

NETWORKING GUIDE



THE BAMBOO ANALOGY: WATER...AND THEN WAIT!

Unlike normal crops that you can harvest annually, bamboo takes a lot longer to grow. According to the stories of professional botanists, you take a little bamboo seed, plant it, water it, and fertilize it for a whole year, but nothing happens. The second year you water and fertilize the bamboo plant, but again nothing happens. The third year you water and fertilize it, and again nothing happens. Talk about discouraging...

But when you continue watering and fertilizing the seed the fourth year, suddenly the Chinese bamboo tree sprouts and grows *ninety feet* in *six weeks*!

All those years, the bamboo was growing roots that became the foundation to support the massive growth. That's why the way bamboo grows is much like **networking** – you need patience as well as persistence without losing track of the long-term perspective.

Source: Networking is a Contact Sport (Joe Sweeney)

NETWORKING

WHAT IS A NETWORK AND NETWORKING?

A formal network is a web of systematically developed contacts and relationships. Networking is the process of developing those contacts, and provides a way to:

- Exchange information
- Increase confidence
- Refine communication skills
- Get advice and moral support
- Meet new people
- Form on-going professional relationships



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF NETWORKING?

- Learn about job openings
- Increase interviewing confidence
- Obtain job search advice
- Gather industry information

NETWORKING ACTIVITIES THAT HELP BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE AND YOUR RESUME

Prepare a self-introduction or “elevator pitch” (no longer than two minutes) which informs the listener of your knowledge, skills, and background. Always have your business cards handy!

- Conduct informational interviews with professors, alumni, classmates
- Join and become involved in professional associations
- Attend structured networking events
- Make cold calls to professionals in your field of interest
- Consider social situations networking opportunities
- Attend and present at conferences

USING ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Online social networking is **one** method or tool for establishing a professional network. Online networking, on sites such as LinkedIn, builds communities with others who share common interests or activities. Some benefits to professional online networking are:

- Provides access to a large number of experienced professionals as well as resources in your field
- Eases ability to research an organization including its financial “health” and track record
- Gives increased visibility; increases chances of finding people with similar educational and work backgrounds
- It's immediate and can be done 24/7

Guidelines to Online Social Networking

Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use professional networking sites (LinkedIn vs. Facebook) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falsify or embellish information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a professional picture; remove any online information that is unprofessional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write negative remarks about organizations, employers, colleagues (or yourself!)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create statements with key skills and accomplishments (similar to resume); ensure information is accurate and truthful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State you that you are in a job search if your current employer is not aware that you are
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use industry specific key words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide updates on irrelevant activities

THE “ELEVATOR PITCH”

You never get a second chance to make a good first impression. That’s why you need to be able to introduce yourself and answer the question “tell me about yourself” clearly and concisely. You may use your elevator pitch when you are networking prior to your actual job search; or to answer “tell me about yourself” during the job interview.

KEY COMPONENTS

- Introduction
- Education; professional development
- Work experience; key accomplishments
- Transferable skills, if necessary
- Current status; what you have to offer
- Employment opportunities you are seeking
- *Length – 30 seconds to max of 2 minutes*

USES FOR YOUR INFOCOMMERCIAL

- Response to “tell me about yourself” during job interview
- In any situation when you are making “networking” connections
- Portions can be used on your resume
- Increase confidence as you introduce yourself
- Script when making “cold” telephone calls
- When requesting informational interviews or advice

NETWORKING EXAMPLE: *(use only as a guide – create your own, specific to your situation)*

Thanks so much for being willing to speak with me. My name is Jane Jobseeker, and Nan Networker gave me your name as someone who might have information for me about the field of bioethics, in which I am very interested.

In May I will be graduating from the University of Minnesota’s School of Public Health with an MPH in Public Health Administration and Policy. While in school, I worked as a research assistant, and I am especially proud of the fact that I presented a poster presentation on tobacco use prevention at the ASPH conference last year.

