



Networking Guide

WHAT IS NETWORKING

Networking is cultivating relationships and exchanging career information and advice.

WHY SHOULD YOU NETWORK

Networking is a valuable skill to continuously hone and utilize. Many job opportunities are found through effective networking.

Possible benefits of networking include:

- Learning about industries and potential career paths
- Determining skills employers need for a particular field or position
- Understanding the culture of a particular workplace
- Building a professional network that gives you access to future opportunities
- Identifying potential mentors

WHO IS IN YOUR NETWORK

Start with people you know: relatives and friends, mentors, community members, student organizations, professional associations, professors, classmates, and former employers and colleagues, just to name a few. You may be surprised by who your existing contacts can introduce you to! You can also sign up for the [Violet Network](#) to connect with members of the NYU community.

WHERE YOU SHOULD NETWORK

Once you have identified people in your existing networks, begin identifying places to meet additional contacts to increase your network. These may include NYU Wasserman Center events, alumni events, career fairs and industry events, the NYU alumni network, professional associations and conferences, and social media.

EFFECTIVE NETWORKING BEST PRACTICES

Start Early

- Ideally, networking should start before you are actively job searching, but it's never too late to begin.

Goal Setting

- Create a target list. Identify industries, companies, academic areas, or research topics of interest in order to structure your outreach.
- Have a goal for each conversation. This can be as broad as gaining insight into an industry that interests you or as specific as learning about new research opportunities in a particular laboratory.

Prepare Your Story/Pitch

- Your pitch may begin with the skill sets or strengths you have to offer or want to demonstrate (e.g. expertise in a given area, transferable skills, etc.). It is important that your pitch emphasizes the most important aspects of your aspiration or networking goal.
- Your pitch may focus on several areas, depending on which are relevant for the specific interaction: academic preparation, relevant experience, why you are interested in this industry or organization, and how your skills would make you effective in this type of work.
- Your pitch may mention relevant prior experiences, which could include coursework, publications, research, internships, leadership roles, volunteer work, or professional work.
- See the [Creating a Perfect Pitch](#) guide for more information on telling your story and making a great first impression.

Start the Conversation

- An introduction with your name and a relevant detail about yourself can easily start a conversation with someone with whom you've never met. Be prepared by developing your pitch in a way that feels authentic and provides an opportunity for additional dialogue. Listening will be just as valuable as speaking, so be sincere and give the other person speaking your complete attention

Set Reasonable Expectations

- Do not be discouraged if you don't hear back immediately from someone with whom you've

requested to connect. Often, it may take someone several days (or weeks) to hear back.

- If someone is continually not responding to you, they may not be interested in being contacted. If you reach out to a new contact twice without receiving a response, it's best to try reaching out to someone else.

Don't Ask for a Job in Your First Interaction

- When networking, it is best to not start the conversation asking for a job. Instead, focus on gathering information, relationship building, and seeking advice. For example, if you meet someone who works at a company you are very interested in, rather than stating that you are job searching and asking about openings, focus on getting to know more about the person's career. You may eventually ask those in your network to help you secure a position in their organization.

Move the Conversation Along

- Showing genuine interest in another person can speak volumes. Asking open-ended questions encourages people to offer detailed responses and keep talking. Also, coming equipped with industry information or knowledge can offer additional dialogue.

Exit the Conversation

- Politely wrap up a conversation by outlining clear next steps. For example, telling someone how nice it was to talk to them and asking for a business card to keep in touch is a great way to exit.

FOLLOWING UP

One of the most important aspects of networking is following up and staying in touch. Send a brief thank you email after meeting someone and add them on LinkedIn. Periodic check-ins with a purpose (providing updates, congratulating them on accomplishments, sharing relevant articles, or holiday greetings) are a good way to easily stay connected. Stay Organized by creating a spreadsheet or another way to keep track of your networking contacts and any interactions.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

One important aspect of networking is the informational interview. An informational interview is an informal conversation with a professional that is focused on gaining information and insights on a particular field or company, as well as advice on how to break into this field.

Sample Informational Interview Questions

1. What is a typical day at your job like? What is the breakdown of how you spend your time? Is your use of time consistent or are some times busier than others?
2. How did you become interested in this field?
3. How did you get your first job in this field?
4. What suggestions do you have for someone looking to break into this area?
5. What is your favorite part of your job/company? What is your least favorite part?
6. What are some trends and challenges within the industry someone looking to enter this field should be aware of?
7. How does a person progress in your field? What is a typical career path in this field or organization?
8. What are the skills that are most important for a career in this field?
9. What do you think is unique about this company as opposed to others in the industry?
10. What are some particular challenges to this company?
11. What are some important skills that you think employers look for when hiring in this field?
12. Did you attend graduate school before entering this career? If so, how do you feel the skills you gained in graduate school have helped to prepare you?
13. Based on my research, it seems like the typical salary range for this role is \$X-\$Y. Is that consistent with what you see in this field?
14. *Are there other people in this industry/discipline/organization you think might be helpful for me to speak with?*

For more effective networking techniques visit [youtube.com/nyuwasserman](https://www.youtube.com/nyuwasserman) and search for "networking."

Sample Emails

Sample Networking Referral Email

This can be used to request a networking conversation/informational interview.

Dear [Name]

I am currently a student at New York University studying Sociology and Professor X recommended that I contact you. I am particularly interested in pursuing a career in which I can utilize my ethnographic skills and passion for women's rights. Since your interests are also focused on women's rights, would you be willing to meet briefly with me to discuss your career path and the steps that you recommend for a sociology student interested in this area of work? If so, are you available to meet for 30 minutes in the next two weeks?

Thank you in advance. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Your name

Sample LinkedIn Connection Request / Informational Interview Request

Having a personalized LinkedIn message increases your chances for an accepted invitation to connect. LinkedIn sets a 300 character limit on all connection requests, so it is important to be concise.

Dear [Name],

I'm a current MPH student at NYU with a concentration in epidemiology. I see that you're at a healthcare consulting firm and graduated from NYU two years ago. Would you be willing to speak with me this month to discuss how you successfully made the transition to consulting?

Thank you,
Your Name

Follow Up After Event

Dear [Name],

It was a pleasure meeting you at last night's Government Careers Panel. I enjoyed our conversation and specifically learning more about your hiring experience at the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I am most interested in exploring the area of cybercrime and found your advice very insightful and timely as I am beginning my job search. I know you said that you'll be traveling a lot for work in the coming months. Would it be possible to schedule a brief phone call over the next two weeks so that I can ask you a few follow-up questions about the government job interviews? I am available in the evenings or anytime on Monday and Wednesday in the morning.

Thank you again for sharing your insight with me and my peers,
Your Name

Thank You After Informational Interview

Hello [Name],

Thank you again for taking the time to speak with me yesterday about the field of risk management and your experience working at TIAA. I took your advice and bought *The Essentials of Risk Management* book that you recommended. I appreciate your offering to connect me with your on-campus recruiter at TIAA. I will plan to attend the Finance networking event next month and hope to see you there.

Best,
Your Name