

CAREER GUIDE



NETWORKING AND PROFESSIONALISM

CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER



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Networking and Professionalism



DEFINITION: Networking is the process of using contacts made in business, through college or family and friends for purposes beyond the reason for the initial contact.

Steps to Successful Networking

1. Name the People in Your Network

Be sure to include all contacts you have met (high school and college):

- Friends and family
- Parents of friends and roommates
- Coaches
- Faculty and teachers
- Staff and administrators
- Academic and club advisers
- Alumni and previous employers

2. Define Your Network

Research everyone in your network and gather as much information on each person as possible. This should include:

- Company and position title
- Phone, email, address
- Where you met
- Who introduced you
- What you have discussed
- What you would like to learn
- Comments about the network

3. Record All Networking Activity

This will help you stay organized. Be sure to track all of the information you have gained and keep business cards given to you by people in your network. Keep expanding your network by attending conferences, joining professional organizations, volunteering in your community, or making new connections on LinkedIn.

4. Discover Your Networks

Finding an internship or job in today's market is a very competitive process as you could be one of hundreds of applicants. Having a network may give you an edge allowing you to obtain position openings more efficiently. A network will make it easier for you to stand out in a large crowd of qualified individuals. It is the most effective way to find a job.

5. When Is Networking Appropriate?

Networking is an ongoing process which can begin as early as the high school years and is especially important during your college career.

Because networking is ongoing, it is important to maintain your network, even once you have secured a job. Reconnecting with your network allows you to seek a job or internship with ease.

6. What Career Field Is Most Suitable for Networking?

Networking is suitable for all professionals regardless of the career field or professional level. Depending on the culture of the profession, networking experiences may differ. Some organizations may encourage networking through various work functions such as professional or social gatherings. In other industries, you may have to work more independently to network.

7. Follow Up with Contacts

It is most appropriate to follow up with each person you contact by writing a brief thank-you letter immediately after your meeting. Be sure to maintain ongoing interactions with your contacts. The purpose of keeping in touch is to be sure your network will think of you when an opportunity arises.

Some reasons you may want to follow up with your network include:

- Sending an updated resume
- Updating the contact on the progress you have made and making them aware of any results based on the contact's recommendation
- Sharing new personal information (i.e., academic success, marriage, new baby, change of address)

Networking is imperative to the job and internship search process. Your network should include people who are willing to give you information about the field and industry of employment, as well as feedback on your career development. Your network should also include people who may be in a position to tell you about job opportunities that are open either within their organization or elsewhere.

Always Remember to:

- Treat networking as a two-way process; help others and serve as someone else's contact.
- Keep up-to-date lists of your networks.
- Keep time open for networking during events.
- Follow up on all leads provided to you and listen to advice.
- Thank your contact for his or her time and be patient throughout the process.
- Take advantage of as many networking opportunities as possible.

Social Media and Professional Networking

SOCIAL AND professional online networks have been integrated into our daily lives. Although there are many benefits to these sites, it is important that you understand each may have a negative impact, especially if you are a young professional seeking employment or acceptance into graduate or professional school. Here are a few guidelines to help you represent yourself in the best possible way.

Tips for Social Networking

- **Can having a blog, a personal website or an account on a social networking site impact your job search, for better or for worse?** It could. Some people list their personal website or blog on a resume for employers to see. Employers may Google a prospective employee to learn more about that individual. Posting company news, pictures and even making positive comments about a company have cost bloggers and social networkers potential jobs or internships.
- **Is your content appropriate for all eyes to see?** Although your primary audience may be your friends or family, often employers will take initiative to review content, messages, postings and any other information that will help them learn more about you. You may not want to write about controversial topics.
- **Would you want your future employer seeing your page?** If not, set it to private. Even if your personal content is not unprofessional, you may be linked to others who do have inappropriate messages on their site.

Professional Networking

- **LinkedIn is a popular professional networking site.** If you have your profile on LinkedIn, treat it as you would your resume and cover letter. Keep it updated, professional, and error-free. Check connections regularly as a means of networking and communicating with professionals in your field. Choose connections that you are comfortable with and who display appropriate information.
- **Be consistent.** Be sure your resume reflects the same information listed in your LinkedIn profile.
- **Should prospective employers be reading your personal information?** Maybe not. However, if you put it on the Internet and it is readily accessible, they might.

Job Fairs



THE THOUGHT of a job fair may conjure up visions of convention centers filled with recruiters collecting resumes, asking questions and assessing your interests and qualifications. This is an accurate description of most job fairs, whether recruiting for internships, full-time jobs or even graduate school. It can be both intimidating and exciting at the same time. That is why it is crucial to be prepared so that you can make the most of the day.