As I mentioned, I am exploring information about the field of bioethics, with a goal of combining my skills and education working in a small non-profit. I have a few questions about your position and this agency and wonder if you could tell me a little about what you do and what it is like to work here.

INTERVIEWING EXAMPLE: *(use only as a guide – create your own, specific to your situation)*

First, thank you for this opportunity to interview with you today. As you know from my resume and cover letter, my undergraduate degree is in Biology, and I graduated with honors from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. I became interested in public health while I was volunteering at a community clinic, and realized how prevalent the issue of health disparities is.

I enrolled in the University of Minnesota’s School of Public Health, and in May, I will be graduating with an MPH in Community Health Promotion. While in school and through my community service activities, I developed skills and strengths both in research and public speaking – especially presenting educational sessions on a variety of health issues to diverse populations. I am especially proud of the fact that one of the sessions I designed and created was so popular, I have been asked to present it to several more groups.

One of the reasons I am excited about interviewing for your agency is that it has such a great reputation, and the position sounds both challenging and like a perfect fit for my skills.

SCRIPT YOUR INTRODUCTION

The script for your introduction will depend on how you plan to use it. Think about your specific situation, (cold call, informational interview, job interview) and then create a script that you feel comfortable using:

Introduction: (Who are you? Who referred you? Thank the person for seeing/interviewing you. What area of interest brings you here?)

Say a little bit about your education, specific skills, and an accomplishment of which you are proud:

What is your current status? What is your goal for this meeting?

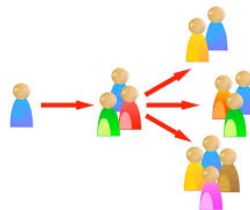
[Remember – be concise! Two minutes max!]

Remember to thank your contact for his / her time. Follow up with a thank you note.



NETWORKING WITH AN INTROVERTED STYLE

- 1. Respect your energy for people-time, whatever it may be**
Plan to rejuvenate, alone or with a trusted friend, before or after you've been meeting new people. Don't network every day or on days when you can predict your people contact to be heavy.
- 2. Try to use one-to-one networking**
To the extent that it is possible, capitalize on individual meetings with networking contacts. Chances are you will feel more comfortable and have a more meaningful exchange than if you are in a noisy and crowded environment.
- 3. Consider volunteering for a "job" when large group networking can't be avoided**
You may find that it is easier to make connections if you have a "job" to do in a large group networking setting. For instance, you could work at the registration table at a conference, volunteer to host a small group discussion, or offer to assist in another way that gives you something to do and still gives you a chance to meet a number of people.
- 4. Use e-mail to initiate the contact**
It is perfectly acceptable to use email to inquire about scheduling an informational interview or other networking meeting. In fact, some folks prefer e-mail to phone or face-to-face contact and may even prefer to respond to your questions using e-mail. The caveat is that a personal connection is preferable since it makes more of an impact, so do try to encourage a face-to-face meeting if possible.
- 5. Conduct as much "reading research" as possible before you network.**
Information is power and it helps you feel more confident when you approach a contact. Visit departmental web sites, ask for organizational reports or gather other promotional materials if you are exploring a particular job or department. If you are exploring a new career, you can read about "generic" career information on-line by visiting any of these sites:
 - *Occupational Outlook Handbook* <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>
 - *Minnesota Careers* <http://mn.gov/mmb/careers/>
 - *ISEEK*: <http://www.iseek.org>
- 6. Write down questions and topics you want to cover.**
It's recommended that you write down questions you want to ask and/or topics you want to discuss in advance of the meeting. It's also OK to refer to your notes during the conversation. Just let the person know what you are reading and why.
- 7. If possible, plan your networking contacts according to when your personal energy is highest.**
Are you a morning person? A late afternoon person? Think about when your energy level for communicating is highest and try as much as possible to meet then.



INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

One of the best sources for gathering information about what's happening in an occupation or an industry is to talk to people working in the field. This process is called *informational* or *research interviewing*. An informational interview is an interview that **you** initiate - you ask the questions. The purpose is to obtain information, not to get a job. Conducting informational interviews is a great way to build your network!

Following are some **good reasons to conduct informational interviews**:

- to explore careers and clarify your career goal
- to discover employment opportunities that are not advertised
- to expand your professional network
- to build confidence for your job interviews
- to access the most up-to-date career information
- to identify your professional strengths and weaknesses



Listed below are steps to follow to conduct an informational interview:

1. **Identify the occupation or industry you wish to learn about**
Assess your own interests, abilities, values, and skills, and evaluate labor conditions and trends to identify the best fields to research.
2. **Prepare for the interview**
Read all you can about the field prior to the interview. Decide what information you would like to obtain about the occupation/industry. Prepare a list of questions that you would like to have answered. (*see additional preparation tips below*)
3. **Identify people to interview**
Start with lists of people you already know - friends, relatives, fellow students, present or former co-workers, supervisors, neighbors, etc... Professional organizations, the yellow pages, organizational directories, and public speakers are also good resources. You may also call an organization and ask for the name of the person by job title.
4. **Arrange the interview**
Contact the person to set up an interview: by telephone, by a letter followed by a telephone call, or by having someone who knows the person make the appointment for you.
5. **Conduct the Interview**
Dress appropriately, arrive on time, and be polite and professional. Refer to your list of prepared questions; stay on track, but allow for spontaneous discussion. Before leaving, ask your contact to suggest names of others who might be helpful to you and ask permission to use your contact's name when contacting these new contacts.
6. **Follow Up**
Immediately following the interview, record the information gathered. Be sure to send a thank-you note to your contact within one week of the interview.

NOTE: Always analyze the information you've gathered. Adjust your job search, resume, and career objective if necessary.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

You are encouraged to prepare your own list of questions for your informational interview. You may choose to use some of the following examples:

1. On a typical day in this position, what do you do?
2. What training or education is required for this type of work?
3. What personal qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this job?
4. What part of this job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?
5. How did you get your job?
6. What opportunities for advancement are there in this field?
7. What entry level jobs are best for learning as much as possible?
8. What are the salary ranges for various levels in this field?
9. How do you see jobs in this field changing in the future?
10. Is there a demand for people in this occupation?
11. What special advice would you give a person entering this field?
12. What types of training do companies offer persons entering this field?
13. What are the basic prerequisites for jobs in this field?
14. Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?
15. What do you think of the experience I've had so far in terms of entering this field?
16. From your perspective, what are the problems you see working in this field?
17. If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why? What would you change?
18. With the information you have about my education, skills, and experience, what other fields or jobs would you suggest I research further before I make a final decision?
19. What do you think of my resume? Do you see any problem areas? How would you suggest I change it?
20. **Who do you know that I should talk to next? When I call him/her, may I use your name?**
21. What was your major in college?
22. Tell me about the industry and some of the trends you see emerging.
23. What credentials, degrees and certifications are needed in your position or for someone starting out in this industry?
24. What are you responsible for, specifically, in your position?
25. What is your philosophy of work?
26. What skills do you see as essential for someone in this business (definable such as: computer programming, accounting, instructing, public speaking, etc., and less definable such as: organizing, attention to details, flexibility, and multi-task projects).
27. What is a typical day like for you in your position?
28. What are the positives about this position and what are some of the negatives?
29. Do companies such as this view internships as way of getting into this industry?
30. What qualities do you look for in employees?
31. How does one succeed in this industry?
32. What educational backgrounds do you look for when hiring new employees?
33. What professional organizations/associations should I join?
34. What prior experiences are helpful and what are essential for someone in this career?
35. Is there anything I haven't asked that it would be helpful for me to know?

