Networking Guide
A Resource for Building Professional Relationships

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WHY NETWORK?

There are countless benefits to networking. You can network with your family, friends, employers, professors, career services, alumni, professional organizations as well as people you meet in your field. But, just in case you are still not convinced of the value of networking … **Put a check next to those items you consider valuable.**

- Reach the right people to get important career and job market information.
- Deepen my understanding of the world of work in a variety of settings.
- Maximize my exposure by reaching out to “friends of friends.”
- Learn directly what is involved on a day-to-day basis beyond what I can find out from research or hearing third-party information.
- Find out what I should be reading and which professional associations I might consider joining to remain up-to-date in my areas of interest.
- Get a perspective of the skills used in a particular position or job.
- To feel more in control of my career direction. I can decide what questions to ask that will give me the desired information in my field of interest.
- Have an opportunity to experience myself grow through shyness, low self-esteem or inhibitions about talking to people.
- Build confidence for interviews.
- Become a more impressive job candidate by doing some “professional homework.”
- Opportunity to redefine my goals each time I get more information, So I will continue to move toward my goals, carried by the process, instead of being paralyzed by not knowing exactly what I should be doing and being embarrassed by it.
- Renew my belief in the goodness of people and their innate desire to be helpful.
- Be proud of doing something tough, i.e. contacting strangers and asking for their time.
- Clarify the weaknesses in my education, skill base and personal development. Areas for growth will become apparent so I can build a development plan accordingly.
- Learn to appreciate what are my unique strengths, interests and talents are so I can capitalize upon them.
- Avoid being stuck in a job I hate.
- It is highly likely that my next job will be found through networking.
- I will gain a network of contacts which may be helpful in the future.
- Get control of my future – an exhilarating experience.
- Save time by being able to tap into information quickly and easily.
SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK IN A NETWORKING SITUATION

So what do you need to know from these generous people who have set aside time to help advise you? What do you want to find out about this person’s occupation that would help you know whether or not it is for you? Open-ended questions that begin with the words; Who, What, When, How and Why, encourage the individual to speak at length about his/her field.

This list of questions is a tool for helping you focus on what you want to ask. You should not ask all these questions. Instead, focus on questions that will give you the kind of information you need to make decisions about your personal career direction. Some sample questions you may want to ask include:

How did you enter into this job/career field?
Could you describe a typical work day for me?
What is the nature of the work?
Who are your customers? Internal and external?
What are the services, products or functions of the organization?
What are the key responsibilities?
What do you find most enjoyable? What don’t you like?
What skills are required in your position on a day-to-day basis?
What personal qualities do you feel are most important in this type of work and why?
What educational background is required?
What kind of experience would help in this career?
What combination of skills, abilities, and aptitudes would be valuable in this field?
What type of technology is integrated into this career?
What recommendations do you have for an entry-level person considering this career?
How do you recommend that someone try to break into this field?
How do most people enter this profession?
What are the employee benefits/beginning salaries like?
What are the emerging jobs in this career field?
What are the mobility possibilities in this career? Between companies? Between states? Outside of the country?
Is your job philosophically consistent with your values?
What effect does this job have on your lifestyle? Social or family life?
What would you have done differently in your career?
If you could start all over again, would you change your career path in any way? Why?
What do you think of my resume? How would you suggest I change it?
I’d like to see what a day is like for someone in this job. Would that be possible?
What are the best sources for learning more? Journals? Conferences? Associations?
Is there anything else you think I need to know?
Can you suggest anyone else who might be helpful for me to talk to?
May I use your name when contacting him/her?
Your 60-Second Commercial  
by Eva Kubu

Use the following guidelines to develop an introduction to use when meeting employers at career fairs and other networking events. Your goal is to create a positive and lasting impression in a brief amount of time.

RESEARCH

• Preview the list of organizations participating in the event and plan a strategy for the day. Put together an “A” list and a “B” list of employers you want to target. Lists of participating employers at Rider career fairs are available on the Broncs Career Link.

• Research all the employers on your “A” list. Look for current facts about the employer, including press releases announcing new projects or developments that will help you make an impression on recruiters.

    Current Facts

    1. ______________________________________________________________________________________________
    2. ______________________________________________________________________________________________

• Review job descriptions pertinent to your major for employer requirements. Note specific knowledge, skills and abilities they seek. List academic or employment experiences and activities where you demonstrated these skills.

    The employer is seeking:
    1. ___________________________________________  1. ___________________________________________
    2. ___________________________________________  2. ___________________________________________
    3. ___________________________________________  3. ___________________________________________
    4. ___________________________________________  4. ___________________________________________

• Review the employer’s mission statement and look for key words that indicate the personal qualities the organization values in their employees. List 2 or 3 of your personal qualities that closely match.