Keep in mind that a job fair may not get you a job right away, but making contacts with employers and alumni is sure to lead you in the right direction. The fair will give you a chance to gain confidence in the skills you have, a greater knowledge of what employers are looking for, and can enhance your networking abilities and narrow the industries and opportunities to those that best fit your targeted career.

Making the Most of a Job Fair

Prior to the Fair

Prepare Your Resumé

- If you need assistance in preparing a resumé, use the examples found on the Career and Professional Development Center website and portal pages. Once you have started, meet with your career consultant to perfect your resumé.
- Have extra copies of your resumé in case of last-minute additions to the employer directory.

Research the Employer

- Identify employers you would like to meet and make notes regarding each employer. Review comments the day of the fair.
- Research company websites; connect with friends or alumni already working at the organization. Check with the Career and Professional Development Center to gain a better understanding of the employer.

Research Yourself

- Review your resumé, experiences, career goals and transferable skills.
- Practice discussing your qualifications and goals.
- Consider where you want to work geographically, what you like doing and what you are generally looking for in an internship or full-time position.
- Prepare an elevator pitch and practice in front of a mirror or with friends and family to gain confidence. (See page 12).
- If you need specific accommodations at the job fair (such as accessible ramps, accessible parking spots, interpreter), you should inform the Career and Professional Development Center.
- Prepare your professional business attire. Make sure it is ironed and clean.

The Day of the Fair

Arrive at the Fair

- Arrive at check-in and obtain an updated list of employers and job fair literature.
- Budget your time. Explore the job fair layout and map out your strategy to reach the companies most important to you.
- Avoid personal phone conversations in the restroom or other areas near the fair.

Meet the Employer

- Always visit your target companies (top 10-20 choices) first, then work toward other interests.
- Some lines may be extremely long. If this is the case, make contact with other employers and come back to the employer when the line has subsided.
- Approach employers on an individual basis, not in the company of your friends.
- Smile, offer a firm handshake and introduce yourself to the employer.

Three to five days after the event, write or email a follow-up thank-you letter expressing your gratitude and your interest in the position and company.

- Offer your resumé and present your elevator pitch.
- Talk to the employer about your job interests.
- Do not ask an employer “What does your company do?” even if you are visiting an employer you have not researched. Instead, take a moment to review his or her display materials and ask questions seeking additional information about something you see.
- Ask questions about the position and the organization.
- Try to prepare questions based on what you have already learned about the employer. For example, ask the employer to clarify something specific that you read or have him or her expand upon

something he or she discussed previously. The question could be specific or general to the industry. See page 30 for questions to ask the interviewer.

- Take ALL literature presented to you by the employer.
- Complete an application if asked to do so by the employer.
- Learn the next step in the interview process and ask the employer for a business card.
- Thank the employer and offer a firm handshake.
- After leaving the booth, take notes about your conversation with the employer.

After the Fair
Follow Up

- Gather all information and business cards collected at the event.
- Three to five days after the event, write or email a follow-up thank-you letter expressing your gratitude and your interest in the position and company.
- Add all contacts to your list of “networks.”

Keep Records

- Assess interactions with employers and decide which positions interest you.
- Create a spreadsheet with important notes about the employer, the interactions and the next step in the process.

The Elevator Pitch

THE ELEVATOR PITCH is one of the most important aspects of your career and professional development. Always tailor your “pitch” to the unique needs of each employer. It can be used during:

- Job fairs and networking events when introducing yourself to an employer.
- An interview to answer the question “Tell me about yourself?”
- Other social, academic or professional gatherings.

Purpose

It is a brief statement describing the benefits of investing in a particular product or service, or YOU. This format enables the listener to quickly learn your specific, unique and impressive attributes.

Benefit

You will come across more poised, confident and career-focused by opening with your elevator pitch.

Use

- In a cover letter — to highlight your background and key abilities.
- During an interview — in answering the question “Tell me about yourself.”
- During professional, social and organizational meetings — when you must introduce yourself (i.e., job fairs, networking events, informational interviews, presentations).

Contains Personal Attributes

- Details the job title or the type of position you are seeking.
- Sells your professional abilities and experiences.
- Emphasizes your individual strengths and links them to the needs of the employer.
- Uses descriptive statements of your skills and abilities.

General Structure

- Opening Statement — Discuss what you are currently doing (describe job or education), and what you know about the company.
- Next Statement — Discuss two or three skill sets you have and how they relate to the position and employer.
- Closing Statement — Remember to:
 1. Ask the next step in the interviewing process.
 2. Offer a firm handshake.
 3. Obtain a business card from the professional.

