

# Networking

...tapping into the hidden job market

Most job opportunities are never advertised; they are filled through word-of-mouth or networking -- known as the "hidden job market." Networking involves developing a broad list of contacts -- people you meet through various social, business and educational functions -- and building on their knowledge in your career exploration and job search.

## Sound SCARY? Well really IT'S NOT!

Networking is as simple as having a conversation.

- Start with your family, friends, and neighbours.
- Once you are comfortable, take the time to network with bosses, colleagues, professors.
- Work towards networking with community members in your field, alumni or at career events.

People in your network may be able to give you job leads, offer you advice and information, and introduce you to others so that you can expand your network.

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## Networking Anecdote

"I was volunteering with a local organization and they let me know about a job opening. I was the successful candidate for the job and one reason was because they knew me and my work."

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## Networking Tips

- Your most valued contacts will be people who have interests in common with you, people you already know.
- Know your goals. Who are you trying to meet? What are you hoping to discover?
- Prepare to contribute. When meeting a contact, bring conversation topics and news to talk about.
- Your primary goal should be meeting someone, not getting something. If your contact does not have information available right now, leaving a positive impression may cause them to keep you in mind when they hear about openings in other organizations. They may even make a few calls on your behalf.
- Maintain regular contact with people – update them on your education, ask their opinion on a school paper or project. The extra effort to maintain contact could produce rewards.
- Give back to the network by remembering to share information with others you've met.
- Your attitude is the most important asset you will need, second is your personality.
- Typical outcomes of networking are:
  - 225 résumés sent = 1 offer
  - 2 personal contacts per week for 12 weeks = 1 offer
- Expect it to take 30 to 100 days to build a results-producing network.
- The best time to reach decision makers is before 8:00 am and after 5:30 pm.

# Informational Interviewing

## A Step-by-Step Guide to Increasing or Creating Your Network

### 1. Do Your Research

First, it is important to determine the organization and person/people to contact. Employer directories, yellow pages, professional associations, and websites are great resources. Consider whether you want to speak to Human Resources, someone doing the work you are interested in, or the decision-maker. Often you may start with one person and then have the opportunity to speak with others.

### 2. Have a Solid Reason for the Informational Interview

Integrity is critical in informational interviewing. You need to be clear and up front with any contacts about your reasons for wanting to speak with them. In career exploration, it is important to remember that information can be as valuable as a job. It is not appropriate to set a meeting for information and then ask for a job.

### 3. Scheduling the Informational Interview

You can make the initial contact by phone, email, letter, or in person. Decide what you are more comfortable with and what you think will be most effective for this particular contact.

- Take the time to briefly introduce yourself and your background.
- Be specific about what you want – amount of time (approx. 20-30 minutes), type of contact, etc.

### 4. During the Interview

As with an employment interview, you will want to ensure you know where you are going and arrive on time. Dress appropriately for the work environment. Be prepared with 8-10 questions and be ready to listen and take notes. Always bring your résumé as you may want to ask the contact for some feedback, or it may be appropriate to leave them a copy. By being prepared for this interview, you will be demonstrating your interest, your organizational skills, and you'll be making a great first impression.

### 5. Questions to Ask

- What is your job like? What does a typical day look like?
- Why did this type of work interest you and how did you get started? How did you get your job?
- Can you suggest some ways a student could obtain the necessary experience?
- Why did you decide to work for this company? What do you like most about this company?
- How well did your education prepare you for this job?
- Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?
- Are there other people in the field/company you would recommend I speak with?

### 6. Final Steps

Always send a thank you note. This is also an opportunity to send them a résumé for their files, if they do not already have one. Finally, record, analyze, and evaluate the information.

For more information visit: [trentu.ca/careerspace](https://trentu.ca/careerspace)  
Or drop by the Student Centre, room 3.10.