    My personal qualities:
    1. ______________________________ 2. _____________________________ 3. _____________________________

DEVELOP YOUR INTRODUCTION

Review the sample below. Using the information above, prepare and practice a brief (60-second) commercial or introduction to use when meeting employer representatives.

Hello, my name is _______. I am currently a junior, majoring in economics and working part-time as a supervisor at Rider Campus Information Services. This role has enhanced my communication, management and leadership skills. In addition, I had an internship over the summer with ABC Company where I worked in a team environment on a variety of marketing and website development projects. I recently read an article about your company’s plans for business growth in the Northeast, and I’m interested in learning more.

Notes:
(1) Practice your introduction with a friend or career counselor so it sounds conversational rather than rehearsed.
(2) You may want to break your opening remarks into two or three segments rather than delivering it all at once.
Good luck with that all-important first impression!
Telephone Networking Tips

Review the following guidelines when calling employers or networking contacts.

1. Introduce yourself by stating your name, your year at Rider, and your major.
2. Mention the name of the person or organization that referred you.
3. Ask if you have reached the contact at a good time and, if not, ask when would be a more convenient time.
4. Indicate that you are conducting a networking campaign to identify individuals who can offer advice about how to pursue opportunities in the field.
5. Ask if the contact would be willing to meet you for an informational interview and when would be a convenient day and time.
6. Prepare a list of questions about the field and typical career paths. Ask open-ended questions to facilitate discussion.
7. Keep your conversation brief and be sure to express appreciation.

Sample Script
Hello, my name is ________ and I am currently a _________ at Rider University, majoring in _______.
I (was given your name by) (know you have extensive experience in...)(recently sent you an email). Is this a good time?
I am calling to seek your advice because of your experience in the field of _______. Your insight about trends and future prospects in the industry would be helpful as I begin my (career research) (job search). Would you be willing to meet with me for an informational interview?

Career Fair Tips

A. Prior to the Career Fair
1. Plan to wear a professional outfit—first impressions are critical and lasting
   • Do not wear jeans, t-shirts, wrinkled clothes, sneakers or hats.
   • Employers strongly discourage mini skirts, tank/ halter/sleeveless tops, low cut or tight fitting shirts, facial or tongue piercings, and visible tattoos.
   • Women—wear a suit, pants suit, blazer with skirt or dress, conservative color, no heavy jewelry or perfume.
   • Men—wear a suit, jacket & tie with slacks, conservative color, no heavy cologne or after-shave.
2. Prepare plenty of copies of your resume—more than you think you’ll need
   • Have an attractive resume on good quality paper, using bold, underline, and bullets; we strongly suggest white or other neutral-color paper.
   • Check carefully for typos, spelling, and grammar errors.
   • Have it critiqued at Career Services.
   • Keep your resume in a folder or portfolio at the event. Do not bring them to the career fair on a disk.
   • Also prepare a scannable resume free of special effects so it can be scanned into the employer’s applicant tracking system for online screening. Bring both types of resumes to the career fair. Some employers may ask you to submit your resume through their company website.
3. Familiarize yourself with the employers
   • Decide which employers you want to speak with and prioritize them—a list of participating employers is available on our website two weeks prior to each event.
   • Click the “Details” button next to each employer for recruiting needs and contact information.
   • Click on the employer name to go to their website.
4. Market yourself
   • Prepare a 60-second infomercial about yourself—your major, year in school, jobs & internships, career interests, activities, skills & strengths. What attracts you to the employer?

B. At the Career Fair
1. Come early in the day—employers are at their peak and there is less competition
   • Bring a pen, folder or portfolio for your resumes, and perhaps a pad of paper.
   • Carry as little as possible (no coats or backpacks, etc.).
   • Turn off cell phones in the employer areas.
2. Approach employer representatives with confidence
   • Introduce yourself, make good eye contact, and offer a firm handshake.
   • Give the recruiter your resume and tell him/her about yourself and your career interests.
   • Ask questions about job openings/descriptions, the organization, application procedures, etc.
   • Collect business cards and employer literature.
3. Speak with as many employers as possible
   • Visit your top choices first. Avoid standing in a long line to speak with one recruiter when you could talk with 3 or 4 others in the same time period.

