

The Art of Networking

Simply stated, networking is how most people find and land jobs. You know how they say, “It’s not just what you know, it’s who you know?” Well, what you know counts; but who you know counts too! *And* it’s not just who you know, it’s who knows you! The people in your network need to know about who you are, your talents, and your pursuits to help you get to where you are going.

Anyone you meet could be a potential new contact for your network

- Practice your Elevator Pitch so you’re always ready for a networking opportunity
- Networking can happen wherever people are present, but only if you talk to them
- Stay well-connected to your network, you never know who you’ll need to call on
- Get organized, keep a rolodex, journal, or address book to manage your contacts
- Networking is a two-way street and the more you help others, the more they’ll help you
- Always remember to thank your contacts, especially when their help has paid off

➤ Networking Strategies: Explore - Experience - Prepare - Pursue

Explore: What *is* networking anyway, and why is it so important?

Networking is the act of making mutually beneficial connections with the people you meet who have the potential to influence your career opportunities in the future. Making network connections can be planned, like when you ask someone for an informational interview, or attend a networking event, or they can be random, like when you strike up a conversation with a stranger in a coffee shop or bookstore. Networking is so important because it allows you access to a more hidden job market, ie. “word-of-mouth” jobs that aren’t publically advertised. The more you expand your network, the more resources you have to call on when it’s time to job-search, so it’s best to keep your network well-organized, and maintain your connections regularly.

Experience: How do I *build* my network?

- Ask professors, parents, friends, and the Career Services team to connect you with professionals in your area of interest...and then ask them for even *more* contacts
- Go on some informational interviews to help build your network
- Do some volunteer work in an area of interest to you and strike up conversations
- Make sure you keep your network organized so you have contact information readily available;

Did you know...that 75–85% of jobs are obtained as the result of networking?

Prepare: What can I do to *expand* my network?

- Develop a professional online presence with Social Media tools like LinkedIn
- Attend a networking event or professional workshop, seminar, or conference in your area of interest (check out our list of upcoming events)
- When you meet someone new, ask what they do for work and share *your* career interests and see if they know of anyone to connect you with
- Make sure you stay connected with your existing network contacts to maintain your relationship

Pursue: How can I utilize my network?

- Let your contacts (including your Career Advisor) know what kind of work you're pursuing
- Ask your contacts if they have heard of any openings in your field or suggest a contact you should connect with
- Attend as many career fairs, "meet and mingles," and industry events as you can

Informational Interviewing

Curious about what an average day in the life of someone who has a job you are interested in? Informational interviews are the easiest way to hear the most pertinent career info you want to learn—directly from someone who is actually doing the job!

A Few Truths about Informational Interviewing:

- Even though it may feel awkward and imposing to ask for in informational interview, most people are happy to talk about their job and share their wisdom so don't be shy! (but do be polite)
- Informational interviewing is one of the best ways to learn the ins and outs of a particular job or career field because it offers an insider's perspective that you can't usually get anywhere else
- Not only can you acquire 1st hand insight into what it would actually be like to work a certain job, it's also an excellent way to build up your network, as informational interviewing often leads to multiple new contacts and connections
- If you go into the interview with a good set of questions to ask, you're likely to come out with a whole wealth of knowledge and direction

What do I say? Possible questions to ask:

1. How did you end up in your current position?
2. Do you like working here?
3. What is a typical day like for you at this job?
4. What did you study in school? Did it prepare you for this position?
5. Is there anything you wish you knew about this career field before you started working?
7. What challenges you most about this career field as a whole?
8. What do you enjoy most about working here?
9. What mistakes could you have avoided in your career path with better planning and advice?
10. What skills and talents are especially useful and necessary to fulfill your job responsibilities?
11. How much room for is there for growth in your job and in this career field? Do you feel like there is potential to move up?
12. What advice would you give someone in my position about preparing to enter the field?
13. I'd love to get more information and perspectives about your field, who might you recommend I connect with? And, would it be alright if I mentioned your name as my contact?

Who Shall I Contact to Interview?

- Family, Extended Family
- Champlain College Alumni
- Ask faculty or advisors if they can refer anyone
- Ask other students in your major if they can refer anyone
- People you meet via social media (Linked In, Facebook groups, bloggers you follow)
- Leaders in relevant professional organizations
- Speakers at professional training events
- The professionals you meet at Career Fairs, Industry Expos, and Conferences
- Anyone else you respect and would like to learn from

Job Shadowing

Job Shadowing is basically taking the informational interview one step further and actually spending an hour, an afternoon, or a full day shadowing someone as they go about their daily routine. Although this kind of experience is slightly more difficult to come by, if you can make it happen, it can provide you with an even more vivid and realistic picture of what a life in that career actually looks like.

Not only is this a fantastic networking tool (think of all the contacts you'll be introduced to!), but say you one day decide to apply to the company at which you shadowed, you'll already have a competitive edge because you've made important connections and showed a commitment to and passion for your field of study. Just remember to sincerely and formally thank the person you shadowed and ask insightful questions!

Considerations on how to organize a Job Shadowing Experience:

Organizing a job shadowing is similar to that of conducting an informational interview. Once you have decided who / what organizations you would like to pursue an experience with, the communication typically begins with an introduction from a friend or email similar to the [informational interview request](#). Once you have scheduled a mutually convenient time, prepare for the job shadow as you would an [interview](#).

Where Do I meet People to do Informational Interviews and Shadows with?

- Campus Clubs and Student Activities
- Industry Expos
- Alumni Relations
- Sporting Events
- Library/Bookstore Reading Groups
- Continuing Education Workshops
- Classifieds
- Professional Associations
- Alternative Spring Break – New Orleans Rebuild
- America READS/America COUNTS tutoring
- K.I.T.S. Kids In Technology Program
- GET REAL Service Action
- Career Services
- Dialogue Facilitation Training
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Project
- Brown Bag Lunch Series Presentations
- Diversity and Inclusion Community Banquet
- Food Fight – food prep for clients of the Salvation Army
- Social Media Breakfasts
- Professional Conferences
- Neighborhood Meetings
- Community Gatherings
- Volunteer Events
- Political Election Campaigns
- LinkedIn, Twitter, Blogging, Facebook Groups
- Online Search Engines
- Connections from Studying Abroad
- Burlington City Arts mentoring project
- DREAM – Youth Mentoring program
- Amnesty International
- Coffee Talk – discussion series on global issues
- **INCLUDE** – LBGTQA and allies group
- **STAND** – Students Taking Action Now: Darfur
- Community Dinners and Cultural Events
- Diversity and Inclusion Speakers Series
- Tent City – homeless simulation and awareness project