

Lasell College Career Services

Networking



What is networking?

Networking simply means talking to people about your career goals, seeking advice, and spreading the word about what you are interested in. You can talk to anyone and everyone

Why should I bother?

- Networking is considered the most successful job hunting approach.
- 70-90% of jobs are found via networking

Networking is NOT asking for a job

The most important thing to realize is when you talk with a networking contact, *you are NOT asking them for a job*. You are asking them for advice, feedback, and referrals.

If you were to start a conversation with, “Do you know of any openings?” chances are that the answer will be “no,” and the conversation will be over. But if you start a conversation with, “I’ve just graduated and find your company/industry interesting, can you tell me about what you do and your career path?” chances are that a dialogue will be started.

If the person you are speaking with, knows of an opening, and thinks you might be a good fit, they will tell you about it.

Who do I network with?

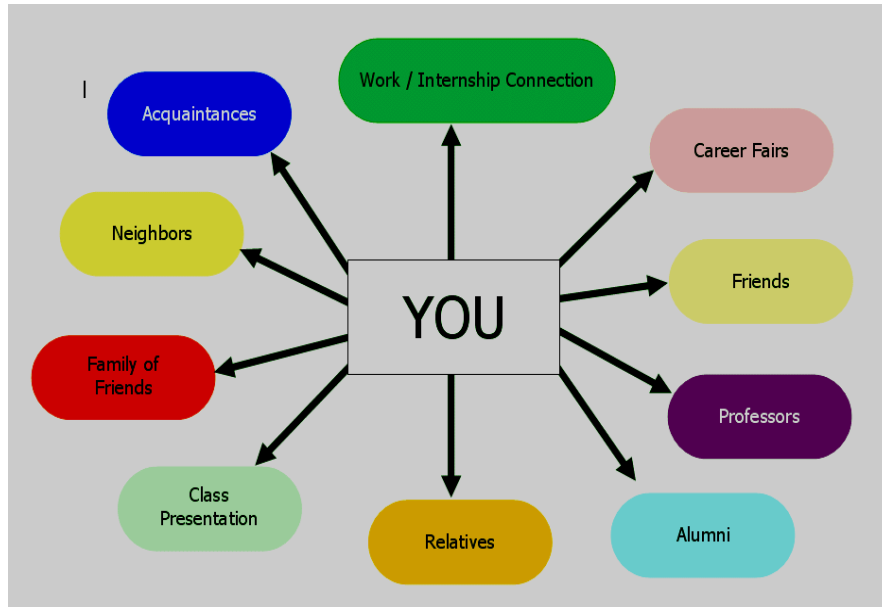
Anyone and everyone. Think about the constellation of your network. You know more people than you might think. While someone of these people may not be in the field you are looking at, they may be able to make suggestions of people they know.

EXAMPLE:

Terry is interested in a job in event planning. She also has a strong interest in law and public policy. When talking to her roommate, she learned that her roommate’s father works at the state house. Immediately Terry’s roommate called her father and he offered to help Terry get in contact with some people he used to work with.

Your network consists of people that you have known for a long time and people you have just met. Think about all the ways that you know people. You never know who used to work at the State House or has a friend who does.

Your network constellation might include:



Places to network

Networking can take place almost anywhere. There are many “formal” opportunities including:

- Professional conferences
- Professional association meetings
- Career Fairs
- Networking Events



However, the “informal” opportunities can be equally as valuable

- Airplane
- Parties
- Casual conversation

Networking Tips for a Crowded Room

- Prepare a list of conversation openers
 - It looks like an interesting agenda
 - It’s my first time coming to this meeting. Have you attended before?
 - How did you get into the field?
 - Do you have any advice for a newcomer like me?
 - What does your organization generally look for in new employees?
- Appear confident
- Arrive early. It is easier to strike up a conversation when there are only a few people who are also standing around with no one to talk to
- Approach individuals standing alone
- Collect business cards. This way you can follow up with the person afterwards. When you have a free moment, you might want to make notes on the back to jog your memory about what you talked about.
- Shake hands with everyone you meet. Don’t wait to be introduced.

- Don't spend too much time with one person. You want to meet a range of people.
- Keep a running list of things you want to do after the meeting
- If possible, find out who will be there in advance so you can plan a strategy of who you want to talk to/meet/reconnect with.
- Be prepared to end a conversation. You want to meet a variety of people. Good conversation enders include:
 - It was great talking to you, but I promised myself that I would talk to 3 new people today. Can I have your card?
 - Please excuse me, I need to use the ladies room
 - I don't mean to cut this short, but I need to catch so-and-so before they leave
 - I'm going to refresh my drink, can I get you anything? (chances are they will say no, especially if their drink is already full)
 - It looks like so-and-so needs some help; I'd better give them a hand.
- When you are talking to one person, maintain eye contact. Don't be caught looking around the room for "someone better" to talk to.

Contacting People

Often people are shy about asking for help. Don't be. The fact is, people generally like helping other people. Start with the person you are most comfortable with.

- Before you call, know what you are going to say. It's important to come off polished.
- Know what results you want from the conversation. A suggestion, an informational interview, etc.
- Be enthusiastic
- Clearly identify yourself
- Name the person who referred you
- Be specific about why you are calling, what you are looking for, and how they can help

Always ask for other contacts

The premise behind networking is to talk to as many people as possible. At the end of a meeting or conversation, ask for suggestions of someone else that you should speak to.

Remember to follow up

- Always, always, always, send a thank you note to anyone with whom you network. Networking is about building relationships. You want the person to remember you and keep you in mind if they hear of any openings. In the note, reference something that was discussed. EX: Your suggestion to... was excellent; I took your advice to...
- Follow up when you say you will. You are being viewed as a professional so you need to be seen as reliable.
- Your follow up thank you letter is a good opportunity to enclose a copy of your resume and restate your goals and background. Ex: I've enclosed a copy of my resume. Feel free to pass it along if you hear of any openings.

Prepare a 30 Second Introduction

When you meet someone, you want to be prepared to tell them who you are and what you are seeking. You never know who might have an opening or be friends with the hiring manager at the perfect company. Your introduction should include your school and major, a brief summary of your volunteer, intern, and work experiences, and your goal.

EXAMPLE:

My name is Terry Jones. I just graduated from Lasell College in Newton, MA this past May with a degree in humanities. I've focused my studies on political science and legal studies. I was a member of the student Government Association for 3 years and the chair of the Senior Soiree committee. In addition, I worked the whole time I was in school at a busy family restaurant. This taught me how to juggle multiple priorities while maintaining a high GPA. My goal is to obtain an entry-level position in an office that focuses on public policy.

Things to consider when developing your 30 Second Introduction

You will want to make sure you are comfortable with your introduction so you can deliver it with confidence and without error. By answering the following questions, you can begin to determine what information you might want to include:

- ✓ Name, school, & major
- ✓ Where am I from?
- ✓ My work experience includes...
- ✓ My strengths are... (give 2-3 examples)
- ✓ Examples of how I have used my strengths include... (give 1-2 examples)
- ✓ My goals for the future/I am currently exploring...
- ✓ Something you can't read about me on my resume...