Elevator Pitch—Example 1

My name is Janine Thomas. I am a current senior at Saint Vincent College majoring in psychology. I will be graduating in May. As you can see on my resumé, I have had much experience working with children and teenage populations. I would like to work for The Children’s Group and use the education and skills I have gained during my internship and classroom experiences.

I am here today to discuss the full-time Counselor I position at The Children’s Group. I learned from your website that you specialize in emotional and behavioral issues. I have been interested in this type of work since my internship last summer at Pressley Ridge where I had the opportunity to work with children serving as a role model, assisting with behavioral modification. I also served as the facilitator for both group and family interventions. I am hoping this experience, along with my psychology background, will allow me to succeed in the Counselor I position.

Could you tell me a little more about the Counselor I position and what you are looking for in an ideal candidate?

Email or LinkedIn Connection Request Etiquette

INTERNSHIP AND job searching can be done in a number of ways. The up-to-date approach to cold calling is either an email introduction or a connect request on LinkedIn. When using these techniques you need to be sure you are following some basic guidelines. Read the following etiquette tips to be sure you are leaving employers with a positive impression.

Before You Reach Out

- Do your research. Know as much as possible about the organization before you contact someone. Determine what your purpose is. This will also help you decide who to contact.
- Be sure to get the proper spelling of the person's name.
- Be prepared and have questions ready.
- Be specific about your request but get to the point in a kind manner.

The Request

- Begin your introduction with a statement instead of a question. If it's Monday morning, "Good morning Ms. X, I hope you had a nice weekend."
- Explain your interest in their work and how you came to know about it or explain your interest in their company's work.
- Have a clear understanding of the reason you are reaching out and be able to articulate your motives politely and concisely. Are you connecting for a job, internship, informational interview or other reason?
- If you are sending a LinkedIn connect request ask them if they would like to connect.
- Close with thanks and kind regards.

Following Up

- LinkedIn — Connection requests may go unanswered for some time depending on how often a person uses the service.
- Email — Wait a week before emailing again. When you follow-up you can offer your phone number as a convenience.
- If you engage in a regular correspondence, or they complete an informational interview, remember to say thank you.

Sample Introduction for Email or LinkedIn

Good afternoon Mr. X,

I hope your week is going well so far. I recently read your somnambulation article on LinkedIn and would like to discuss the results of your study in greater detail. My interest is in the research field, and particularly sleep studies in teens.

Continue your email with: Would you be available for a 10-minute phone call sometime this week?

