



Networking

What is Networking?

Networking is the process of building relationships with others in order to gain information you are seeking, as well as to offer information that you have to share.

Why Network?

Approximately **80%** of jobs are obtained through networking. In addition, by practicing networking you can gain valuable information about:

- Industry trends
- Professional development organizations or events
- Opportunities for collaboration

How Do I Network? Six Steps to Success...

Step 1: Create a contact list

Creating a list of people to network with can be a helpful tool. Begin writing this list by thinking about both professional and community contacts that you already know.

Professional contacts may include:

- Co-workers past and present
- Internship supervisors past and present

Community contacts may include:

- Family
- Friends
- Professors, coaches, college staff
- Service industry acquaintances (hairdresser, dentist, etc.)
- Members of religious or cultural organizations you belong to

Step 2: Get organized

Staying organized is key when it comes to networking. Get organized by using the following tips:

- Create an account and profile on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com)
- Create an email account dedicated solely to your networking endeavors
- Create a separate file folder on your computer to store networking related information
- Create a business card with your contact information on it (Check out www.staples.com). Keep your business cards in a specific place in your wallet or purse.

Step 3: Prepare your wardrobe

Make sure that you have the appropriate clothing for the networking event you are attending. If the event is professional you should wear a suit or business casual attire. If it is in the community make sure your outfit is clean and coordinated.

Step 4: Do your research

You will be a more effective networker if you research the company or person that you are planning on networking with before you contact them. For example, if you are attending a job fair and are interested in networking with employers, research the companies that will be in attendance so that you can ask more educated questions when you attend the event.

Step 5: Prepare a thirty second commercial

A thirty second commercial is a quick summary describing your background and needs. Depending on your specific circumstances, you usually want to address the following questions in your commercial:

- What is your educational/employment background?
- What type of position or information are you currently seeking?

Sample Thirty Second Commercial (Internship Search):

“I am a psychology major at Endicott College. Endicott requires students to do a semester-long internship during their senior year. Since I am finishing up my junior year, I am currently looking for an internship site for the fall. I am extremely interested in working with children diagnosed with autism. I would like to find a school or organization on the North Shore where I could gain this experience.”

Sample Thirty Second Commercial (Job Search):

“For the past four years I have been working towards my bachelor’s degree in Hospitality Management at Endicott College which I will complete in May. My main interest is in event-planning specifically, wedding planning. I have had two internships where I assisted wedding planners for high-end weddings. Now that I am getting ready to finish my degree I’m looking for an entry-level position with a company that offers wedding planning services in the Boston area.”

Step 6: Practice networking conversations

You will need to tailor your networking conversation to your specific circumstances; however, the following format can be used as a general guideline:

- **Introduction**
This will usually involve you telling the person your name if you have not previously met them and giving them a firm handshake.
 - **Asking questions**
A good way to get a conversation going is to ask the person some open-ended questions. For example, if you are meeting someone for the first time in a professional setting you may ask them “What does your position entail at XYZ Company?” or “How did you get involved with the XYZ Professional Organization?” If the person is someone that you already know out in the community you might say “How is work going for you?” or “What projects are you working on right now?”
 - **Listening skills**
Listening is one of the most important components of networking. Listening carefully to what the other person says not only shows that you care about what they have to say, but it also helps you to gather information so that you know how to best tailor your message to the other person, or to identify information that they may be able to provide for you.
 - **Offer help if possible/appropriate**
If the person that you are speaking with identifies a need, for example, if they are looking for a job, or if they would like to learn more about a specific industry, offer help if it is possible and appropriate. If you help others, they will be likely to help you in return, and it can be rewarding to provide assistance to others.
 - **Thirty second commercial**
If it is appropriate, ask for feedback from the other person on your thirty second commercial.
-

Sample Networking Conversation:

Mary: Hi my name is Mary Smith, nice to meet you.

Joe: Hi Mary, I'm Joe Brown.

Mary: So Joe, what company do you work for?

Joe: I'm with Franklin Corporation.

Mary: Oh, I've heard a lot of good things about Franklin, how do you like working there?

Joe: I like it a lot, I've been a Senior Financial Analyst there for almost ten years now; it is hard to believe.

Mary: Wow that is great! What would you say makes Franklin such a great place to work?

Joe: Well, the benefits are great and over all I really like everyone on the team.

Mary: I think it is so important to have good relationships with your co-workers. I am job searching right now and I hope that I can find the same type of environment to work in.

Joe: Most definitely. What kind of position are you looking for?

Mary: Well, I will be graduating from Endicott College this spring with a B.S. in Accounting and I hope to get a position doing accounting work on the auditing side with a firm in the Boston area.

Joe: Let me give you my card. I don't know if we have any openings available right now, but if you see anything definitely get in touch and I will see if I can help you out.

Mary: Thanks so much! Here is my card as well.

Making Your Networks Last

Networking can be very time consuming and can take a lot of hard work. Make sure your efforts pay off by keeping in touch with your contacts. If possible, connect with your networking contacts on LinkedIn. There is no set rule in terms of how to best keep in touch however, sending holiday cards and writing periodic check-in emails a couple of times during the year are good strategies, as well as sending periodic messages via LinkedIn. Also, make sure to update your contacts' information regularly to ensure accuracy of your contact list.