



BEYOND B-SCHOOL

Online Career Training for MBAs



# GET RESULTS NETWORKING

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Tips Sheets, Templates and Checklists  
to Power Your Job Search

By Hannah Morgan and Roy Young



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# Overview



# 12 Ways to Overcome Your Aversion to Networking

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If you are one of those people hate to network and avoid it at all costs, all you have to do is change how you approach it! Even introverts can network. It's just a matter of finding the type of networking that works best for you.

Networking is not about building a mammoth list of contacts or passing out business cards like you're dealing poker. Networking simply means building mutually beneficial relationships.

Many people see networking as a waste of time because immediate and tangible results are difficult to attribute to your networking activities. It also can take longer than you want to see results. And, sadly, some people won't be receptive to your requests to network. But as long as you don't expect instant results and adapt networking to meet your personal style, you can do it!

Switch your mindset and find ways to make networking a regular part of your long-term strategy. Your career depends on it.

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## 1. Start Networking Before You Need a Job

Don't wait until you desperately need a job to begin networking. Building a network takes time. If you wait until you are in crisis mode to put networking into action, you'll feel disappointed in the results. Everyone from corporate leaders to small business owners realize the importance of word-of-mouth referrals and make an effort to carve networking into their schedules. The best time to begin building and revitalizing your network is before you need something.

## 2. Adopt a Networking Anytime Anywhere Outlook

Networking can occur at any location and any time. Don't limit your networking activity to professional meetings. All you need to do is be open to the possibilities of meeting someone new. The next time you leave you go anywhere – a store, to class or even to the gym, consider potential for meeting someone new and be willing to step out of your comfort zone. Strike up a conversation with the person standing in line or in the elevator, or just say hello to the cashier. If you are an introvert and prefer the intimacy of one-on-one conversations, start with these intimate meetings to develop your confidence and eventually work your way to attending group networking events.

## 3. Embrace Networking on Social Media

Real relationships can and do result from initial interaction on social media. As a matter of fact, social media is a great way to expand your network and meet people you would never have the opportunity to interact with otherwise.

You can begin by learning about the person via their social media accounts. Then simply add a comment to a discussion, re-share the person's work or just Tweet them a question. Once a dialogue begins on social media, you have the opportunity to set up a phone conversation. Your request for a call is likely to be accepted since you've already established a connection via social media.

LinkedIn makes it easy to discover people and invite them to connect, but you don't want to abuse its power by spamming people you don't know. Many people are cautious about who they connect with on LinkedIn. When you do reach out, be polite, respectful and err on the side of being more formal if you do not know someone. And don't expect immediate responses from the people you reach out to. Keep in mind that not everyone uses LinkedIn the same way you do. ►



## 4. Networking Beyond LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a valuable tool, but it is not a replacement for in-person networking. Once you've connected with people on LinkedIn, follow up and arrange an in-person meeting or even video call. Face-to-face conversations help establish a closer bond with people in your network.

## 5. Stay in Touch

If you've been busy building your network but haven't followed up with any of your new contacts, it is easy for people to forget you, or worse, you may give the impression you do not value the new relationship. It is up to you to stay in touch. Treat each new person you meet like a potential manager or valuable business colleague. Share information or news articles with them, offer to be of assistance on a project they are working on, or invite them to join you at an event. To make sure you remember to follow-up, schedule dates on your calendar for 1, 3 and 6 months out.

## 6. Be a Giver

Networking isn't all about you. During a conversation listen for the opportunity to offer help or information instead of asking for a job or referral to someone. You may also find a way to introduce your new connection to someone you know. Shift your thinking and focus on giving rather than taking. You want people you meet to want to help you in return and remember you.

## 7. Learn About the Person, Company or Industry

Learn everything you can about the person, their company and industry before you meet with them. Dig into LinkedIn and review their profile. Google the person's name and the company to look for any recent news. Take notes and prepare questions to delve further into their background, interests and recent publicity. And be sure to circle back to the person who introduced you for any helpful information you should know before you meet. Most people love to talk about themselves; give your networking contact the opportunity to share what interests them most.

## 8. Leave a Positive Impression

Your only mission when meeting a new person is to make them feel like they are the most important person you've met that day. Be polite, smile, use his/her name, and ask them lots of questions. This may be the only chance you get to make the right first impression. Be genuine and be likable.

## 9. Be Open to Meeting New People

Networking should involve meeting new people. While it certainly makes sense to stay in contact with people you already know, there are benefits to expanding your connections. Even if you already have one contact inside a company, it can't hurt to have more. Never turn down the opportunity to meeting new people. This can often result in learning about interesting and unexpected things. Reach out beyond your current circle of colleagues to expand what you know.

## 10. Never Discount People

You know a lot of people and every single one of them could potentially introduce you to your next employer. In fact, you may not even know where some of your contacts work or what they do. Some probably work in a different field. But they can still offer value. Never discount or eliminate talking with someone because their background, company or level of work isn't directly related to what you are looking to do next. Your aunt may play bridge with the father of someone who works in your dream company or the person you know in accounting may have close ties with people in other departments where you want to work. You just never know who people know. A conversation about your goals with friends, relatives and other connections is one more opportunity to get your message out and expand your network.

## 11. Follow Up on Referrals

During networking meetings, you may be offered advice or receive a name of someone to contact. In either case, you should graciously thank the person and take the recommended action. Once you've taken the steps, loop back with your contact and provide an update. This shows you value the idea and the person. If you have no intention of taking action, politely explain why during this meeting, otherwise the person may think you didn't follow-through. ►



## **12. Listen Carefully**

Introverts have strong listening skills. Leverage these skills by asking follow-up questions that show you are paying attention and interest. Also, be on the lookout for unspoken cues. A networking contact may suggest you check out an article or new company in town. Rather than ignoring the suggestion or blindly taking action, ask your contact why they made the recommendation. You may discover the person has inside information or knows someone you should meet. Keep your ears and mind open.

## **Conclusion**

From this list of 12 ways to overcome your aversion to networking, you can develop a style that makes you comfortable and gets results.



# Networking Your Way to a Great Job

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Searching for your job by relying on postings – on LinkedIn, Indeed, company websites, etc. -- may make you feel productive, however, using job postings is a low odds method for landing job interviews. Networking is more work and a little less comfortable, but it is far more likely to produce interviews and land a great job.

Networking, or having conversations to share mutually beneficial information, is a process. One reason b-school students give up on networking is that it isn't always immediately gratifying. You can't guarantee that every networking conversation you have will translate into a job. While you can't predict which people will be able to help or who they know, there are many reasons why you shouldn't give up on networking.

Networking works because it helps the people you meet begin to know, like and trust you. These three things are the foundation of any transaction. Without them, you are a risky candidate. Have you ever considered buying an expensive product or service without asking for recommendations from people you trust or reading online reviews?

Another reason networking works is because hiring managers use their network to find qualified candidates. They ask their professional colleagues and personal network for referrals.

By meeting people in your desired industry and career path, you are getting the word out about your qualifications. You are also learning about the qualifications and characteristics specific companies are really looking for. Ultimately, you will be referred to hiring managers.

Your goal is to build a strategic plan to guide your networking activities. You will begin to see the benefits of networking and the progress you are making in building relationships with people who could introduce you to your next employer.

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## The Hidden Job Market

The Hidden Job market refers to jobs that are available but have not been shared publicly or advertised.

There are several reasons a company does NOT advertise a job opening. First, once a job is posted, the company becomes inundated with resumes, emails and phone calls. Responding to inquiries and applications requires a significant investment of time. While most companies use applicant tracking systems (ATS) to help with the screening process, it is still very time consuming to review resumes, screen candidates and conduct interviews. A second reason companies may not advertise a job is because a candidate has already been identified. A third option for why a company may not publicize an opening is because they plan to replace someone, and they don't want the employee to find out until a replacement has been hired.

The only way you will learn about jobs in the hidden job market is to network with people, especially those who work inside companies. Employees tend to know about job openings before anyone else.

## Hiring is Risky Business

Identifying a candidate for a job is only one piece of the puzzle. The hiring manager needs someone who will do the job well and complement the existing team members. This is not easy to evaluate through the interview process. It is difficult to predict how the candidate will actually perform on the job and fit with the company culture. Referred ►





candidates tend to make better hires, meaning they stay in the job longer and come up to speed faster. More and more, companies rely on referred candidates and have implemented employee referral programs to help fill openings.

### **How to Tap Into the Hidden Job Market**

It should be clear to you by now that networking is the best way to tap into the hidden job market, reduce your perceived risk as a candidate and ultimately increase the chance of getting an interview. You want to meet and speak with people who work inside companies where there may be an opening that hasn't been advertised.

If you haven't networked before, there's just one rule you need to follow.

#### **You never ask for a job.**

Your purpose in networking is to gather advice, information and recommendations to help you make an informed career move. You also want to be perceived as a valuable resource, so be sure to offer something in return to the people you meet with.

### **Network Strategically**

Develop a strategy to organize and prioritize who you will meet with. Otherwise, you'll meet with lots of people but won't uncover any relevant career information or job leads, and it will feel like a waste of time.

Here are seven questions to help you map out your networking plan.