C. After the Career Fair
1. Send a thank you letter or email message restating your interest to those employers in which you are particularly interested. Include a copy of your resume. Since most candidates will not follow up with employers after the career fair, this will make you stand out.
“Tell Me About Yourself”
The Two-Minute Drill
by Eva Kubu

Interviews often begin with this question. Sometimes students do not know where to begin, how much information to provide, or how to end their response. Use the worksheet below to outline and develop a well-rehearsed summary of your education and experience that includes how you became interested in the field and some of your most significant accomplishments or strengths.

Education
Begin with your education. Mention your year in school, your major(s) and minor, and how you became interested in the field. You can include your GPA (if 3.0 or higher), skills you have learned, or an example of an academic project. You can also mention memberships in campus organizations and any leadership roles.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Work Experience
Discuss your current position, if you are currently working. If you worked in the past, mention past job(s). Focus on transferable skills that would be valuable to employers in the field, professional accomplishments or recognition you received.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Key Strengths
Based on your research of the organization, mention two key strengths that match their requirements.

1. ________________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Your Future
End with why you are interested in working for the organization. State that you look forward to learning more about how you might be able to contribute your skills, talents, and experience in the future.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Example
I am currently a junior at Rider University, majoring in computer science. I became interested in computers at a young age and took a few college-level programming courses while in high school, which helped me decide on my major.

I have excelled in all my coursework at Rider, while working 20 hours a week at the University Computing Center in a technical support role. I enjoy assisting users and problem solving, because it is challenging and I learn something new every day.

In addition to this, I had an opportunity to intern over the summer with XYZ Company, where I contributed to software development projects, including database design. I am particularly interested in this area and this is where I would like to begin my career.

In reviewing the job description, I was drawn to the database design aspects where I feel I would be able to make an immediate contribution. I look forward to learning more about your MIS department and the challenges of the position.

Practice
Using your notes, develop your response and then schedule a mock interview with one of our career counselors to practice your oral delivery. Your response should be approximately two minutes in length.
AFTER CAREER FAIR LETTER

[Your name]
[Street Address]
[City, ST ZIP Code]

[Recipient Name]
[Title]
[Company Name]
[Street Address]
[City, ST ZIP Code]

November 24, 2009

Dear [Recipient Name]:

Thank you for speaking with me at the recent Rider University Career Fair. Our conversation made a striking impression on me, and I am interested in any opportunities [Company name] has to offer.

As we discussed, I have enclosed my resume as a follow-up to our discussion. Allow me to provide this brief overview of what I can offer [Company name]:

**Leadership:** Student Government Vice President, Sorority President, Big Sister Volunteer while maintaining a 3.5 GPA.

**Interpersonal Strengths:** I am pleased to report that my professors describe me reliable, positive, and passionate about my field of study.

**Goals:** My obtaining experience in your company, I will have reached my career goals which are [X, Y and Z].

I look forward to the possibility of discussing my qualifications in further detail. Thank you again for your time at the career fair. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Enclosure
NETWORKING LETTER

Your Name
Your Present Address
City, State, Zip Code
Telephone Number
Date of Writing

Employer’s Name
Title
Name of Organization
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr. Blank:

1st paragraph – Make a connection! Tell how you heard of the company and contact person – i.e. past presentation, website, the name of the newspaper. State who referred you to the contact, if applicable, and why they referred you. Also, if you state a common interest, such as having attended the same college, state it here.

2nd paragraph – State a purpose! Describe the reasons why you want to connect with them and what you are looking to accomplish. State how your qualifications and future goals/plans may help both you and the contact in future endeavors. Give examples of your skills and past experiences that may help you create a connection with the contact.

3rd paragraph – Request a meeting! You may want to state specifically when you plan to call or write about arranging a brief meeting. Thank them for considering your request.

Sincerely yours,

Hand-written signature

Your typed name
Dear Ms. Preston:

After reading about Prospero’s aggressive and successful publicity campaigns in the October 14 edition of *Boston Business Journal*, I began researching your firm as part of my own campaign to explore careers in communication. Knowing my interest in Prospero, Dr. John Smith, my Communications professor, gave me your name as one of his former students.

Would you be willing to speak with me about your work at Prospero and your own career path?

I see corporate communications as an area where I can offer an employer organizational, interpersonal, and writing skills. For example, while working last year in Rider University’s Alumni Relations office, I was in charge of promoting the Fall Alumni Reunion Bash. I designed and implemented an innovative mail campaign that targeted more than 19,000 letters to seven different audiences. Attendance increased 36 percent over the previous four years.

Based on my experience with audience analysis and communication, I would like to learn more about careers where I can use these skills. I welcome your advice. I’ll call you within the next week to see if you might be able to meet with me at your convenience. In the meantime, if you’d like to reach me, my contact information is (609) 555-9887 and lee@rider.edu.

