals, LinkedIn offers a huge database of other people's career paths from which you can gather ideas about companies, job titles, or professions that might be a good fit for you.
- 4. Get personal.** When you're looking for a job, your online network can and should include friends and family. Parents, classmates, professors, neighbors, and other close contacts are the best people to provide you with "warm" referrals to the contacts in their networks. The bigger and more authentically your network grows, the more access to opportunities you'll have.
- 5. Be a joiner.** Another way to form valuable relationships is to join online communities with which you already have an affiliation. This might include your university's LinkedIn group, the Facebook fan page of a nonprofit you support, or an industry association listserv. Once you're a member of a group, you can comment on discussions, meet people who share common interests, and find exclusive job listings.
- 6. Tweet.** Twitter is an amazing tool to research and connect with recruiters, industry experts, and potential employers. Even if you set up a Twitter profile to "listen" more than you tweet, you'll get enormous value out of the information you'll discover. Plus, many organizations are now tweeting out their job postings — don't miss this new source of opportunities!
- 7. Blog.** Consider staking your own ground in the social media world. You can blog in writing or video about your career interests, campus life, travel, sports, activities, or anything else. Blogging (as long as you keep it clean) can demonstrate your knowledge and passion to a potential employer. If you're not interested in writing your own blog, comment on the posts of industry bloggers you admire. You might just catch the eye of a reader who is hiring.
- 8. Share.** One of the best ways to maintain a strong professional network is to support other people by sharing helpful information like articles, blog posts, and YouTube videos. A small, helpful gesture like forwarding a link is a great form of networking (and the recipient will likely help you in return).
- 9. Keep people up to date.** Status updates are another smart form of networking. Update your LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter status with information about events you're attending, books you're reading, or other career news. To remind people that you're job hunting, post updates such as, "I had a great second interview this morning — cross your fingers for me!"
- 10. Use social media to ace interviews.** Before a job interview, study the LinkedIn profiles, Twitter feeds, and blogs of the people you'll be meeting. The more preparation you do, the more confident you'll feel — and the more likely you'll be to make a great impression and land the job! Finally, as important as social media is, remember to step away from the computer once in a while. Online methods should supplement, not replace, in-person job searching techniques.