#### **1. Who do you need to meet?**

Be purposeful in who you choose to meet with. While some degree of serendipity is involved in networking, you do want to drive the process by contacting people who work at target companies, appropriate alumni, friends, family, classmates and past work colleagues, as well as people who are experts in the industry or occupation you are interested in. (See "Eight Types of People To Ask For A Meeting")

#### **2. What is the purpose in meeting with them?**

Before reaching out to anyone, determine what your purpose is for networking with them or what you want to learn from them. Do you want to ask for career advice, tap into their expertise (and network), learn about a company, or are there other reasons meeting someone will help your job search and career?

#### **3. What is the best way to meet them?**

There are many ways to generate a meeting with a good contact without reaching out through a cold email. Here are some of the ways you could connect: ask a mutual connection for an introduction; attend an event the person will be speaking at or attending; engage with the person using social media; or join a LinkedIn group the person belongs to and add comments to their posts and discussions.

#### **4. How will you introduce yourself?**

What information can you share that will make the person most receptive to the idea of meeting with you? Your professional qualifications may not be the first thing to mention. Think about including the name of a mutual connection, name of the school you both attended, skills or areas of mutual interest, or even shared interests outside of work. (See "How To Create A Great Pitch")

#### **5. What questions will you ask?**

Determine in advance the types of questions you will ask someone before you reach out. Do you want to learn more about what really happens inside a company or the ins and outs of a career? Maybe you're interested in understanding the day-to-day activities of your desired career. Develop a list of questions you want answers to. (See "Eight Steps to Prepare for Your Informational Meeting") ►



### **6. What can you offer in return?**

Before and during the conversation, listen for opportunities to offer something in return. You may have read an article that would be beneficial to share or you may have worked on a case study or project that would be of interest. Perhaps you know someone from your networking that the person would benefit from meeting. You could facilitate an introduction. If you are still unclear as to how you can help the person you are meeting with, ask at the conclusion of the meeting.

### **7. How will you stay in touch?**

Sending a thank you message after the meeting is just the first step. You want to stay in contact with the person, especially if the meeting revealed potential for future opportunities. Vary your follow-up methods between phone calls, email and social media. Also use different reasons to stay in touch, from sharing industry news stories to updates on your job search progress. (See “12 Ways to Stay in Touch with Your Network”)

## **Types of Networking**

There are four types of networking activities you will be involved in:

### **1. Attending A Networking Event**

You should plan to regularly attend networking events that allow you to interact with new people in your industry or occupation. From alumni networking events to career conferences to industry meetings, you’ll want to prepare to make a strong first impression at these events.

### **2. Conversation with People You Know**

Reach out to people you know. Because these people are already familiar with you, it is easier to reach out and re-educate them on what you are looking for and to request their advice or help. People you know are also more likely to want to help and refer you to people in their network. Consider asking people you know for names of people who work at target companies and people they think you should meet.

Talk to people in class, on social media or around campus. Be open to meeting new people, learning new things and finding common interests.

### **3. Requesting An Informational Meeting**

There are two types of people you will want to meet with for an informational meeting – company insiders and industry experts.

Start by asking for a meeting with people who work inside target companies. Using your target company list, identify alumni, mutual connections, and even people you know who work for companies you are interested in. Your purpose for wanting to meet with company insiders is to learn about the company. These people will know about the company and will be the first to hear about new opportunities.

You also want to meet with people who can share their expertise about an industry or occupation. They may not work for a target company, however, the information they share will be valuable.

### **4. Pursuing A Job**

There will be times when you discover a job posting or hear about a job and want to learn more. In this case, you are networking to acquire information about the posted job. Be clear that your purpose for reaching out is to learn more about the job, what the ideal candidate might look like, the steps in the hiring process and any information that will help you best present your qualifications. Also be sure to ask if the company has a referral hiring program. If there is one, ask if you can use their name as a referral or if they would be willing to refer you as a candidate. ►



## **Nurture Your Networking**

It isn't enough to meet someone once and expect they'll remember you in a couple of weeks or months. It is your responsibility to develop and nurture the relationship. Look for opportunities to keep in touch with the people you've met so they don't forget about you.

## **Track Your Networking**

Maintaining a prioritized list of people you want to network with helps you plan your outreach efforts and maintain momentum. You also want to keep notes on topics discussed, suggested actions or people they recommend you reach out to. Tracking this information helps you stay organized and allows you to easily reference information when needed. (See "Seven Tips to Hold Yourself Accountable to Network")

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## **ACTION PLAN CHECKLIST**

### **Carve Out Time**

Networking your way to a new job is a marathon, not a sprint. Invest just 15 minutes a day to help move your search forward.

#### **Daily:**

- Review LinkedIn Notifications for work anniversaries, new jobs, promotions, and birthdays. For each, send a personalized LinkedIn message or email.
- Scan your LinkedIn home feed for news from your network or companies you follow, like or leave a comment.
- Like or share one article related to your career goals on LinkedIn.
- Look for articles to share that mention target companies.
- Read industry publications to stay on top of current events.
- Review group discussions on LinkedIn and add to the conversation.
- Monitor job boards (Indeed.com, LinkedIn, niche industry sites and your school's job postings)

#### **Weekly:**

- Send an outreach email to 3-5 people you would like to meet with from your list of networking contacts.
- Follow-up with the people you previously met or have been in contact with.
- Conduct at least one informational meeting.

#### **Monthly:**

- Attend at least one virtual or in-person networking event.
- Plan your outreach for the month — who do you need to contact and when.
- Assess your progress and evaluate what is working and what you can improve.



# Seven Techniques to Hold Yourself Accountable to Network

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Even if you've set goals, it's not unusual to push aside activities you don't enjoy, find uncomfortable or don't view as immediately beneficial. So it's no wonder that networking falls to the bottom of your to-do list or off your list all together.

Your life as a b-school student is busy with classes, homework and extra-curricular activities. These things often take priority over your job search and specifically networking. You'll need to find a way to hold yourself accountable.

Following through on your goal to network provides a sense of pride and a feeling of empowerment. You'll begin to feel better about yourself and more confident too. Not only will learning how to hold yourself accountable to network help you manage your career, these strategies will work to help you follow through on many other life goals too!

Try some or all of these tips to hold yourself accountable.

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## 1. Schedule Time Every Week

Allocate time every week to work on networking related activities. This means blocking off time on your calendar each week to send messages, follow-up and schedule meetings or phone calls. Treat this time as you would a class or any other mandatory event.

Before you schedule this time block, consider what time of day you have the most mental energy. You will need that mental energy to craft messages or make phone calls and you want to be at your personal best. You will find that scheduling calls or meeting people in person will require you to flex your schedule and be available when the person you want to network with has time.

Setting aside time each week to network will help you take the small but incremental steps to build relationships, and like anything else, the more you do it, the better you will get and the easier it will become.

## 2. Reframe Your Goal

What is your goal for networking? If you don't see the value in networking, then you're less likely to work at it. To hold yourself accountable, you'll have to find a way to motivate yourself to want to network. In the short term, you are networking to do career research and build relationships. Longer term, you are networking to land a job.

Try reframing your networking goals for the short- and long-term. Look for something that will entice you to want to learn or build relationships. Short-term, you may find it fun to find things in common with people you meet or discover new places to visit or new occupations. Try to set goals that align with your strengths or things you enjoy doing. If your long-term goal is to land a job with your dream company, envision yourself working for that company and how rewarding that will feel. You want that job so badly that nothing will stand in your way. Your goal to network with people who work inside that company becomes much more fulfilling when you see the end result. ►



### **3. Learn Everything You Can**

If you knew that every CEO attributed networking to their career success, would you be motivated to learn how they did it? One way to overcome procrastination is to become more knowledgeable about the subject - networking. Study the great networkers. Read articles about successful leaders. Not only will you learn some new tricks, you may also learn to appreciate the art and science of networking and how it has helped successful people reach their goals.

Learning will remove some of your anxiety of the unknowns of networking. It will give you the confidence to try new approaches. By becoming an expert student of networking, you'll learn best practices that will improve your networking outcomes, making you more likely to continue to do it.

### **4. Reward Yourself**

Dangle a carrot to motivate yourself to fulfill your networking goals. Sometimes the long term reward of securing a job just isn't enough to keep you motivated. Create a reward system to help you meet your micro-goals or smaller networking action items. For example, if you meet your goal of sending five emails requesting a meeting one week, reward yourself. This will also force you to use measurable goals rather than non-quantifiable ones.

You may want to try an app that will gamify your networking to-do list.

Another option is to penalize yourself for not achieving your goals if you think that would be a stronger deterrent and help keep you on track.

### **5. Publicize Your Goals**

A time-tested trick people use to hold themselves accountable is to share their goals publically. You may choose to tell your classmates, post it on social media or share your intended goals with a job search group.

By announcing your goals, you are letting other people know your intentions. This sets an expectation and some will want to see you carry it through. They may ask about your progress or even ask how they can help.

### **6. Remove Obstacles**

One of the primary reasons people procrastinate or don't follow through on their promise to network is due to obstacles they encounter. What is keeping you from networking? The first step is to recognize the obstacles you face. Dig deep if necessary to uncover the root cause. If you say networking makes you feel uncomfortable, ask yourself why. Once you've identified the obstacle, you can address it and remove it so you can achieve your networking goals.

### **7. Get a Partner**

Identify someone you trust to hold you accountable. This person is someone who will be empathetic yet tough. They will help you troubleshoot situations, celebrate in your successes, and give you a kick in the pants when you need it.