Best regards,

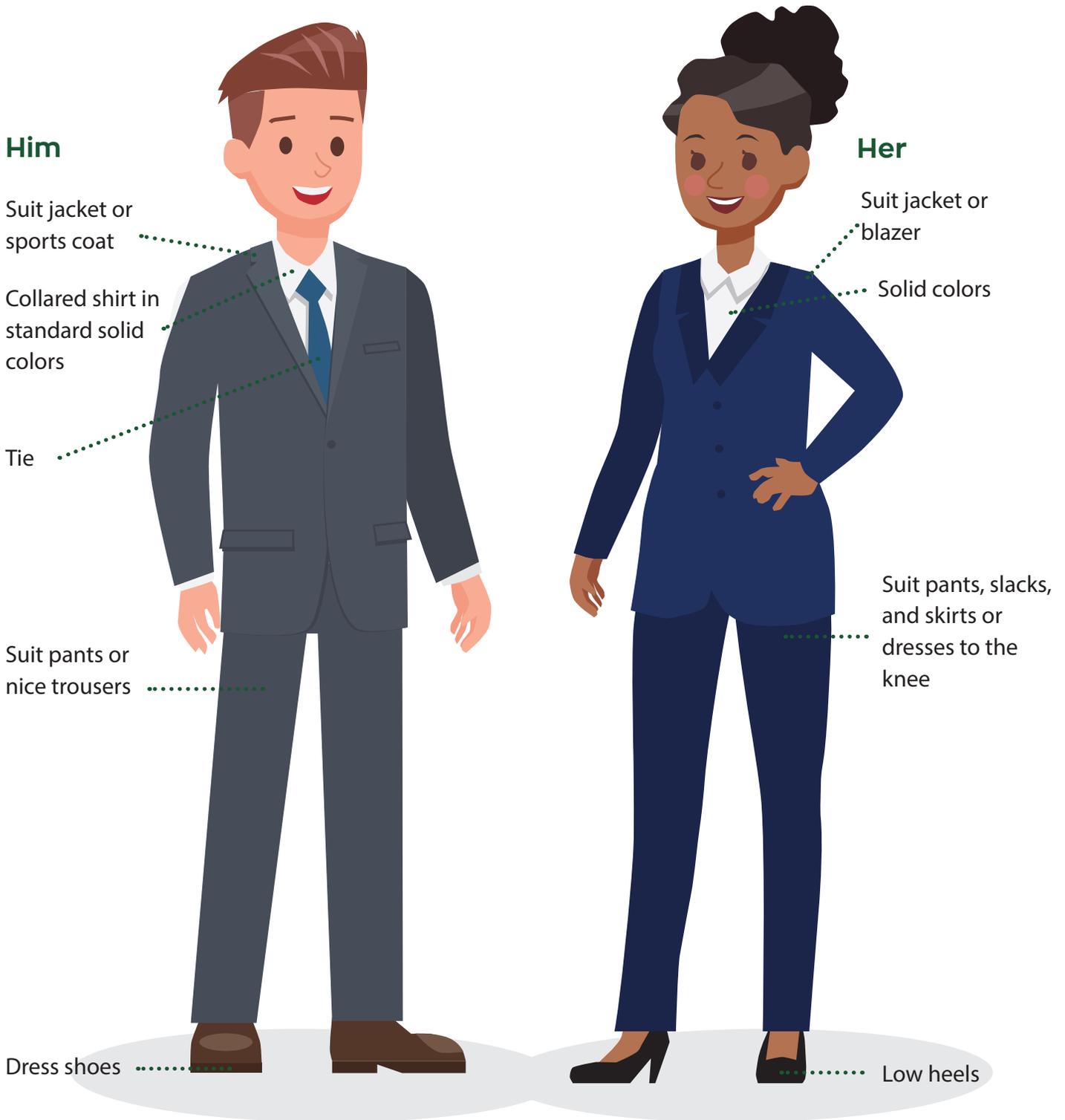
Your name

Continue your LinkedIn request with: Would you like to connect on LinkedIn?

Best regards,

Your name

Dress for Success—Professional



Tips for Success In Any Business Situation

- When in doubt, dress conservatively
- Be wrinkle-free
- Use modest amount of jewelry and/or fragrance
- Check your hair for the “wind-blown look” and your suit for lint or misalignment

Dress for Success—Business Casual

Him

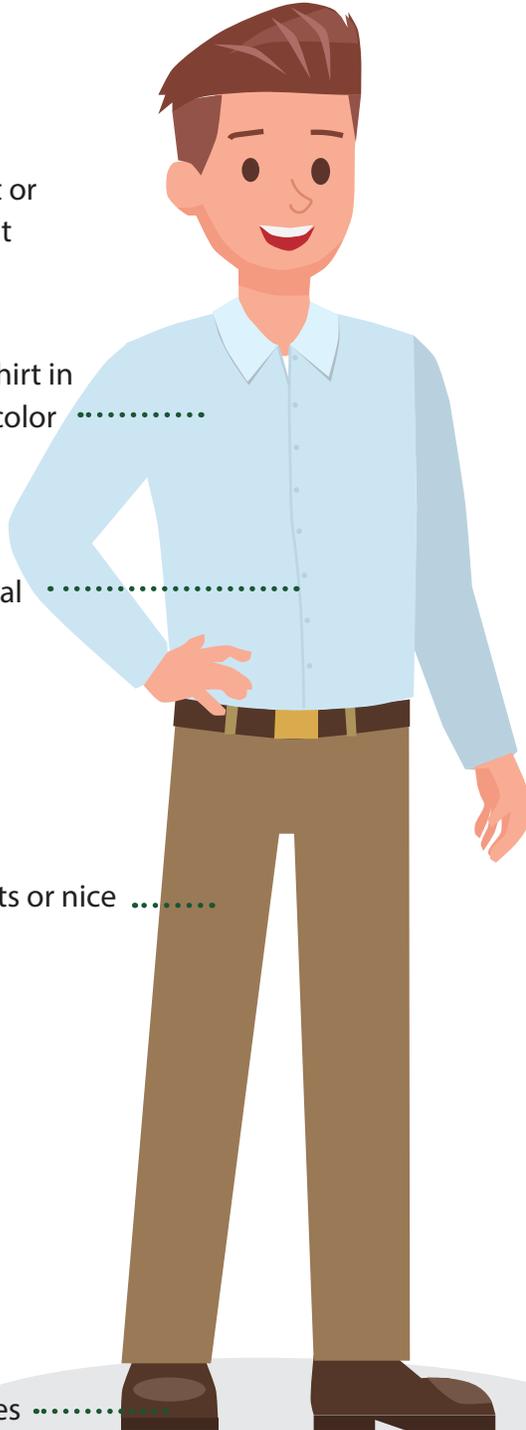
Suit jacket or sports coat

Collared shirt in standard color options

Tie optional

Khaki pants or nice trousers

Dress shoes



Her

Sweater

Add bright colors and/or patterns

Khaki pants, nice trousers, or fingertip-length skirt

Low heels or flats

