



Networking Skills

NETWORKING AND PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE

PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE AND COMMUNICATION

How you present yourself in all facets of your life is critical to your success in obtaining an internship or any job. It is not just about your qualifications; you must handle yourself well in professional situations, including interviews and networking conversations. If you handle these situations in a mature and confident manner, you will show yourself as ready to make the transition from student to professional.

Important Tips

- Conversations, body language, eating and drinking make an impression and affect your chances of receiving a job offer.
- Dress is critical to success. It is always best to be overdressed than underdressed. A professional suit is always a great option.
- Be as prepared as possible for any event.
- Treat all people in a professional situation the way you would like to be treated. Everyone you have contact with may be asked their opinion of you.
- Writing skills are critical. Emails must be well written, proofread, and professional.
- Developing phone communication skills is equally important. Leaving well thought out messages is critical as you connect with people.
- Being articulate and kind can help you in every phase of your professional life.

- Make sure your image on social media is professional. Employers will look you up on popular social media channels.
- Have a professional email address and voicemail message on your phone. Change them if needed.
- Finally, be sure that you have developed strong résumés, cover letters and interviewing techniques. Work with Career Services and anybody else you trust to develop the best documents.

Preparing for an Event or Interview

- Do your homework on the people you will be with or the organization in which you are interested.
- Plan and study where you are going and how to get there. Plan for weather and traffic. Give yourself time to go to the restroom when you get there.
- Prepare and practice a 30 second self-introduction that will help you quickly introduce yourself to people.

Effective Introductions

- First impressions are critical. A firm, sincere handshake is the best introduction. Look people in the eye, and repeat their name as you shake hands (ex: "Nice to meet you, Ms. Johnson").
- Have a 30 second self-introduction prepared.
- If nametags are being used, place it on your right side so people can spot it easily when shaking your hand.
- If you are seated at a table, stand when being introduced or shaking hands.
- Be sure to greet and introduce yourself to the host/hostess if there is one.

Effective Conversations

- Maintain good eye contact while being introduced or in conversations.
- A good way to start conversations is to ask the person something about themselves (ex: How did you get to where you are? Why do you like what you do?).
- If the event includes food, circulate first before heading to the bar or buffet.
- Keep your conversation professional in nature at all times.

How to Handle Food and Drink

- Avoid sloppy foods that might spill or be difficult to eat. Salads, spaghetti, foods you have to handle, and big sandwiches can be difficult.
- Eat and drink lightly so you can focus on the conversation.
- If you are at a reception keep either food or drink in your left hand, leaving your right hand free to shake. Limit the amount of food on your plate; you can always go back.
- If alcohol is served and you are of age, limit yourself to one drink or none at all. If you drink beer, pour it in a glass. If you drink wine, hold reds by the bowl and whites by the stem.

How to Handle a Sit-Down Meal

- Wait until you are asked to sit down and never sit down first
- Unfold your napkin and place it in your lap. Make sure it is folded in half with the fold towards you.
- If you must leave the table, fold your napkin and place in your seat for when you return.

- Silverware is always used from the outside in. So the small fork at the end is for a salad or first course and so on.
- Once you are finished, fold up your napkin and place next to your plate. Never put the napkin on your plate.

At the End of an Event

- At a meal interview, the employer will pay. Be sure to thank them.
- In a networking meeting, be prepared to pay for the meal or coffee if you initiated the meeting.
- At a reception, be sure to thank the event host/hostess directly, with a smile and firm handshake.
- Within 48 hours of any interview, meeting, or reception write a short thank you note to the event host/hostess, interviewer, or anyone else that took time out to meet you.





NETWORKING

Networking is connecting with people who work in a field of interest so you to learn more about it and build your professional circle. It's not about asking for a job, but often leads to the connections that can help you land the job you want. Research shows that nearly 60-80% of jobs are landed through networking.

The Basics

- You can network with alumni, parents, friends of parents, faculty and staff members, coaches, people you meet on an airplane- virtually anyone.
- Remember that you have something to offer. If you present yourself as prepared, professional, well-spoken, and enthusiastic, contacts will be excited to help you learn and gain more connections in your chosen field of interest.
- If you meet with someone, follow-up with a thank you note.