Thanks for considering a request from a fellow Rider alumni.

Sincerely,

*Ray Lee* (signature)

Ray Lee
Many people use ads as their sole job search technique. Unfortunately, statistics show that only 10% to 20% of jobs are ever published—which means that 80% to 90% of jobs remain hidden in the job market. For this reason, networking remains the number one job search strategy.

Networking Defined
A network is a group of supporters who serve as resources for your job search and ultimately for your career. Some great contacts might include people you meet at business and social meetings who provide you with career information and advice. Students often hesitate to network because they feel awkward asking for help, but it should be an integral part of any job search. Though you might feel nervous when approaching a potential contact, networking is a skill that develops with practice, so don’t give up. Most people love to talk about themselves and their jobs and are willing to give realistic—and free—advice.

Eight Keys to Networking
1. Be Prepared
First, define what information you need and what you are trying to accomplish. Your purpose is to get to know people who can provide information regarding careers and leads. Some of the many benefits of networking include increased visibility within your field, propelling your professional development, finding mentors, increasing your chances of promotion, and perhaps finding your next job.

Second, know yourself—your education, experience and skills. Practice a concise, one-minute presentation of yourself so that people will know the kinds of areas in which you are interested. Your networking meeting should include the following elements: introduction, self-overview, Q&A, obtaining referrals, and closing.

2. Be Targeted
Identify your network. For some, “I don’t have a network. I don’t know anyone,” may be your first reaction. Start by listing everyone you know who are potential prospects: family members, friends, faculty, neighbors, classmates, alumni, bosses, co-workers, and community associates. Attend meetings of organizations in your field of interest and get involved. You never know where you are going to meet someone who could lead you to your next job.

Questions to Ask During Networking Meetings
- What do you like most (least) about your work?
- Can you describe a typical workday or week?
- What type of education and experience do you need to remain successful in this field?
- What are the future career opportunities in this field?
- What advice would you give to someone trying to break into this field?
- What are the challenges in balancing work and personal life?
- Why do people enter/leave this field or company?
- Which companies have the best track record for promoting minorities?
- With whom would you recommend I speak? When I call, may I use your name?

3. Be Professional
Ask your networking prospects for advice—not for a job. Your meetings should be a source of career information, advice, and contacts. Start with a firm handshake, eye contact and a warm smile. Focus on asking for one thing at a time.

4. Be Patient
Heena Noorani, research analyst with New York-based Thomson Financial, recommends avoiding the feeling of discouragement if networking does not provide immediate results. She advises, “Be prepared for a slow down after you get started. Stay politely persistent with your leads and build momentum. Networking is like gardening: You do not plant the seed, then quickly harvest. Networking requires cultivation that takes time and effort for the process to pay off.”

5. Be Focused on Quality—Not Quantity
In a large group setting, circulate and meet people, but don’t try to talk to everyone. It’s better to have a few meaningful conversations than 50 hasty introductions. Don’t cling to people you already know; you’re unlikely to build new contacts that way. If you are at a reception, be sure to wear a nametag and collect or exchange business cards, so you can later contact the people you meet.

6. Be Referral-Centered
The person you are networking with may not have a job opening, but he or she may know someone who is hiring. The key is to exchange information and then expand your network by obtaining additional referrals each time you meet someone new. Be sure to mention the person who referred you.

7. Be Proactive
Stay organized and track your networking meetings. Keep a list of your contacts and update it frequently with the names of any leads given to you. Send a thank-you note or email if appropriate. Ask if you can follow-up the conversation with a phone call, or even better, with a more in-depth meeting in the near future.

8. Be Dedicated to Networking
Most importantly, networking should be ongoing. You will want to stay in touch with contacts over the long haul—not just when you need something. Make networking part of your long-term career plan.

Dos & Don’ts of Networking
- Do keep one hand free from a briefcase or handbag so you can shake hands when necessary
- Do bring copies of your resume or business cards
- Don’t tell them your life story; you are dealing with professionals, so be professional
- Don’t be shy or afraid to ask for what you need
- Don’t pass up opportunities to network

Written by Thomas J. Denham, managing partner and career counselor of Careers in Transition LLC
How to Use Social Media in Your Job Search

Author: Rachel Levy

Most people know that the best way to find a job is through networking. You can go to networking meetings, tap into your own personal network, or ask friends who they know.

With the Internet buzzing with social media, there are similarly many ways to use social media in order to network, and eventually find a job. According to an article in DMNews, Jeremiah Owyang from Forrester Research agrees that social networks allow all parties involved to better search for and reach their target.