Set up a time to regularly check in with your accountability partner. During your check in, share your successes, your challenges and share what you want to accomplish before the next check in. Your accountability partner should challenge and support you.

**Target**



# How to Build Your Target List

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Building a target list is a key step one in developing your job search plan and provides focus for your networking.

People involved in sales use prospect lists. These lists contain company names and contact information for people who *MAY* be interested in the product or service they are promoting. We'll call these target companies. In your case, these target companies would potentially need your skills or expertise.

Answer these questions to help you determine who your target companies are and then you can fine-tune your options.

- What companies would you like to work for?
- What industry do you want to work in?
- What size company is the best fit for you?
- Geographically, where would you be willing to work?

In his book, "The Two-Hour Job Search" Steve Dalton covers, step by step, how to efficiently build your target list. Steve created a video summarizing his method which you watch (see link on the Table of Contents.)

Follow these steps to create your target list so you can go directly to the source of opportunities, increase the odds of getting to the opportunity ahead of the competition, feel like you have control over your job search, and most importantly, make the best use of time.

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## 1. Top Company Lists

Every year, Forbes, Glassdoor, Vault and other publications release top company and best employer lists. These lists are a goldmine and provide you with top ranked companies to add to your target list. Typically these are large, well-known companies where everyone wants to work. You'll want to diversify your list of target employers to include small to medium sized companies as well.

## 2. Your B-School's Employers List

Your b-school likely has a list of employers that regularly recruit on campus or where alumni have landed. Check with your career center and see what is available.

## 3. Industry Lists

Nearly every industry recognizes top companies with awards or recognition. Conduct a Google search for "best companies" and add the industry you are interested in. Your school's librarian may also be able to provide access to industry lists or directories.

## 4. LinkedIn's Alumni Function

Even if your B-School has an alumni database, you should still check out LinkedIn's "See Alumni" feature. This allows you to easily filter alumni by city, company and function. Take note of the employers alumni work for, especially alumni in roles that interest you. ▶



### **5. Indeed.com**

Indeed is the top job aggregator and job board. Not only does it search thousands of job boards, companies also post jobs directly to the site. This makes it a prime resource for researching companies with jobs you are interested in. Use search terms such as functional skills, your degree, and geographic preference, to search for jobs that most closely match your criteria. Look through the list of companies that are posting these jobs and add new companies to your list to research later.

### **5. The Business Librarian**

Your school has a business librarian who is formally educated in research tools and how to best use them. Tap into this resource.

### **Broaden Your List**

In order to expand your list to 25-40 companies, you will want include your target company's competitors and smaller companies within the same line of business. For example, if you have Amazon on your target list, you could add online retail competitors such as Walmart, eBay, Alibaba and The Home Depot.

Don't overlook small to medium businesses that are or will be in growth mode. In fact, growth within small to medium companies is happening faster than at large companies. Smaller Amazon competitors could include Duluth Trading Company, FreshDirect, At Home or any number of up-and-coming online retailers.

### **Put Your List on Paper**

Create an Excel spreadsheet so you can easily keep track of your target companies. You'll also want to prioritize which companies you'll reach out to first. This is where Steve Dalton's video comes in handy. Using his LAMP method, you'll organize a much more effective job search.

Your list should be large enough to ensure you have enough job opportunities. If you have too few target companies, you may not land an interview or a job at any. Anywhere from 25 – 40 companies is a good number to maintain on your list.

Over time, you're list may change and that's to be expected. As you research companies, some will drop from your list because you don't see a fit. You will also discover new companies either through networking or research. The key is to stay focused and use consistent criteria, not just the fact the company has B-School level jobs.

There's another benefit to creating a list. It helps you keep those target companies on your radar and if you choose, you can share your list of company names with people you network with. It makes it easier for them to introduce you to people they may know within your target companies.

### **Start Your Research**

With your list developed and prioritized, you can begin conducting research to acquire basic knowledge about the company before you begin networking. There is a checklist with information you will want to gather prior to a networking meeting.

You're much more likely to want to put the effort into networking if you are sincerely interested in working for a company and this will help you stay motivated.

### **Research Resources**

**Company website:** see press releases, products and services, awards, testimonials, and 'about us' page.

**Employer's social media accounts:** review profiles of the company/people who work there to see what they are sharing and discussing. ►





**Glassdoor:** gather insight and information based on anonymous company reviews.

**Professional associations, online newsletters, magazines and newspapers:** regularly read these resources to discover current news and trends.

### Target List Template

Company Name	Alumni	Motivation	Postings From Indeed.com
	Yes or No	5 – Dream employer 4 – Second tier 3 – Third tier 2 – Not interested 1 – More research	Yes or No

Once you have your list of target companies, identify companies with alumni and prioritize the people you will reach out to first. Begin with the person you know best or have the closest ties to. And once you’ve spoken with them, keep track of any referrals or action items and schedule your next follow-up.

Company Name	Alumni	Motivation	Postings From Indeed.com	Contact	Date	Action
	Yes or No	5 – Dream employer 4 – Second tier 3 – Third tier 2 – Not interested 1 – More research	Yes or No			





**Checklist for Research on Target Employers**

<b>Company Information</b>	
What is its history?	
What are its stated values, mission and culture?	
Who are the key players?	
What services or products does it provide?	
Who are the primary clients or customers?	
What are the benefits for users or customers?	
What significant successes has the company had?	
What current news is being shared about the company?	
Who are the main competitors?	
What are the main challenges in this industry?	
What do other people (customers, competitors, employees) say about the company?	



# Eight Types of People to Ask For a Meeting

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Your purpose for networking is to learn about your desired career, the market place, and spread the word about your qualifications.

You accomplish this by meeting with a variety of people. You do want to be strategic about who you ask to meet with because your time is at a premium.

Be methodical in creating your network. Start by documenting the names of people you already know so you don't overlook someone then continue to add names to your list using the categories listed below.

Keep in mind, it's easier and more successful to get an introduction to someone than reaching out to a complete stranger. For this reason, you'll want to begin networking with the people you already know and hope they will be able to introduce you to other valuable contacts.

The truth is, you never know who can help you. But the only way you'll find out is to meet these seven types of new people.

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## 1. People You Worked With

Your past work colleagues have seen you perform in the job and know your strengths and work ethic. These people make an excellent source of information to find out what changes are going on in the business and industry. Secondly, you want to let them know you will be looking for a new opportunity after you finish business school. Informing people you used to work with of your future plans will help them understand your goals. They can watch for opportunities that might be a match for you. Your colleagues also have connections with people so be sure to ask if they know of anyone they think might be helpful for you to meet.

## 2. Friends

People you know are most likely to want to help you if they can. Your friends have a vast network of contacts you don't know about. Start by meeting with the people you know and inform them of your new career aspirations and ask if they know anyone who may be helpful in speaking with. Even if your friends don't understand what you want to do next, they may be able to help you meet people inside companies you are targeting. Be sure you mention some of the companies you are interested in working for. When they do provide you with a name, find out some background on the person and how they know each other. It's important you take immediate action and reach out as soon as possible. This shows professionalism and that you are serious about your career. When you reach out to the person recommended, via phone or email, you will absolutely want to mention that your friend referred you and why you believe they would be a helpful person to speak with.

## 3. Your Old Bosses

Assuming you and your previous manager or supervisor got along, it's a good idea to reach out to them. Your past boss may know of upcoming opportunities at your old company or elsewhere. If you performed well in your role, then it would be easy for your boss to want to help you and introduce you to other people you should know.

## 4. New People You Meet

Let's say you are attending a networking event or conference or even a baseball game and you meet someone who has ►



a background in your field of interest. If there's enough synergy and common interests and you feel like continuing the conversation, ask for a meeting. How? If you haven't already, exchange business cards and ask if you can connect on LinkedIn. Then ask about continuing the conversation over coffee. Do everything in your power to set a firm date and time and location right then and there. You don't want your new potential lead to slip through the cracks as can happen once people have left the venue.

### **5. People Working at Your Target Company**

Is there a company you would love to work for? Talking with people who work inside a company allows you to learn what it is really like to work there. You may already have connections to people who work inside your dream company and companies on your target list. Research the company on LinkedIn and see who you know. If you do not have any connections, look for someone you know who has a connection in the company. These are called second degree connections. Also ask everyone in your network if they know the person and could introduce you. Or, as a last resort, you could make a cold call and introduce yourself. It's best to get an introduction to someone so you can use their name when you reach out. This increases the odds that the person will respond to your request.

### **6. Alumni**

Tapping into your school's alumni is pool for potential conversations. There are alumni from both your undergraduate school and your current business school. In most cases you can contact the school's Advancement or Alumni office to access a database. LinkedIn also has a powerful resource on the University's page called "See Alumni." This allows you to sort alumni by city, company and the type of work they do. Search for alumni who work for companies you are interested in and alumni who hold a role you aspire to be in.

### **7. Classmates**

The people you attend B-School with have diverse backgrounds. Take the time to meet classmates and learn about their previous work experience. Reach beyond the people you see in class every day. If you belong to a club or take part in other activities, learn about the people in these organizations.

### **8. Professors and Other B-School Staff**

Professors often have connections to the business world and are not only great sources of information but may also have job leads passed on to them from their contacts. Sitting down with a professor to talk about your career will help you both. And don't overlook the other staff members who work at your business school such as people in the career center, alumni office, student services and even admissions. All these people have relationships with past students and business. Additionally, everyone wants to see you succeed.

