

Networking Your Way to a Job

What is Networking?

Networking is talking with people who can help you explore career options and goals.

It is the best way to develop relationships -- and gain information that will be helpful to you in your job search.

Why should I do it?

Because it is the most effective job search method! Studies show that 70% to 80% of jobs are found through some form of networking.

Why would anyone help me?

People like to help people, especially by talking about themselves, their jobs and contacts.

And you may be able to help them in some way - if not now, perhaps in the future.

Just remember, you are asking for information when you network, not a job. But networking produces job opportunities.

Elon Career Center
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REASONS TO NETWORK

- To explore career options
- To get information about a career field, industry, or organization
- To discover job opportunities
- To get to know people in your chosen field or industry
- To let people know who you are and what you want to do

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

Before you contact anyone, think about why you are contacting them and what you want to say. Are you looking for information about different careers so you can choose your career path? Or, are you looking for people working in a specific company or career field to find job opportunities?

When you have a clear idea of your purpose, you will be able to develop an effective message about who you are and what you want to accomplish. Make sure you clearly tell everyone you speak with what information you are looking for and how they can help you.

WHO DO I CONTACT?

Anyone you know or can get to know!

Potential networking contacts include:

- Family
- Faculty/Staff at Elon
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Current/Past Employers
- Internship/Co-op Supervisors
- Alumni (Mentors on Elon Job Network; other resources)
- Members of Professional Associations

And of course, you want to ask these people for other contacts who may be able to help you.

Keep in mind that some of these contacts may be able to help you directly, while others may be able to refer you to someone else who can help. As you talk to more people, you will discover more opportunities.

WHAT DO I SAY?

Introduce yourself in a clear and concise way and then quickly let the person know why you are contacting him or her. If someone referred you, use that individual's name in your introduction.

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Ideally, you want to arrange a time to meet with the person directly (or by phone or email, depending on the circumstances) so you can ask them detailed questions and gain useful information.

Example Introduction:

“Hi, Mr. Smith. My name is Jane Jones and I am a classmate of your son. He suggested that I give you a call.”

“I am considering public relations as a career and I’m trying to learn more about the field and the type of opportunities that are available. Doug told me that you work for the public relations firm of Smith and Sanders and have a lot of experience in PR.”

“I’d like to sit down with you and talk at your convenience to get your advice. Would you be willing to talk with me?”

Caution: Be prepared to ask your questions when you call; they may want to talk right away.

MAKING AND MAINTAINING YOUR CONTACTS

Once you set an appointment for an “information interview,” you need to prepare. Organize your

questions in advance so you can facilitate the meeting in a professional way.

Steps to a successful information interview:

- Prepare your questions and a brief introduction of yourself in advance (see sample question list)
- Dress professionally and take copies of your resume, your list of questions, and any other materials you may want to present
- Maintain good posture and eye contact
- Take notes during the meeting
- Be attentive and enthusiastic
- End on time
- Ask for other contacts they can recommend
- Thank the contact for his/her time and information
- Follow up with a thank you note within 24 hours

Maintain relationships with the people who took time to help you by:

- Following up on all referrals to new contacts
- Making sure you follow through with any commitments you made during the meeting (or after)

- Periodically touch base with your contacts to see if they have additional information, leads, advice, or contacts that might be helpful

Once you find a job (or choose a career field), let your contacts know; it’s a great way to maintain your network and possibly help those who helped you.

To learn more about networking, contact the Career Center and set up an appointment.