

Network Your Way to a Job

Career Lab
Lucina Hall Room 235
M-F 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

You have probably heard the old saying, “It’s not what you know, but who you know.” That is only partially true. It is both “what you know” and “who you know” that leads to a successful job search. Networking is about knowing people who can help you in your job search and making sure they are aware of your unique set of experiences and skills.

It is estimated that eighty percent of jobs are not advertised anywhere. Most people get their job leads through their personal and professional contacts. That means that networking is a very important strategy when you are looking for a job.

Purposes of Networking

Networking has a variety of purposes which include

- Gathering information and advice about organizations or schools in which you have an interest.
- Asking for and receiving help from members of your network about your approach to your job search and your application materials.
- Obtaining referrals to other people who can give you additional helpful information.

Identify Contacts

Develop a list of people you can talk to about your job search and look for opportunities to network with people who can help you achieve your objective. Start with family, friends, faculty, former employers, and social contacts. Participate in organizations and events that provide a forum for networks such as departmental clubs, professional associations, community organizations, and career fairs. Tell these people what type of position you are seeking. Share with them information about your education and experience, the type of organization you want to work in, and what you have to offer an employer.

Networking through Social Media

Using social media sites like LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook is a great way to grow your network, share resources, build your professional image, and demonstrate your professional brand. Online networking is available 24/7, removes the fear of face-to-face networking, and allows you to keep your information current. LinkedIn is strictly for business, but Twitter and Facebook can also be used to facilitate professional networking to find internships and jobs. Take advantage of joining groups related to your career interests offered on most social media sites. Maintain a professional image in all social media sites you belong to.

Before you begin building your job-search network you need to clean up your online image. Google yourself to see what kind of information can be found about you online. Remove all unprofessional information if possible. Information that can’t be removed can be “buried” by joining professional social networks like LinkedIn, writing blogs, participating in professional discussion groups, and posting your portfolio online

For more information on networking through social media check out the Career Center publications *Online Networking, Using LinkedIn*, and *Using Twitter and Facebook* at <http://www.bsu.edu/careers/publications>. Scroll down to Career Tip Sheets. Join the Ball State Career Network group on LinkedIn and follow the Career Center on Facebook and Twitter.

The Elevator Pitch

Imagine you are standing in an elevator and the doors are about to close. Someone sticks an arm in at the last possible second. You’re frustrated at the delay until the doors open and Bill Gates (or Oprah Winfrey, or some other person you want to impress) walks into the elevator. Now what?

Are you going to stand there speechless and lose this once in a lifetime opportunity, or are you going to use those 15 seconds to your advantage?

Even if it is not meeting someone famous in an elevator, an elevator speech can help you be able to explain your goals to someone when you are networking with them. An elevator speech helps you make your message clear, concise, and coherent.

What should you communicate?

- Greeting—Introduce yourself, smile, have a good handshake, and make eye contact.
- Message—Decide how you want to steer the conversation with one or more of these tools:
 - Pay a compliment.
 - Make a statement (about your strengths, your area of study, or what you're looking for). Your elevator speech is about what you can do for others, not what they can do for you.
 - Ask a question, but don't ask for a job.
- Response—Communication is a two-way street. Give him (or her) the chance to talk, so don't use up the entire fifteen seconds talking about yourself. Prepare a ten-second elevator speech and leave time for the person to respond.

Below are examples of elevator speeches.

Mr. Gates, my name is Charlie Cardinal. It's a pleasure to meet you. I am currently a senior at Ball State University studying history with a minor in peace studies and conflict resolution. I just got back from a trip to Africa. I really admire your foundation's work with the underprivileged there. How could I find out about opportunities to work with your organization?

Ms. Winfrey, my name is Jane Doe. I just completed an internship in the marketing department at CNN and helped develop several commercials currently airing on other networks. I am very excited about your new television network and the positive impact it can have on people's lives. How can I find out about opportunities to help market your new television network?

Steps in Building and Maintaining Your Network

- Determine your career or educational objective.
- Prepare and circulate your job-search materials among your network contacts.
- Communicate with people who can help you achieve your objective.
- Register and fill out your profiles completely and professionally in LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. Join groups related to your profession, major, and job-search goals to build your network.
- Keep people in your network informed about your job-search status.
- Keep records and update them frequently.

Networking Tips

- Always exhibit good manners; you never know whom you might meet.
- Attend meetings that relate to your interests and get to know people.
- Be open-minded and think broadly about who could be a networking contact; maybe the mail carrier's brother works for an organization that you are interested in.
- Keep good records. Make a list of contacts you meet, what they do, and how to get in touch with them.
- Don't abuse contacts; keep in touch and share helpful information without becoming a pest.

Networking Etiquette

Maintain a professional image at all times while networking. Here are a few hints to help you present a professional image while networking.

- Dress appropriately.
- Arrive to networking events early.
- Never start a conversation by talking about yourself.
- Keep your conversations professional, short, and focused
- Follow up with contacts you make within two business days.
- Thank contacts for helping you.
- Practice a confident hand shake.
- Bring business cards to networking events.
- Turn off your cell phone at networking events.

- Listen, show interest, and ask questions.
- Never ask for a job; inquire about opportunities.
- Avoid alcohol, messy foods, and over eating.
- When online networking never use texting shortcuts or emoticons; always use proper grammar and spelling.

For More Information

For more information on networking, visit the Career Lab in Lucina Hall room 235. Some of the resources available are listed below.

Books

How to Find a Job on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and Other Social Networks
How to Work a Room
It's Who You Know!
Networking for Everyone!

The Networking Survival Guide
Power Networking
Seven Days to Online Networking
Smart Networking: Attract a Following in Person and Online
The Twitter Job Search Guide

Websites

Career Center Online Resources: <http://www.bsu.edu/careers/publications>
Great Links to Explore: <http://www.bsu.edu/careers/links> (Scroll down to networking.)
Get Started with LinkedIn Video (LinkedIn): <http://learn.linkedin.com/students/>
How to Build a Professional Student LinkedIn Profile (LinkedIn):
<http://careerservices.linkedin.com/Build-A-Professional-Profile.pdf>
How to Conduct Essential Employer Research on LinkedIn (LinkedIn):
<http://careerservices.linkedin.com/Conduct-Essential-Employer-Research.pdf>
How to Network Professionally Online (LinkedIn):
<http://careerservices.linkedin.com/Network-Professionally.pdf>
LinkedIn.com Etiquette Guide:
<http://careerservices.linkedin.com/LinkedIn-Etiquette-Guide.pdf>
Quintcareers.com – Networking: <http://www.quintcareers.com/networking.html>

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Career Center

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