



Networking is one of the least understood, yet most successful techniques you can utilize in the planning, building and advancement of your career. A network can be viewed as a garden— a work in progress that develops over time. The more time you spend cultivating your network, the better your “harvest” will be. Here are some tips about networking that are sure to help you succeed!

### The Basic Rules

- Networking should be viewed as an information— sharing activity. People are more willing to share information with you if they trust your intentions and motivations. Don't just “use” people— if there is a way to give back do so.
- Networking is more formal and structured than you may think. Plan your activities, and be professional in your dealings. The way you go about developing your network tells potential employers a lot about how you'd approach an employment situation.
- Networking is about relationships. It should not be viewed as a one-time contact. The best networking relationships are those that are developed and maintained over time. Keep in touch with those in your network on a regular basis.



### Laying the Groundwork

- Before you start, you need to identify your career path. The Center for Career Development can help you assess your strengths, interests, and values to determine better fits for occupational areas.
- Develop a “warm” and a “cold” contact list— include professors, former employers, internships supervisors, family, friends, college and high school alums with whom you are in contact.
- Develop a list of questions to use in informational interviews (refer to the Center for Career Development handout on Informational Interviewing).
- Send a cover letter and resume requesting an informational interview, or set them up by phone.
- Practice a mini-commercial about yourself, describing your career interests, your strengths and skills, and relevant work, internships, or leadership experience.

### Planting the Seeds



- Limit your informational interview to no more than one hour.
- Dress as you would for a job interview. Take another copy of your resume, bring your informational interview questions, and take notes when appropriate.
- Ask for the person's business card at the conclusion of the interview.

### Cultivate the Relationship

- Write a thank-you note after the informational interview.
- Follow up on all leads or contacts that the person gave you. Not following up would be rude after the person took the time to give them to you.
- Provide feedback to contacts about your activities and leads. This will help them know what you are doing and can help them re-direct you or give you other contacts or ideas.

Adapted from Watson, M (2001). Cultivating networks: Make your opportunities bloom. Planning Job Choices: 2001.  
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Make Your Networks Grow