

Networking is connecting with others; helping and sharing knowledge and contacts. It's ultimately about building relationships with people for the long term based on common values, professional interests, and mutual respect. Just as in an interview setting, it is important to be aware of certain social cues and etiquette to assure that you carry yourself well during networking events. An effective networking opportunity calls for adequate preparation, proactive attendance and an appropriate follow-up.

NETWORKING GUIDE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



Office for International
Students and Scholars



The “Elevator Speech” or Personal Pitch

A **30 to 60-second** speech (think about it being a personal commercial!) that is a concise, carefully planned, and well-practiced marketing message about your professional self.

Why do you need it?

It helps get your foot in the door with potential employers whether on the phone, e-mail or in person at a conference, social networking event, or through an informal face-to-face encounter through a friend or relative. You will have a “ready-made” two sentence to answer the “Tell Me About Yourself” or “What are you hoping to do when you graduate?”

A good pitch should answer three questions:

WHO ARE YOU? | WHAT DO YOU DO? | WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

- **Clarify your job target:** know what type of experience or position you are looking for and tailor your pitch to be relevant to your goal.
- **Put it on paper:** Write down everything you’d want a potential employer to know about your skills, accomplishments and experiences.
- **Format it, Practice it!** While there are a few skills and experiences to highlight in your pitch, work up ways to customize it for particular situations. Be sure to practice and get feedback from others
- **Say it with confidence:** Remember to maintain eye contact and be calm! Avoid sounding overly rehearsed.



COMMON MISTAKES BY RECENT COLLEGE GRADUATES:

- Lack of confidence in what you have to offer. - “I don’t have a lot of experience yet.”
- Lack of focus or goals. - “I have a lot of interests and don’t want to limit myself.”
- Inability to articulate the learning and skills gained from one’s academic major. - “I know my major has nothing to do with my interest in starting my own business, but...”

NETWORKING TIPS

Get out of
your comfort
zone

Challenge yourself to attend networking and social events to talk with people. If English is not your first language make the effort to interact with English speakers and use your 'Elevator Speech'!

Understand
cultural
differences

Take the time to understand and address different business cultures and how to network. When networking at events and social gatherings, be aware of language cues and general etiquette. For example, in U.S business culture, it is appropriate to speak about yourself and your qualifications.

Be proactive
online

When searching for opportunities, use credible resources for employment information, industry trends, and business culture in the country you are seeking employment.

Connect with industry professionals using social media: Use Twitter and LinkedIn to also participate on news articles and posts written. Don't forget to be cautious of language choice when posting or writing to professionals.

When
networking...

It's important to be an active listener when networking. When seeking information about a certain job, career, or industry, it is important to show sincerity and interest. Take brief notes on the key points. Remember to ask for business cards or contact information and be sure to follow-up afterwards through a thank you email, or connection on social media.

Tip: Write what you talked about and when/where you met on the back of their business card.

Don't be
discouraged

Building your network takes a lot of time and energy. Not everyone you reach out to will necessarily respond to you. Don't take it personally, and don't give up! Move on to the next person. More often than not, people are more than willing to speak to students.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

A KEY NETWORKING TOOL

> What is Informational Interviewing?

Informational Interviewing entails finding individuals in your field of interest, and asking them questions regarding the field that will eventually help you in determining whether or not that a particular field of work is a good “fit” for you. At the same time, you begin a new relationship with someone who can begin to mentor and advise you along your chosen path.

> Objectives of Informational Interviews

TO LEARN...

If you hope to find what a specific career path has to offer, what the positives and negatives are within an organization’s culture, or which academic major will prepare you best for a selected career path; why not ask the people who already working within that field?

TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP...

USA Today posted the question, “How did you find your present position (jobs)?” Almost 70 % of those surveyed claimed that they were able to obtain their position because someone they knew. In other words, most of us attribute our career success to personal relationships. The earlier you start building relationships with people in your field of interest, the stronger they will be. This can significantly improve your professional network you’ll use when you actually begin your job hunt.

> Where Do I Start?

Informational Interviewing is a networking process. On the following page is a guideline for making contacts and gathering informations from them. As you go through the process focus on obtaining information relevant to your career objectives while building lasting relationships. The sooner you begin, the more prepared you will be to make career decisions pertaining to internships and full time positions. Turn the page to get started!

THE INFORMATION GATHERING PROCESS

○ NETWORK THROUGH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

- You will be amazed at how many contacts you may be able to make through existing relationships. Ask, “Who do you know that...” and be sure to obtain contact information. Also, let your friend or family member know that your intent is to contact this person to learn more about their career field.