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### **Productivity Tips**

- Reach out using the method that is most likely to get a response. It may be using email, phone, LinkedIn, Facebook or some other social network. The method you choose depends on the preference of the individual you are reaching out to. And if you don't get a response, switch it up.
- Some people may want to help make connections for you, however, it is always a good idea to maintain control of the request for a meeting or conversation. In many cases, it is better if you offer to do the legwork or make the call, with their permission and endorsement, of course. Your well-meaning friend just doesn't have the same set of priorities or sense of urgency as you. It may take them days or weeks to get around to making the introduction. Offer to de-burden them of that responsibility and you will also eliminate the potential of feeling like a pest when you have to call them in two weeks to remind them.

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### **Create Your List**

Create a list of everyone you know using the categories below. Your goal should be to list at least 100 people. Use contacts ►



from your phone, email, LinkedIn, and even Facebook to help remind yourself of all the people you know. Consider this a brainstorming session and don't eliminate people, just list their names.

This list varies from the seven categories mentioned above. Obviously you can't list people you've just met if you haven't been networking. But there may be people you met awhile ago and never followed up with. Add their name to your list.

Build your list of names using Excel or Word. You will use this list to track who you've contacted, the conversation topics, new names acquired and dates for follow-up.

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### Checklist for Documenting Your Network

#### Co-workers/Former co-workers/Customers/Vendors

Name	Company	Phone	Email

#### Relatives/Friends/Neighbors

Name	Company	Phone	Email

#### Alumni

Name	Company	Phone	Email

#### Target Company Contacts

Name	Company	Phone	Email





**Classmates/Professors/B-School Contacts**

Name	Company	Phone	Email

**Business Contacts (Doctors, Lawyers, Dentists, Accountants, etc.)**

Name	Company	Phone	Email

**Past Networking Contacts**

Name	Company	Phone	Email



# Finding Alumni on LinkedIn

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Networking with alumni is a great strategy for your b-school job search.

You may have had the same professors, been part of the same club or share one of many similar experiences while at b-school. Sharing the same educational experience provides a warmer way for you to introduce yourself and increases the odds of the person accepting your invitation to connect.

There is a very simple way to research and find alumni on LinkedIn and most people don't even know about it! This somewhat hidden LinkedIn feature is invaluable for b-school students!

There is an Alumni page for almost every college and university and it allows you to easily sort and filter alumni.

If you haven't reached out to alumni (or classmates) yet, here are ways you can use LinkedIn's alumni resource.

This video will help you find alumni:

Find and Connect to Alumni on LinkedIn: <https://vimeo.com/233050632>

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## Where is It?

There are two ways to reach the alumni feature. You can type in the college or university name from the search bar at the top. Make sure you select the school's university page not the company page. The other way to access it is to click on your school's logo from your profile. Either way should take you to the school's page where you will find the "See alumni" button.

*Tip: You can search alumni from ANY school, whether you attended the school or not!*

## What Information Can You Find?

You will find alumni information including:

- where they live
- where they work
- what they do

You can filter what you see by clicking on the bars under where they live, work or what they do. This will show only those alumni who meet the criteria.

When you scroll down the page, you will see a profile snapshot for all the alumni who meet the criteria you filtered or searched for.

*WARNING. If you are not connected to the person but want to connect, ALWAYS go to the person's profile page before clicking on the connect button. This ensures you will be able to personalize your invitation to connect. And you always want to send a personalize message when you invite someone to connect on LinkedIn. ►*



### More Filtering Options

Besides being able to filter by the above-mentioned criteria, you can also filter and view results by:

- what they studied
- what they are skilled at
- how you are connected

To get to this second page of information, look at the top right for “< Previous Next >”

### Find Alumni by Where They Work (Worked)

Are you looking for career advice or want to know how you can get your foot in the door with your dream company? Simple. If the company appears in the “where they work” column, click on the bar to filter only those alumni who currently work or previously worked for that company. Or you can type the company name in the search window to search for alumni with that company in their profile.

Scroll down below the summarized information and you’ll see the profiles of alumni. You’ll also see the option to “connect” but remember, go to the person’s profile and invite from there so you can personalize the invitation you send.

On the next page of search results, take notice of the top skills people who work in those companies have. Hint, hint: have you listed those skills in your LinkedIn profile (if you have them)?

### Search by Year Graduated (or Attended)

You can enter a range of years to find alumni who attended during that time or if you want to see a list by the year they graduated, you can do that too. Change the “attended” to “graduated” by clicking on the triangle/arrow.

### Search by Geography

Do you want to relocate to a new city? Try looking for fellow alumni in a new city to make your transition easier. Or maybe you just want to catch up with local alumni. Search for the city under the “where they live” column or if you don’t see it, type the city in the search window.

### Search by Title, Keyword or Other

To find alumni who have a certain job title or have certain keywords in their profiles, or any other criteria, you can use the search window next to the magnifying glass. This allows you to search for any keyword/criteria that appears in alumni profiles.

### Career Exploration

Do you want to know what skills you should develop or uncover a new career path? LinkedIn’s alumni feature provides data to help you explore new career options.

### Personalized Invitation Messages to Alumni

The invitation to connect you send to alumni needs to be personalized. You want to create the best possible first impression. Here are a couple of templates to help you craft your invitation.

“In looking at your profile, I see you are a fellow alumni of \_\_\_\_ university. I also noticed we have similar interests in \_\_\_\_\_. I would enjoy the opportunity to connect and chat sometime.”

“I was looking at your profile and I am very impressed with your accomplishments in \_\_\_\_\_. As a fellow alumni of \_\_\_\_\_, please accept my request to connect. I’d love to talk to you about how you accomplished \_\_\_\_\_.”



**Connect**



## Connecting on LinkedIn

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Once your LinkedIn profile is complete, meaning you've created a keyword rich headline, robust summary and enriched every section, you are ready to begin using LinkedIn to research people inside target companies, find alumni, and use groups to engage in conversation with people in your desired career.

LinkedIn is more than an online resume. It provides you with the opportunity to create a strong personal brand, stay connected with past colleagues, meet new people and get updates on current trends. Re-think how you use it or expand how you are using it. Think about its long term value to you and your career.

Keep in mind that when using LinkedIn, all the rules of networking and professional etiquette still apply. Be polite, respectful and continue to build your network. For the best results, build mutually beneficial relationships before asking for a favor.

It's also important to note that many people do not use LinkedIn regularly and may not see your messages or updates.

To help you make the most of LinkedIn, follow these steps to connect with people and grow your professional network.

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### **The Default Message is a Turn-Off**

Many LinkedIn users complain about the impersonal invitations they receive. They assume the sender didn't care enough to send a personalized message. But here's what's going on- LinkedIn doesn't always give you the opportunity to type a message. In many instances, LinkedIn automatically sends the invitation to connect. So it isn't that you are lazy or didn't want to change the invitation, LinkedIn didn't give you the option to personalize it. So now you know!

### **Never Click to Connect Unless You Are on the Person's Profile**

Ensure you personalize every invitation you send and avoid accidentally sending a generic invitation. To do this, make sure you are on the person's profile when you click on the blue connect button. LinkedIn sometimes prompts you to connect with people you should know and offers the blue connect button. This happens when you see "people you may know," search for someone, view school alumni and in other instances too. Don't be tempted to click on the big blue connect button.

Always go to the LinkedIn profile of the person you want to connect with. When using LinkedIn's desktop version, click on the "more" button and you will see the option to type in your own message.

### **How to Personalize Your Invitation From Your Mobile Device**

To invite someone to connect from your mobile device, type the name in the search bar and select the person's name to open their profile. You will see the big blue button that says connect. Warning, don't click it. Instead, click on the more button and select "personalize invite." This allows you to type your own message, rather than automatically sending LinkedIn's default message.

If you make a mistake and accidentally send your invitation without a customized message, do the right thing and send a follow-up message to the person explaining why you want to connect. ►



### Your LinkedIn Invitation to Connect

When personalizing your invitation, you want your message to be concise but provide enough information so the person will accept your invitation to connect.

Here are the five things your message could include. The more you can include, the better.

- Explain why you want to connect with the person
  - Tell them how you know them — Do you have connections in common?
  - Find something in common — Is it a mutual career field or interest? — Did you attend the same school? Are you in the same LinkedIn Group?
  - Reference something in their profile
  - Thank them in advance for accepting your invitation
- 

### LinkedIn Invitation to Connect Templates

Use these templates to easily personalize your invitations to connect on LinkedIn.

*“It was nice meeting you at the \_\_\_\_ event. I enjoyed talking to you about \_\_\_\_\_. Let’s be sure to stay in touch.”*

*“I am a fellow member of the \_\_\_\_ LinkedIn group and I saw your comments about \_\_\_\_\_. I’d love to stay in touch so we can talk more about \_\_\_\_\_.”*

*“It’s been a long time since we talked, hope you are doing well. I see you are now working at \_\_\_\_\_ company, how is that going? Let’s catch up over the phone soon! Do you have time next week?”*

*“In looking at your profile, I see you are a fellow alumni of \_\_\_\_ university. I also noticed we have similar interests in \_\_\_\_\_. I would enjoy the opportunity to connect and chat sometime.”*

*“I was looking at your profile and I am very impressed with your accomplishments in \_\_\_\_\_. Please accept my request to connect, I’d love to talk to you about how you accomplished \_\_\_\_\_.”*



# Asking Your Network For a Referral or Introduction

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Your network is the key to getting in touch with people inside your target companies. One of the main reasons you've thoughtfully and carefully been building out your network is to earn the right to ask for a favor one day. That day will come. Either one of your contacts knows someone you really want to meet or your contact works for a company that just posted a job you're really interested in.