Getting Ready

- Make a list. Once you have identified fields that you want to learn more about, make a list of anyone you know who might have some knowledge of those fields. Career Services can help you find professionals.
- Get organized. Create a notebook or spreadsheet to track your contacts. Include sections to record the contact's name, title, address, phone, email, dates of contact, type of contact, results of contact, date to follow up, type of follow-up (i.e. call, send résumé, etc.), names of additional contacts given, and a place to make general notes for each contact.

- Create a LinkedIn profile. Career Services can help you create an effective profile.
 - If you find someone who is a 2nd level contact in LinkedIn and you don't know them, go through your 1st level connection for an introduction.
- Screen your own voicemail message to be sure all of your messages are professionally appropriate.
- Have a résumé ready to go.

Jumping In

- **Make the initial call or write the initial letter/email:** Introduce yourself, explain why you're contacting them and express interest in setting up a time to meet or talk on the phone to learn more about their job, organization, etc.
- Sample phone/email script:
 - "Hello, my name is Mary Jones. John Miller gave me your name and suggested that I contact you regarding my interest in your work. I'm a sophomore at Husson majoring in English and am just starting to explore career possibilities. One career that really interests me is radio broadcasting. I work as a DJ at the college radio station and spent last summer as an intern with KKJL in Seattle. I'm calling to see if it would be possible to meet with you during my upcoming trip to Seattle. I will call you next week to find out if we can arrange a mutually convenient time for an informational meeting."

Relevant Questions for a Meeting

During an informational meeting you can ask questions about the person you're meeting with, the organization they work for, or the industry. Bring 4-6 questions as it is up to you to lead this meeting.

For the Contact

- How did you first get interested in this field?
- What has your career path been like?
- Does your work relate to the studies you pursued while in college?
- How did other aspects of your college life prepare you for this field?
- What do you enjoy most and least about your work in this industry and why?
- Describe a typical work day. Are there lifestyle choices that you've made because of the work you do?

About the Organization

- What skills and abilities are necessary?
- What is a typical career path for employees?
- Does your employer offer training programs?
- What are possibilities for advancement?
- How would you describe the work place environment?

About the Career Field

- What kind of education is recommended to excel in this field?
- What are typical entry-level jobs?
- What is the salary range for these positions?
- Can you recommend professional resources that would be helpful for researching the field and the people who work in it?
- My interests are _____. How might they fit into this field?

Managing a Productive Meeting

- Dress professionally.
- Show enthusiasm.
- Bring copies of your résumé so you can get feedback on how to improve it for that particular field or so the contact can forward to their connections.
- Show that you've done your research and be prepared to answer interview questions. An informational conversation has been known to turn into a first-round interview.
- Don't ask questions that you could have easily answered with a little research of your own.
- Ask for advice on next steps: "What might I do to learn more? If you were me, what would you do next to pursue a position in this field?"
- Always ask, "Whom else do you recommend I approach for advice about entering this particular field?" Write down those names and be sure to follow up with them to expand your network.

Following Up and Continuing the Loop

- Write a thank-you note or email immediately.
- Be sure to follow up on any advice or additional contacts that are offered.
- Stay in touch with periodic updates to contacts; let them know the end result.
- Get connected on LinkedIn with the connections you make.



Networking Letter Sample

58 Warren Ave.
Bangor, ME 04401

January 30, 2021

Ms. Patricia Sutton
President
Deerfield, Inc.
65 Commercial Street
Portland, ME 04001

Dear Ms. Sutton:

Gordon Hughes from Fidelity suggested that I connect with you to set up an informational meeting to learn more about financial services. I am interested in learning more about the career pathways in this field and would enjoy talking with you about your extensive experience.

I would love to set up a 20 or 30 minute conversation by phone or in person to ask you a few questions about the field. Please let me know what works best for your schedule. I have time from 10am to 2pm on Thursday, February 2nd or 9am to noon on Friday the 3rd. If these times do not work for you, I am very flexible and can be open to other times that fit your schedule. Finally, if meeting is not feasible at this time do not hesitate to let me know that as well.

Thank you in advance for your time and I look forward to hearing from you. I appreciate your guidance very much.

Best regards,

Doug Gottlieb