○ SCHEDULE MEETING

- Call or e-mail the new contact and let them know that:
 - You are a college student studying (your academic field)
 - Your mutual friend suggested that you contact them for career adviceNext, as if they have 30 minutes available to answer questions you have about the field in which they work (face-to-face appointments are best, but a phone or email conversation will work.)

○ WRITE OUT YOUR SCHEDULE

- Remember, you are the interviewer so be prepared. Make a list of questions that you have. Be sure to show a substantial interest in the career field and the organization.
 - For example, you may want to ask:
 - What has been your career path?
 - Can you describe a typical work day?
 - What do you like best/least about your job/company?

○ FINAL THREE QUESTIONS

- Once you are ready to end the discussion (keep an eye on the clock, you only asked for 30 minutes!), ask three final questions:
 - Would you please look at my resume and give me feedback?
 - Who else do you know that might give me further insight into this field? (Can I contact them and mention that you suggested to do so?)
 - Can I keep in touch with you? (Promise not to overwhelm them with daily phone calls or e-mails!)

○ FOLLOW-UP

- Make sure to show your appreciations for their time. Send a thank you note or e-mail and let them know what you learned. As you continue to study the field, approach your new contact with questions that come up, and as you strengthen the relationship ask if they know of any opportunities to gain experience in the field.

Managing your DIGITAL IDENTITY

Your online identity or brand is defined by any and all online information that exists about you, whether you created it or not. Social networking sites, including Facebook, are part of your public image. The material you post and the things you write will influence an employer's or graduate schools' impression of you, for better or for worse. Employers, graduate schools, and other programs use social media sites and information in their recruitment and selection processes. Know what is out there with your name on it. If you can Google it, so can someone else.

Check Your Current Online Identity

Review your public email address(es): Is each address professional?

Google yourself: Are you comfortable with an employer or graduate school seeing what you found?

For each social networking site (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.): Would you be comfortable if someone else were to see your profile, Photos, Groups and Comments? Are you tagged in any photos online?

If you've posted your resume online: Are you comfortable with the privacy policy where your resume is posted? You may want to omit your street address and phone number for safety and privacy.

If you have your own website or blog: Are you comfortable with an employer or graduate school seeing what you've written, posted and/or compiled?

Clean-up Your Online Identity

The next step is to target potential problems you've identified and clean them up.

Identify the easier areas to address first, like your own Facebook profile and blog, then tackle the tougher ones like contacting friends regarding the embarrassing photos in which you are tagged.

There are some pieces that are a part of the public record and can't be removed, like police logs and newspaper articles.

If there is information on the web that you would rather employers or schools not see, you must be particularly diligent in building your brand on high traffic sites so that less flattering information will appear lower on a Google search.

Build Your Online Identity or Brand

Now that you know what's out there, and have worked to clean up your image, you are ready to begin proactively building your brand with intentionality.

The simplest step you can take to guarantee that the first Google link with your name on it is professional is to create a LinkedIn profile.

LinkedIn is a great way to professionally display your skills, accomplishments and your goals while building meaningful relationships.



RESOURCES

NETWORKING TIPS

- <http://www.universityedgeapts.com/southern-miss-student-housing-5-networking-tips-for-college-students/>
- <http://nyuwassermanblog.career.admin.nyu.edu/2013/10/networking-tips-from-international-nyu-alumni/>
- <http://career.sa.ucsb.edu/students/job-search/creating-elevator-pitch-two-minutes-or-less>

“HOW TO DRESS” PICTURE

- <http://www.chcp.edu/blog/how-dress-job-interview>

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

- MSU Career Services Network www.careernetwork.msu.edu

MANAGING YOUR DIGITAL IDENTITY: [http://www.pomona.edu/administration/](http://www.pomona.edu/administration/career-development/students/networking-101/managing-your-online-identity.aspx)

- [career-development/students/networking-101/managing-your-online-identity.aspx](http://www.pomona.edu/administration/career-development/students/networking-101/managing-your-online-identity.aspx)

LINKEDIN DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

- **LinkedIn for Students:** http://university.linkedin.com/university/global/en_us/index/linkedin-for-students.html

- **Making Your LinkedIn Profile a Portfolio:** <http://www.sabrina-woods.com/1/post/2013/12/linkedin-20-ways-to-turn-your-profile-into-a-portfolio.html>