Warm referrals happen when you are able to name drop a mutual connection. Requests that come from a warm referral are much more likely to win a response than a cold email or outreach. Similarly, you are much more likely to get a response to a job you apply to if you use a referral, either an employee or someone the decision maker knows.

Learn why you need to be referred either for a job or to a new contact and how to ask your network for help making this happen.

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## Referred Candidates Are the Top Source of Hires

Over 30 percent of new hires come from employee referrals according to SilkRoad's Source of Hire 2017 study. Companies report that employee referrals beat out the other hiring methods including applications from Indeed, current employees, candidates sourced by company recruiters, company career website, CareerBuilder and LinkedIn.

## Companies Have Referral Programs

More than three quarters of U.S. workers say that their company has an employee referral program reports iCIMS, a talent acquisition solution provider. This means there is an incentive for employees to refer candidates for job opportunities. But financial incentives aren't the only reason employees refer people for openings in their company. Believe it or not, people want to help you and help their company. It doesn't take much effort for an employee to refer you for a job. All you have to do is ask.

## Two Ways to Get Referred

There are two ways to get referred – a proactive approach and a reactive approach.

### Proactive

The proactive approach happens before a job is posted. You are asking for an introduction or referral. One reason you've been networking with people inside companies you are interested in is to learn from them but also to build relationships. You've also been nurturing relationships with people you haven't kept in touch with. An important part of the message you've shared while networking is letting your contacts know the types of roles and companies you are interested in, just in case something comes up. Ultimately, you want to speak with someone who has the potential to hire you, perhaps a department head. You probably don't know many people at this level so you will need your network to introduce you. When you do find a job posted at one of your target companies, it is easier and faster to reach out to the people you've recently been in touch with and ask them to refer you for the job.

### Reactive

The reactive approach happens after you've found a job opportunity. You ask your in-person LinkedIn, Twitter and even Facebook network to identify friends or friends of friends inside the company with the opportunity. It doesn't matter what role your contact holds. What is important is that you reach out and ask for if they will refer you to the job. ►



### LinkedIn Makes it Easier

The best way to get your resume to the top of the stack is to leverage the power of your connections inside the company. LinkedIn makes it easy to identify company insiders and keep track of where past colleagues currently work. Not only can you search for people you know inside a company using LinkedIn, you can now use LinkedIn's new job search filter to search for jobs where you have connections.

From the desktop version of LinkedIn, go to the jobs tab. You will see a section that says "jobs where you can get referred." This allows you to first focus on jobs where you have connections. View the job and the people you know inside the company and identify the best person to refer you. Choose either someone you know well or someone who is familiar with your work. Asking someone you don't know very well to refer you can be awkward and may not get the desired results. Once you find the best connection to refer you, LinkedIn allows you to send a message directly from the job posting. The recipient will also receive a link to the job posting.

LinkedIn supplies a basic message which you can edit. Here's what the message says when you ask for a referral.

*Hope all is well with you! I came across the [job title] role at [company name] and am interested in applying. Would you be open to sharing my LinkedIn profile with the hiring team so they know about my interest in this role?*

*Happy to chat more if you have the time as well. Looking forward to hearing from you.*

### Craft Your Own Message

If you prefer to bypass LinkedIn and send an email instead or you want to ask someone in your network for an introduction, here's what your message should contain:

- Remind your connection how you know each other
- Reference the job or the person you would like an introduction to
- Explain why you're qualified or include your written pitch in asking for an introduction
- State why you're interested in the job or meeting the person

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### Asking to be Referred to a Job Template

Subject:

Hello [name of connection]:

I wanted to reach out and ask for your help. There's a job for a [job title] at your company and I'm very interested in applying for it.

You may remember, [state how you know each other].

Based on what I read, I believe I would be a great fit for the role.

- [#1 qualification you meet]
- [#2 qualification you meet]





[#3 qualification you meet]

I have been watching [company] and am excited about [something interesting the company is working on]. Additionally, [company]'s focus on [volunteer projects the company supports] aligns well with the volunteer work I've been doing at [volunteer organization].

If you need more information, I'm happy to have a conversation if that would be easier.

Thank you in advance for your help and support!

Your name  
phone number  
email address  
LinkedIn URL

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## Sample Referral For a Job Message

Subject:

Dear Mr. Smith,

Nancy Jones of [company name], suggested I contact you regarding the [job title] opening in your organization.

As an editor/writer for Alexandria's city magazine, I've developed my talent and experience as a public relations writer. Because the staff is very small, I've worn a number of hats, including: developing the editorial format and individual story concepts, writing numerous articles, editing copy, laying out the magazine, and supervising production.

Prior to my current position, I was highly involved in the public relations industry, working for Jones & Jones, where I prepared numerous press releases and media guides, as well as managing several major direct mail campaigns.

My high degree of motivation has been recognized by my previous employers who have quickly promoted me to positions of greater responsibility. I was promoted from assistant editor to editor of Alexandria Monthly after only five months.

I am eager to talk with you about the contribution I could make to [company name]. I will call you the week of April 25th to see if we can find a mutual time and date to get together and discuss the possibility.

Your consideration is greatly appreciated.

Cordially,

Jane Doe

phone number  
email address  
LinkedIn URL





## Sample Message Asking For an Introduction

Subject: Following up on your advice

Hello Martin,

We met briefly at SXSW conference last month during the networking session. To refresh your memory, I am changing careers, from accounting to product management. You provided thoughtful advice on companies that might value my background.

Since we last spoke, I've decided it would be helpful to get tech experience. XYZ Tech is one of the companies I am interested in for their diverse suite of productivity products. I noticed you have a first degree connection to Sam Smith, a developer there.

Would you be willing to introduce me to Sam? If you feel uncomfortable making an introduction no worries. Alternatively, I would appreciate any insight you can offer on the best way to approach Sam.

Any help you could provide before the end of the month would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you so much, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Your name  
phone number  
email address  
LinkedIn URL



# The Purpose of the Informational Meeting

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**First things first: what is an informational meeting?** Also known as an “informational interview,” it’s not really an interview at all, but a conversation to get advice, insights and contacts, and you are in charge of the agenda and asking questions. Do not ask for a job. Consider this CAREER RESEARCH.

It’s always better to schedule these kinds of conversations in person, but it’s possible to have an informational meeting via phone or Skype.

Another important detail: schedule these meetings before there’s an actual job in the mix. In other words, once you are applying for an opportunity, that’s not the time to contact someone at that company for a chat. At that point, it’s probably too late to really benefit from any inside information you might learn.

Here are five things to accomplish at an informational meeting.

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## 1. Learn About Industry Trends

The point in meeting people is to ask them questions you wouldn’t be able to find answers to elsewhere. Do some research to learn about the company and industry before the meeting. Then, ask questions that you can only be answered by someone who actually does the work or is in the field. You can learn about in-demand skills and technology in your field, projects and issues specific to the company. This is your chance to ask career-related questions, for example:

*“I have heard having my PMI certification would greatly enhance my marketability. What are your thoughts and what have you seen?”*

## 2. Learn About the Person’s Career Path and About a Typical Day

Plan to talk with someone who is on a career path you are interested in. Having a conversation with someone about his or her career is one way to know if the career is what you think it is or one that will meet your expectations. You will also want to speak with people who work inside your target companies to learn if it’s a place where you’d excel and succeed.

Don’t forget, people typically enjoy talking about themselves. Ask for the person’s story; engage in a conversation about her goals, what she’d do differently and what advice she has for you. You could discover what you need to do next to achieve your career goals, learn what you need to know to succeed in your dream job or organization. For example:

*“How did you wind up where you are today? What advice do you have for someone like me who would love to emulate your accomplishments?”*

See more sample questions below.

## 3. Gain Insider Information Specifically About Landing a Job

You can’t count on it, but you never know what someone will tell you if you ask the right questions. Maybe there’s a special quality or skill the organization seeks when they hire. Maybe you can find out a name of a great, influential ►





contact who makes important hiring decisions. Or, perhaps you can find out that the company plans to open up a new internship opportunity. For example, you might ask:

*“What qualities are most important for someone working here? Is there anything specific I should know about your company culture?”*

#### **4. Learn About Other Contacts**

At the end of every networking meeting or informational meeting, ask if the person knows someone who might be able to provide resources or suggestions for you. Your next contact is your next rung on the networking ladder. Even if the informational meeting was not as helpful as you had hoped, you still have a chance to salvage the situation. Make a point to include a question such as:

*“Do you know anyone else I should include in my research about \_\_\_\_\_?”*

And if they do supply you with a name, ask if it is okay for you to use their name when you reach out.

#### **5. Secure a New Supporter**

The very best result you can hope to happen at an informational meeting is that you will gain an ally for your job search. It goes without saying: the more prepared you are for your meeting, the more likely you are to convince your contact to invest time in helping you.

