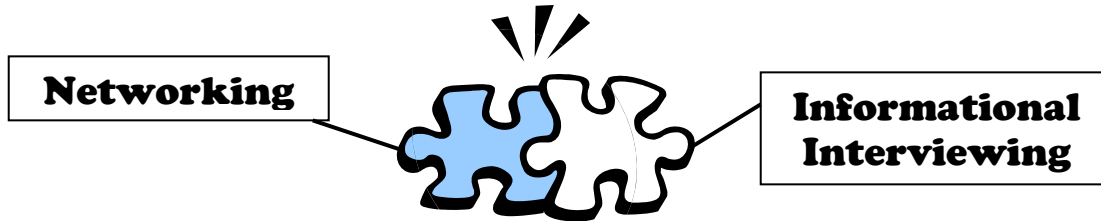


## Networking & the Informational Interview

Networking is involving the people you know in your job search and gradually expanding your system of contacts. When appropriate seek advice, introductions to others or informational interviews to gain a better idea of internship/job prospects, fields and positions of interest and career pathways.



### What Is Networking?

#### Networking:

- is TALKING with people you know for information and advice
- is BUILDING ON a group of people who are already invested in your success
- is DEVELOPING new contacts from people you know
- is TAPPING into the hidden job market which leads to employment opportunities more than any other method.
  - 85% of jobs are found through networking. Ask anyone how they found their job!

#### How Can I Begin to Develop a Network?

- Begin to make a list of everyone you know. If you know where they work, even better. Don't worry about how familiar each contact may be with your chosen field. The key is that each contact knows people and they know others. Eventually you can get to your target.
  - Use the 3 Minutes, 30 Contacts on the back of this guide. You may be surprised at just how many people you know!
- Contact the Career Center to get access to the CARD System. The CARD System is a database of alumni ready to assist you with a variety of career related inquiries – including networking and obtaining professional contacts.
- Consider every interaction you have with someone, (at Wegmans, the car service center, the coffee shop) as adding to your network system. Remember, first impressions mean a lot so be sure you behave professionally in every situation~ you never know how or where your paths may cross in the future!

#### What Do I Do With All of These Contacts?

- Review each person you listed and note:
  - How do I know him/her?
  - What does he/she do?
  - Who else does he/she know that might be able to assist me?
- The contacts that look as though they may be able to provide you with the most information should be highlighted and considered as the first people you will want to conduct an informational interview with.



## Informational Interviewing

Informational interviews involve asking other people about the specifics of their jobs. Everyone loves to talk about their work, whether they are happy in it or not! The value of these types of interviews is that it gives you insight into the realities of a particular field (school counseling involves a lot of paper work, or call center work can be boring, etc.), gets you connected with a professional who can help you, and gives you great information about how to get into a particular field.

For the first level personal contacts, ask to meet for an informational interview of about 20 minutes.

### Getting the First Meeting

- To set up this time, create an introductory script for yourself. If possible, email request.

Hi,

My name is Sam Savory and I am a junior at St. John Fisher College. Betsy McDermott from the Career Center suggested I contact you. (or I found your name in the CARD System in my search for people in the advertising field). As a Communication/Journalism major, I am considering going into the advertising field, and I wondered if you would be willing to answer some questions for me about your job and the industry in the Rochester area. I would be very interested in learning about your career path that led you to where you are today.

I know you have a busy schedule and anticipate our meeting only being about 15-20 minutes. You can contact me at [STS01234@sjfc.edu](mailto:STS01234@sjfc.edu) or (585) 385-5555. I really appreciate your assistance in advance and look forward to speaking with you.

- Of course, depending on why you are contacting the person, the script will change.
- Remember: the focus is on the other person's career path, not you!
- NEVER ask for a job or internship; you always want to ask for advice and/or guidance about the field, or on how to find an internship/job. Expanding your network is not done by force, but accomplished deliberately and thoughtfully. The impression you give in your first contact will remain with you.

### Preparing for the First Meeting

- You've got the time, place and date: now it's time to prepare.
- Research the company, field and position the contact is in. Utilize the links found on <http://home.sjfc.edu/CareerServices/relatedlinks.asp> to conduct your research as well as any others you may have gained from your courses, faculty members, friends, etc.
- Since this person in your network may link you to an opportunity, continue your strong reputation gained in your first correspondence with this first meeting. Be sure to:
  - Dress appropriately
  - Arrive approximately 5-10 minutes early
  - Bring a list of focused questions you would like to ask about contact's job and industry
  - Bring a copy of your resume to leave behind at the end of the interview
- If conducting the discussion over the phone, make sure you have your questions ready and your resume to send if requested to do so.

### At the First Meeting

- Keep the meeting short, 15 to 20 minutes.
- You are in charge of this meeting:
  - Step 1: Introduce yourself and remind contact why you are here and who referred you
  - Step 2: Give a brief background summary. Major, graduation date, future plans
  - Step 3: Ask questions and gather information
  - Step 4: Ask for additional contacts or advice if appropriate
  - Step 5: Close the meeting, thank for time, summarize topic of most interest, agree on follow up.

- Never, ever ask for a job. It puts contacts on the spot and, if they don't know of a position, ends conversations very quickly and uncomfortably.

### **Sample Questions to Ask at the Meeting**

1. How did you get into this particular career?
2. How have you [the contact] grown in your career (career path)?
3. What are the skills and abilities needed in this position?
4. Were there any surprises for you in the nature of the job or industry?
5. What are some of the biggest challenges in this field?
6. What do you enjoy most about this field?
7. What advice would you give to someone entering this field in today's market?
8. What can I be doing now to make myself more marketable for this field?
9. Are there questions I should be asking that I haven't touched on yet?
10. (Relate information you have learned from your research if appropriate)
11. Do you have any contacts you think would be helpful to me in my search?

When leaving, thank contact enthusiastically, mention one thing that was especially helpful and offer them a copy of your resume.

### **After the Meeting**

- Send a thank you letter within 24 hours.
- Set up a tracking system for each phone call, meeting and referral.
- Keep you contacts posted on the results of the referrals they made for you.
- Above all, **communicate** when you have landed and thank everyone who helped you.

# 3 Minutes, 30 Contacts

The people you list here do not have to be in the field you're considering. Your goal is to find out who THEY know from THEIR network as a way to increase your own base of relationships.

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## Relatives

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Membership Affiliations

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Friends from College

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Friends of my Parents

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Co-workers (including supervisor)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Parents of my Friends

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Friends from High School

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Teachers/Professors/Advisors

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Neighbors from Hometown

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Other People

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_