I decided to write down my thoughts on the topic. I also had an opportunity to talk to Warren Sukernek who found his job at Radian6 through Twitter! He gave me lots of great advice in this area, so I've incorporated his thoughts below.

LinkedIn
If you're not already on LinkedIn, you definitely need to be. Basically, it's a site that allows you to connect to people you know. It also allows you to see profiles of anyone else on LinkedIn, and gives you ways to connect to them. There are a few ways you can use LinkedIn in a job search:

- **Company Search** - One of the best ways to use LinkedIn is if you have a very specific company you are interested in. You search on that company, and hopefully find people who are connected to other people you know. Then, you can ask your personal contact to connect you. Or, if you pay $30/month, you have the opportunity to email people who you don't have a contact in common with.
- **Job Postings** - LinkedIn allows employers to post jobs on the site. The jobs are usually high quality, professional jobs.
- **Email** - When I was first laid off, I sent a large email to everyone in my LinkedIn network, letting them know of my situation, and asking for any help or people they could put me in touch with.
- **Blog Link** - LinkedIn now gives you the ability to link your blog post to your profile. So every time I post a new blog post, it updates on my profile, so anyone looking at my profile will see what I'm writing about. It also includes the updated post in the weekly update emails that go out to your connections.
- **Twitter Link** - Similar to Blog Link, LinkedIn also pulls your conversations from Twitter. So, anyone who is not on Twitter, can see what you are tweeting about.

Warren's LinkedIn Advice:
- **Recommendations** - Warren suggested getting many more recommendations on my profile.
- **Status Updates** - Similar to Facebook, LinkedIn also has status updates. Warren suggests that it's a good idea to update your status, to better inform your connections what you've been up to.
- **Headline** - LinkedIn gives you a place to add a professional headline. I didn't realize that was really seen by anyone, so I had mine as "Consultant". Warren's advice is to make the more exciting and enticing. Mine now reads "Innovative marketer with a drive for results."
Twitter
The best part of Twitter is that it allows you to connect with people you don't know, based on common interests. What a great way to do some networking!

- **Basic Networking** - I am now much more connected to people who are involved in areas I'm interested in. Today I heard about jobs available at two companies. I tweeted two people I met on Twitter, and in minutes I had some information about the jobs.
- **Job Postings** - I am connected to a few people who know about jobs that I would not have otherwise known, i.e. @socialmediajob or other recruiters.
- **Connecting** - When someone follows me or I follow them, I read their bio thoroughly. If it looks like they work somewhere I might be interested in, or if I think they might be someone who could connect me to others, I get in touch with them. A few have said no or not responded at all, but for the most part, everyone is very open to meeting or talking.
- **Companies** - My new favorite Twitter tool is Twellow (on my list of programs I "use regularly"), which actually searches people's bios and URLs on their bios. It's amazing! For example, I did a quick search on Shift Communications, a company I would love to work for and I could see that 13 people from Shift are on Twitter.

Warren's Twitter Advice:
- **What's Going On** - Warren suggests I be more proactive in talking about what's going on in regards to my job search. So, mentioning things more often about interviews I have had, or people I have met with. This keeps it fresh in people's heads that I am looking for a job.
- **Reaching Out** - Warren also suggests just reaching out to people I want to network with and saying something like "Hi - I'm looking to break into social media. Is there anyone you can think of to refer me to?"
- **Twitter Name** - Warren's opinion is that your Twitter name should be your name, as it will help in your search engine results.

Facebook
I use Facebook primarily for connecting with friends or people I know and reconnecting with people in my past. But, it can also be an effective networking tool.

- **Notes** - While I do know everyone I'm friends with on Facebook, I don't necessarily know or remember where each person works. And, I definitely don't know where each of their friends work. So, when I first was laid off, I posted a "note" on Facebook, explaining the situation, and what I was looking for. A note tends to stay on people's screens longer than a status update, and you can write much more.
- **Status Update** - I do frequently post status updates relating to my job search, to keep it top of mind that I'm still looking for a job. I'll say things like "I had a great interview this morning... keep your fingers crossed!" or "I have a networking meeting later today with a company I'm really interested in!". I also write a status update with a link when I write a new blog post.

Warren's Facebook Advice:
- **Notes for Blog Posts** - Create a "note" for each blog post. As I mentioned above, notes stay on people's screen's longer. I think that some people may be more likely to read it if the text is right there on the screen rather than having to click through to the blog. Also, if they comment on it on Facebook, it becomes even more viral.
- **Tag Your Friends** - If you write a blog post that includes a reference to a friend on Facebook, tag them. That way, their friends will be alerted to your post, and your message will spread more quickly.