This networking contact may not hire you, but could be very influential in helping someone else hire you, via introductions, by convincing someone to meet you and by advocating for you. It's not something you can expect from every meeting, but if you enter into the conversation with genuine interest and curiosity about the person and the organization, plan well, communicate effectively and impress your contact, anything is possible!

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### **Defining the Purpose of an Informational Meeting**

#### **Why do you want to meet with this person?**

- Discuss how your skills may translate to a new but related industry
- Brainstorm about your career options
- Discover the company's culture (and where potentially you may fit)
- Obtain information about the growth or hiring trends of other companies in your industry
- Brainstorm names of other industry related companies
- Identify key players you want to meet (such as decision-makers in your target companies)

#### **What questions you could ask.**

- Who do you know who works in (fill in the appropriate field/industry/company)?
- Would you look at my target list and tell me if you have any contacts in these companies?



- Can you name other companies that might be interested in someone with my background?
- Do you know the names of any good recruiters in my field?
- Do you have any ideas about industry associations, or strategies I may not have considered?
- Do you know the names of any industry specific websites I could investigate?
- Can you suggest what other positions might match my skills and background?
- What do you see as the future trends in this industry?
- What skills are employers looking for in this particular industry?
- Can you provide me with the names of other people who might be willing to speak with me?



# Eight Tips for Requesting an Informational Interview

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**What will you say to someone you barely know that will convince them to meet with you – either face-to-face or on the phone – for 20 to 30 minutes?**

**Keep these eight tips in mind and you'll be on your way to successfully set up informational meetings!**

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When you request an informational meeting — not a job interview — follow these eight tips:

## **1. Ask People You Know for an Introduction**

The first thing to keep in mind is that you really shouldn't reach out to people you don't know. Instead, ask people you know for an introduction. A warm referral will result in a higher response rate and improve the chances that the person will agree to meet with you.

## **2. Request Information and Insight, Not a Job**

You aren't asking for a job. You are seeking information and insight; consider your quest a research study into a career path. It is up to you to make it clear you want to learn from the person, and that you are asking for advice, information or recommendations. When you are making the request to meet, don't call it an informational interview. It isn't really an interview. It is a conversation. And people have meetings all the time.

## **3. Explain the Purpose of the Meeting**

The reason you want to meet with the person depends on who they are and what they do. If the person holds a role you are interested in, then your purpose for wanting to meet is to learn, first-hand, what the job really entails, what skills are most important or what additional training or certification is helpful. If you're asking to meet with someone who works for one of your target companies, then you will want to learn what it's like to work there. What is the company culture, what types of projects might you be working on or what types of clients will you be serving.

## **4. Prepare for Likely Objections**

Before you pick up the phone, develop a script or bullet points so you'll be prepared to introduce yourself and explain specifically what you are asking of them. Being prepared should make you more confident. The more often you do this, the easier it will get.

You will encounter people who don't know how to help you and they may make excuses for not meeting with you. What they are really saying is that they are not comfortable enough to schedule a meeting with you at this time. They aren't always saying no. Prepare responses ready for these common objections so you'll be able to continue the conversation:

*"I don't know of any jobs"*

*"I don't do the hiring"*

*"I'm too busy"*

Your response might be: ►



*“I understand, but I am actually looking for people to have a conversation with so that I can learn more about XYZ company (Q industry or P occupation). I’m not expecting a specific opportunity as a result of our conversation. If you were me, who do you think I should speak to?”*

It’s important to put the needs and interests of others first. When asking for a meeting, you’ll want to allocate this into your invite as well. How would the person benefit by meeting with you? How can you help him or her?

### 5. Be Crystal Clear and Truthful

You are asking for a short meeting, 20-30 minutes. Most people can fit this into their schedules either before work, during lunch or after work.

Your request for a conversation must be sincere and free of hidden agendas. You will not ask for a job, you won’t even mention the word job during your conversation. To help you secure the meeting, make sure you are crystal clear about the topics you plan on covering, types of questions you’ll be asking and your expectations for the meeting.

### 6. Face-to-Face

If logistically possible, request a face-to-face meeting at a place that is convenient for the person you are meeting. Face-to-face meeting is more likely than phone to forge a connection and build a relationship. If distance does not allow for an in-person meeting, so set up a call, with video if that is acceptable to you both.

### 7. Tell Them Who You Are

While your message will include a link to your LinkedIn profile, you must also include a short sentence or two summarizing your background. The key is to keep this concise. Only include the most relevant information. This is a written version of your shorter pitch. You can also share your succinct value proposition.

Your value proposition focuses on the problem you will solve for a potential employer, not what you need or want. For example, a value proposition may look like this:

*“I strategize new business growth for insurance companies by helping them target and engage with the right potential market.”*

### 8. Craft A Winning Request

Email is the preferred method for making the request for an informational meeting. Everyone uses it and checks it multiple times a day, which means your message is more likely to be seen. Sending a LinkedIn message asking for an informational meeting should be a last resort. When crafting your message, you will want to keep these important points in mind:

- a. **Use an Interesting subject line.** The subject line is your chance to entice or convince the reader to open your message. Make it clear and compelling. If possible, include the name of the person referring you.
- b. **State how you know the person.** Including the name of a mutual connection makes your message seem less spammy and since you both know the same person, it’s more likely you’ll get a response.
- c. **Explain why you want to meet.** By explaining what your purpose is for wanting to meet, you are clear and truthful.
- d. **Suggest meeting dates.** You want to make it easy for the person you are contacting to respond, and the less back and forth required to pin down a date, time and location, the better.

You’ll find a template for a meeting request which can easily be updated to include the appropriate information. ►



## Meeting Request Message Template

Subject: Jim Smith recommended I reach out to you

Dear [MR./MS. LAST NAME OF PERSON]:

I received your name through [NAME OF SOURCE] as someone who would be knowledgeable of industry trends and life at [COMPANY NAME]. I am interested in meeting with you to learn about the culture at [NAME OF COMPANY] and what trends you are seeing in your area of expertise [OR SPECIFIC AREA IF KNOWN].

I'm currently attending (or I graduated from) [NAME OF SCHOOL] and am interested in [CONCENTRATION/TYPE OF ROLE].

I've had success [INSERT VALUE PROPOSITION].

I realize your schedule is probably very busy, however, I was hoping you would have 20-30 minutes to meet sometime within the next couple of weeks [OR INSERT A COUPLE OF DATES]. I'm flexible and able to meet at a time and location convenient for you.

I will follow up with you to see what might be convenient, and thank you again for your consideration.

Regards,  
Your Name  
Your Email  
Your Phone number  
Your LinkedIn profile URL

---

## Sample Meeting Request Message

Subject: Referred by Nancy Jones for an Informational Meeting

Dear Mr. Smith,

Nancy Jones of [company name], suggested I contact you to discuss your work.

As an editor/writer for Alexandria's city magazine, I've developed my talent and experience as a public relations writer. Because the staff is very small, I've worn a number of hats, including: developing the editorial format and individual story concepts, writing numerous articles, editing copy, laying out the magazine, and supervising production.

I am eager to learn about your successful career path at XYZ company. I will call you the week of April 25th to see if we can find a mutual date and time to get together.

I appreciate your guidance.

Cordially,  
Jane Doe  
Email  
Phone number  
LinkedIn URL

**Communicate**



# How to Create a Great Pitch for Any Occasion

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*“It’s nice to meet you. What do you do?”*

**Sound familiar? It’s one of the first questions you’ll be asked at any networking event or when meeting someone new.**

**It is up to you to clearly, succinctly and accurately describe yourself so the people you meet will understand your value, goals and how they can help.**

**An important part of telling your story is creating a pitch; often known as an “elevator pitch.” (This term is based on the idea that if you were on an elevator with someone important, you could deliver your “speech” during the elevator ride.) Your pitch could be 15, 30 or 60 seconds, depending on the situation. Keep in mind, the average adult attention span today is only eight seconds.**

**You will use your pitch in many different circumstances. The pitch you use when meeting an alumni at a social event will be slightly different from the one you use when sitting down for an informational meeting with someone who works for a target company. You will also use a written version of your pitch to introduce yourself when requesting an informational meeting.**

**Use these seven steps to create a pitch to impress the people you meet in any networking situation.**

***When speaking your “pitch,” keep in mind HOW you say it is as important as what you say. Be concise and be enthusiastic. Smile when you finish.***

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## **1. What is Your Goal?**

Before you can start writing your pitch, you want to define your immediate career goal. In other words, what role are you interested in? This becomes the focus of your pitch and determines the supporting information that will ultimately go into your pitch.

Can you answer these important questions: what skills, attributes and experience qualify you for the role?

You also want to include in your pitch the reason you are interested in the career or field you have chosen. Your motivation is unique to you and your ability to articulate your motivation can be a differentiator.

## **2. Industry Experience?**

Your knowledge and familiarity with an industry makes it easier for you to transition within an industry. But outside industry experience can be of value if you will be working with clients in an industry you are familiar with. In some cases, experience in other industries brings new perspective. It will be up to you to decide how you tie your last industry experience to your future goal.

## **3. What Skills Do You Use to Solve Problems?**

Remember, every job represents a problem waiting for a solution. Think about the skills you enjoy using or want to use. Include both hard and soft skills, as well as technical skills and software you’re familiar with, especially if these ►



are in-demand. If you are transferring to a new role, focus on transferrable skills. Transferrable skills are broader and apply across industries and roles. They include communication, leadership, problem-solving, organization, teamwork and more.