"You are only 6 acquaintances away from a professional connection to anyone in the world"

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS



Public Health

- American Public Health Association (APHA) – <http://www.apha.org>
- Minnesota Public Health Association (MPHA) – <http://www.mpha.net>
- Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) – <http://www.asph.org>
- American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH) – <http://www.astmh.org>
- Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) – <http://www.aphl.org>
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) – <http://www.astho.org>
- Carter Center - <http://www.cartercenter.org/index.html>
- National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH) - <http://www.nalboh.org/>
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) - <http://new.paho.org/>
- Public Health Foundation (PHF) – <http://www.phf.org>
- Public Health Laboratory Service (United Kingdom) - <http://www.phls.co.uk/>
- World Health Organization (WHO) - <http://www.who.int/en/>
- Global Health Council - <http://www.globalhealth.org>

Epidemiology

- Association for Professionals in Infectious Disease and Epidemiology, Inc. – <http://www.apic.org>
- American College of Epidemiology (ACE) – <http://www.acepidemiology.org>
- Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. - <http://www.apic.org/>
- Caribbean Epidemiology Center (CAREC)
- Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) - <http://www.cste.org/>
- International Society for Environmental Epidemiology - <http://www.iseepi.org/>
- Society for Epidemiologic Research - <http://www.epiresearch.org/>

Environmental Health

- National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) – <http://www.neha.org>
- Minnesota Environmental Health Association (MEHA) - <http://www.mehaonline.org>
- Environmental Health & Safety Associations - <http://www.ehscareers.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/showresourceslinks/catid/17/ehampsprofessionalassociations.htm>
- Association for Environmental Health and Sciences - <http://www.aehsfoundation.org/>
- Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics - <http://www.aoec.org/>

Public Health Administration

- National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) - <http://www.naccho.org/>

Health Education

- American Association for Health Education (AAHE) - <http://www.cnheo.org/aahe.htm>
- Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) - <http://www.sophe.org>
- National Healthy Start Association - <http://www.healthystartassoc.org>
- National Assembly on School-Based Healthcare – <http://www.nasbhc.org>
- National Association of Community Health Centers - <http://www.nachc.com/>
- National Wellness Institute - <http://www.nationalwellness.org/>

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS (Continued...)

Healthcare Administration

- American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) - <http://www.ache.org/>
- Healthcare Financial Management Association - <http://www.hfma.org>
- National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems - <http://www.naph.org>
- National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors - <http://www.nasmhpd.org>
- Women in Healthcare Management, Inc. - <http://www.whcm.org>
- National Association of Health Service Executives - <https://netforum.avectra.com/eweb/startpage.aspx?site=nahse>
- American Association of Healthcare Administrative Management - <http://www.aaham.org/>

Nutrition

- American Dietetic Association (ADA) – <http://www.eatright.org>
- National Association of Nutrition Professionals (NANP) – <http://www.nanp.org>
- American Society for Nutrition – <http://www.nutrition.org>
- Society for Nutrition Education (SNE) – <http://www.sne.org>

Health Services / Clinical Research

- AcademyHealth - <http://www.academyhealth.org>
- Society of Clinical Research Associates, Inc. – <http://www.socra.org>
- Society for Women's Health Research – <http://www.womenshealthresearch.org>
- American Association for the Advancement of Science - <http://www.aaas.org/>

Child & Maternal Health

- Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs - <http://www.amchp.org/pages/default.aspx>
- Maternal-Child Health Nurse Leadership Academy - <http://www.nursingsociety.org/LeadershipInstitute/MCH/Pages/default.aspx>
- Society for Equity in Child Health - <http://www.equitychildhealth.org/>

Biostatistics

- American Statistical Association (ASA) - <http://www.amstat.org/index.cfm>
- International Biometric Society - <http://www.biometricsociety.org/>
- National Association of Health Data Organizations - <https://www.nahdo.org/>

Aging Studies

- American Geriatrics Society - <http://www.americangeriatrics.org>
- American Aging Association - <http://www.americanaging.org/>
- Gerontological Society of America - <http://www.geron.org/>
- National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers - <http://www.caremanager.org/>