#### **4. What Impact Do You Have? What Results Do You Create?**

Identify your top professional accomplishments. You won't be able to address all your accomplishments in your pitch, but look for accomplishments with a reoccurring theme. Do you have a history of streamlining processes or organizing projects? Did you save money for your previous employer by negotiating a contract? You may even have a knack for summarizing data and presenting it to senior management. These are the types of things future employers want to know. When you identify the impact or results of your work, you distinguish yourself from others with the same basic skill-set.

#### **5. End With a Question**

When you reach the end of your pitch, it can feel awkward if you don't know how to conclude it. When delivering your pitch while networking, a good way to engage someone in a conversation is to ask a question. You may not always need to ask a question, but it is an option to consider given your networking situation.

#### **6. Deliver Your Pitch With Style**

Present your pitch with energy and emotion. Let your excitement show! It can be difficult to talk about yourself, but when you've outlined your key points, you have more energy to focus on your presentation style. Try smiling when you deliver your pitch. Instead of memorizing your pitch word for word, outline the bullet points you want to include. You don't want your pitch to sound robotic or get stuck because you've forgotten exactly what to say next.

#### **7. What Does Your Future Employer Need?**

Your pitch should take into consideration the needs of a future employer so rather than focusing your pitch solely on what you WANT consider emphasizing what you OFFER. Your pitch isn't all about you; it's about explaining the benefits of hiring you.

To uncover the needs of your future employer, make sure you do your research. Identify what the company needs from someone in the role you are interested in. Review lots of job descriptions to ensure you reference the required skills and knowledge. Look for words that appear consistently across multiple job postings. For example, you may find that almost every Financial Analyst job posting requests quantitative analysis skills, financial modeling, advising with senior leadership and an MBA or MS. Include as many as you can in your pitch to convey what you offer.

As you learn more about your desired role and as you develop new skills, update your pitch to include the new skills.

#### **8. Tips to Keep in Mind**

You don't need to include every qualification and skill. Remember, your pitch is a summary of your most notable qualifications. You have the remainder of the conversation to reference additional information about your background.

Your pitch is a teaser to get someone interested in speaking with you and asking follow-up questions. If you do not include enough information or present your qualifications coherently, it will be difficult for the person you are speaking with to engage in conversation.

#### **Your Pitch at a Networking Event**

This version of your pitch needs to be about 15-20 seconds.

*I'm Bernard Jones. I'm a big data consultant and I help companies demystify big data and put one of their most important assets, their data, to use identifying and answering the questions that will dramatically improve their business' bottom line. My MBA from XYZ Business School has honed these skills. ►*





### Your Pitch at an Informational Meeting

You have a little more time in a one-on-one informational meeting to share your qualifications. This version of your pitch may be up to a minute long.

*Hello and thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I have 4 years' experience working in retail operations and marketing. I've become very interested in the explosion of social media and micro content. Right now, when I'm not in class or at work, I'm helping my organization enhance their social media presence. I'm an MBA candidate at XYZ Business School. My goal is to join a non-profit overseeing their marketing and communications specifically focusing on social media. I am interested in learning more about how you ended up in the non-profit world and the differences from the private sector.*

### Your Pitch to Use With Alumni

Leverage the power of your mutual education to highlight academic or school achievements that the fellow schoolmate will appreciate and understand.

*Hello my name is Christina Jones. I am pursuing my Masters in Finance at XYZ Business School and as you know from your experience there, the coursework and co-curricular opportunities have been invaluable. I'm interested in an analyst position within an asset management division. My passion lies in finance and I've already had two internships in the industry. My quantitative analytic skills along with my education have enhanced my ability to perform detailed research and communicate at all levels within a company.*

### More Sample Pitches

*My name is Sam Smith and I deliver data for businesses that want to better understand their markets, customers, and competitors. I worked with one of the big four consulting firms analyzing the responses of executives from Fortune 1000 companies about how they viewed risk management and what they saw as the emerging risks. The final report made national headlines and is regularly cited as a benchmark for businesses. I want to take my data analysis skills and apply it within one of the top 10 tech companies in Silicon Valley.*

*Hi, I'm Jane Smith, and my plan is to develop and lead the next-generation of supply chain innovations in emerging markets. I was fortunate to learn the potential through a consulting internship within Deloitte's supply chain practice. In June, I'll graduate with my MBA from XYZ Business School and I'll be pursuing opportunities with companies like Maersk, WalMart and Amazon, to name just a few.*

*Hello, I'm Jim Welsh. I troubleshot Bank X's risk management applications during the global financial crisis. Post-MBA I want to focus on developing new risk management strategies to avert such crises.*

*Hi, my name is Sue Smart. My background blends laboratory operations and accounting. I'm endlessly curious and my friends, family, and colleagues look to me for answers on everything from new medication research to budgeting. I've always been passionate about process improvement and making things run better. I want to financially improve operations by streamlining the procurement process and my MBA has enhanced my ability to analyze operations more quantitatively. ►*



## Pitch Worksheet and Template

Goal	
Industry experience	
Skills offered	
Problems solved	
Relevant Education	

Now that you've identified the most important information to share, let's put the pieces together. Here's the template for your pitch.

I am pursuing a career as a ... [career goal]

My experience has been [industry, role or type of company]

This gave me the opportunity to [skills used or problem solved]

I've been successful [what problems you solve, what solutions you offer] this makes me ideally suited to \_\_\_\_\_  
(something about the requirement of the new function or industry)

My [type of degree, concentration and name of school] further developed my skills. I decided to pursue an MBA  
\_\_\_\_\_.



# Eight Steps to Prepare for Your Informational Meeting

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Your invitation for an informational meeting has been accepted! Now it is time to prepare for your meeting.

It's important to remember that you are the one asking for the meeting and therefore, you set the agenda. It's up to you to develop questions to acquire the information you need to help with your career.

If you do this right, your initial informational meeting could be the beginning of a long-term professional relationship with the person you are meeting. You want to make a good impression by sounding interested, enthusiastic and smart.

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## 1. Do Your Research

Before you invite someone to meet with you, learn everything you can about the person. Start with a Google search. Has the person or their organization been in the news? Have they recently been quoted in a professional journal or online newsletter? Most people are flattered when new colleagues mention a quote or comment of theirs that received positive press. Additionally, doing so also makes it clear you are on top of industry news.

Review the LinkedIn profile, Twitter stream and even Facebook pages owned by the person you will be meeting. Focus first on professional information: Learn where the person attended school, where they worked, what associations they belong to and any other volunteer organizations they may be affiliated with.

If the person you are meeting with is an alum, see if their LinkedIn profile mentions anything about courses they took or clubs they belonged to. (Don't forget to make sure you have a complete LinkedIn profile and a professional online presence in case anyone is researching you!)

Look for some common personal touch points. Are there any common connections? Do potential contacts belong to public, online group-focused hobbies you enjoy? Make a note of any potential talking points.

## 2. Plan How You'll Start the Conversation

If you're uncomfortable meeting new people, advance research and planning will help you feel more prepared and confident.

Use something from your research to start the conversation or you could choose something lighter such as the weather, local events, or the venue where you are meeting. The purpose of this small talk is to start building rapport with the individual you are meeting with. This helps set the tone for the meeting and helps the person begin to understand your personality.

Maybe the person enjoys playing tennis and you do, too. Work the topic into the conversation. It's not necessary to say, "In researching your background, I noticed you enjoy tennis; so do I." Even in an age when it's easy to find out anything about other people, this might seem a bit aggressive. Instead, once niceties have been exchanged, feel free to comment, "Wow... This weather is great for tennis. I hope it lasts until the weekend." The new contact will likely pick up the topic and presto — a natural conversation ensues. ►



### 3. Review Your Purpose for the Meeting

Before you reached out to request the meeting, you defined what you wanted to accomplish in meeting with this person. Go back and review what you asked for. What knowledge or information does the person you are meeting with possess? How will their information help you? The questions you ask during the meeting will be determined by who you are meeting with.

For example, if you are meeting with an alumni who works in a role you aspire to be in, learn about the role and how the person landed it. If you are meeting with someone who works in a company you are interested in, you could ask about the company culture, the systems and processes the company uses and the hiring process. Below you will find a list of questions you can modify to suit your situation.

### 4. Set the Agenda

You probably asked for a 20-30 minute meeting. The time will go quickly so you'll want to set an agenda to keep you on track. Here's a general outline for you to follow:

Agenda Item	Time
Greetings, small talk	3-5 minutes
Your pitch and purpose of the meeting	3-5 minutes
Ask questions	15-20 minutes
Thank you, ask for other contacts, offer help	3-5 minute

### 5. Be a Good Listener

For some people, it's natural to do a lot of talking. If you're one of these people, or you know you get nervous and talk incessantly, be sure you plan ahead to ask plenty of questions. Most people like talking about themselves. Be the person who wants to know more about new contacts. Nod, smile, and you will leave a good impression. A good conversation where the other person feels valued and heard is likely to lead to another meeting. A great way to do this is to use the phrase, "Tell me more about..." which keeps them talking and shows you are listening and interested.

### 6. Avoid Asking for a Job

Don't forget, while it may seem counter-intuitive, you should avoid asking for a job when meeting people for the first time. Make a point to have an engaging conversation about the person's work experience and learn from them.

### 7. Practice Makes Perfect — Practice!

If talking with strangers is uncomfortable, spend some time role-playing with friends or in front of a mirror. Make a list of things to say. It helps to prepare to discuss topics that are trending. See the latest movies, read books, and read the business press and public filings about the company and industry before the meeting. Avoid talking about politics and religion.

### 8. Send a Thank-You Right Away

To show your gratitude, express thanks to the person who graciously took the time to share information with you. Your message should be sent while the meeting is still fresh in your mind and the mind of the person you met with - 24-48 hours is a good rule of thumb. Not only are you thanking the person for their time, your message also helps cement the relationship so you may ask for a favor in the future.

Anyone can send a "thank you for your time" message, even though few job seekers do. Invest the extra effort to explain why the meeting was helpful and how you plan to follow through on the advice provided. It proves that you were listening. ►



### Questions to Ask During an Informational Meeting

Consider Asking	To Learn About
1. What attracted you to the career?	How does this career match your expectations?
2. What previous experiences helped you most in this role?	What experiences can you acquire or do you have that are similar?
3. What do you need to know or what you should prepare to be successful in the role when you first started? What's one thing you wish you knew about this role/company before you started?	What do you need to know or what to prepare for to be successful in the role.
4. What have you found to be most rewarding about this work?	What are the intrinsic or extrinsic motivators in this type of work?
5. What's most important to prepare for a role like yours?	What skills, knowledge or competencies do you need to develop?
6. If you could go back and do anything differently in this career path, what would you do?	Is there another way to enter into this career?
7. Tell me about your company.	What are their goals, concerns, values, needs?
8. What is happening in the industry?	What do they think is important for you to know?
9. What exactly do you offer your clients or customers?	What is the technical language used in their business?
10. What is the history of this industry locally and how was this business started?	How does their company fit into the larger industry picture?
11. What are the most significant factors affecting your company today?	What are the outside circumstances affecting their company?
12. How have changes in technology most affected your business? How has your business/industry been affected by the past economic climate?	How are these factors affecting their present hiring needs?
13. How has your company grown or changed in the last couple of years?	How has the direction of the company affected its hiring needs?
14. What future direction do you see the company taking?	Have these changes increased or decreased the need for staff?
15. What is the greatest demand for your services or product? Which department feels it the most?	Where are the greatest possibilities for employment in this business? How would employment in these areas add to the growth of the company?
16. How do you differ from your competition?	What services/products are they most proud of? How do they perceive themselves in the marketplace?
17. Describe your star employee. What are the qualities of people who perform best in this business?	What does this company need from its employees and how can I address those needs before they show up as job postings?
18. How do you think most of the employees would describe this workplace?	What kind of environment has this company created for its employees?
19. How would you describe your company culture?	What is their perception of the kind of workplace it represents?
20. What type of personalities fit in best at your company?	What is the company's culture/values?
21. What trends do you see in the future that will affect your organization and industry? What do you think the company will look like 5 years from now?	How will the company's planned growth affect its hiring needs?
22. Who else would you recommend that I speak with about this career/company?	Acquiring referrals is an important part of networking plus this question helps you determine how well the person trusts you.



## Job Search Related Questions

- Would you look at my target list and tell me if you have any contacts in these companies?
- Can you name other companies that might be interested in someone with my background?
- Do you know the names of any good recruiters who specialize in this field?
- Do you have any ideas about industry associations, or strategies I may not have considered?
- Do you know the names of any industry specific websites I could investigate?
- Can you suggest what other positions might match my skills and background?
- What is the best way to get noticed as a candidate with your company?

## Your Meeting Outline

Background Information	
Name:	
Title:	
How long with current company:	
School(s) attended:	
Major accomplishment:	
Associations, clubs, activities:	
Who referred you:	
Why:	
Meeting Agenda	
Your pitch and value proposition:	
Questions to ask	
Names acquired	
How can you help?	
Action items post meeting	





## Thank You Template and Sample Messages

Your message will be concise and can usually be conveyed in three paragraphs. The first paragraph says thank you. The second paragraph explains why the meeting was beneficial and any follow-up actions you plan on taking. The third and final paragraph says thank you again, and you may choose to ask if it is ok to keep in touch or ask follow-up questions.

Keep these points in mind when creating your message:

- Templates are great, but your thank you message must be unique to your informational meeting.
- Keep the tone formal, remember this relationship could result in a job offer one day.
- Take the extra time to make sure your message, free of grammar or typographical errors.
- If you were referred by someone, be sure to follow-up and send them a thank you message for the introduction and give a brief summary of your take-away from the meeting.

You will find a template and several examples at the end of this tip sheet.

Subject line: Thank you for your time

Dear [Mr./Ms.] [Last Name],

First paragraph: Thank the person for their time, sharing their expertise, insight, knowledge or information. Also reference the type of information shared. Was it company information, career information, job search guidance, information about job skills or experience needed, or some other topic.

Second paragraph: Explain what you gained from the informational meeting and how it will help your job search or career. If you received actionable advice or recommendations, include what actions you have taken as a result.

Third paragraph: Thank the person again for their time and express the desire to keep the lines of communication open in the future.

Sincerely,  
Your Name  
Phone number  
LinkedIn URL

### Example 1:

Dear [Mr./Ms.] [Last Name],

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me to discuss your career at [Company Name]. I enjoyed meeting you and learning about how you navigated into your field after business school.

Based on your recommendation, I have already contacted the local chapter of ABC professional association regarding membership. I'm looking forward to my first meeting next month.

Again, thank you so much for your time! I look forward to keeping in touch.

Sincerely, ►

**Example 2:**

Dear [Mr./Ms.] [Last Name],

Thank you for meeting with me to discuss your experience in [Industry]. I appreciate your time and the insight and information you shared with me.

I was especially interested in learning about [choose a something from the conversation] and the way it affects [Industry] employees. I am even more excited to begin a career in this area of work, and I feel that the information you shared has helped fill some gaps in my knowledge of [role or industry].

Again, thank you for your time and I look forward to keeping in touch. If there is anything I can do to help you, please don't hesitate to reach out!

Sincerely,

**Example 3:**

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Thank you for speaking with me today. Your insight into [career field, company culture, or whatever was discussed] was truly helpful. The information you shared has confirmed my decision to gain additional work experience in [the field or role] before aiming for a more senior role.

I am looking forward to receiving the newsletter from [name of resource] and I'm certain the information will help me become more familiar with the industry. I've also bookmarked the websites you suggested for industry developments.

I will follow up in the near future to let you know about my progress. Thank you again for your assistance.

Sincerely,





# How to Work a Room

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**As a B-School student, you will probably attend career conferences, job fairs and alumni networking events. It's not so easy to master the art of juggling a plate and drink in one hand while delivering an on-target elevator pitch. And for introverted job-seekers who prefer one-on-one meetings or more intimate conversations, the idea of needing to "work a room" to meet an influential new contact may seem overwhelming.**

**Despite this, succeeding at in-person networking is not out of reach. Knowing how to work a room can make all the difference in feeling more comfortable and creating a memorable first impression.**

**Follow these steps to eliminate the awkwardness when attending a networking event and emerge with new contacts.**

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## **Be Selective**

You do not need to attend every networking event. Choose events based on who will be there and the type of contacts you can make. Look for events that will allow you to interact with the appropriate people, either by industry, profession or geographic location. Beyond the major career conferences, seek out relevant industry MeetUps, workshops, professional association meetings or hosted happy hours, presentations delivered by target company leaders, or alumni events held in desired.

## **Become a Sleuth**

Before attending in-person events, find out who else plans to attend. This is easier than ever if you received an online invitation. Attending a professional networking event? Organizers likely used a social application to record responses and make them available to invitees. Colleagues and potential mentors may have listed themselves as attending, which provides easy access to click through their profiles to learn about their backgrounds and interests.

Learn whatever you can about the people you may meet. Narrow down some people you may want to meet and use all available tools to learn more about them. Start with a Google search. Have they or their organizations been in the news? Have they recently been quoted in a professional journal or online newsletter? Most people are flattered when new colleagues mention a quote or comment of theirs that received positive press. Doing so makes it clear you are on top of industry news, which never hurts.

Review LinkedIn profiles, Twitter streams and even Facebook pages owned by people you hope to meet in person. Focus first on professional information: where they attended school, where they worked, and review their professional bios, or LinkedIn summaries. (Don't forget to make sure you have a complete LinkedIn profile and a professional online presence in case anyone is researching you!)

## **Have a Conversation Starter**

No one really wants to stand around exchanging elevator pitches... Think about what you enjoy discussing.

The idea is to get the conversation started by making small talk. Asking a light question makes it easy for the person to respond. Avoid starting a conversation with the very overused "what do you do?" Instead, warm up the conversation by asking something about the networking event, city, weather or even current events. Eventually the conversation will allow you to ask about the person's profession.

If you are attending a career conference or job fair, there is usually time allocated for networking. But if not, you can still take the initiative to network while waiting in line. You never know what you may learn from a fellow b-school student. ►



Be prepared to network with everyone who is attending an event. Consider these suggested conversation starters:

- Talk about food. What's the best restaurant in town?
- Ask about their hobbies or outside interests? If you are lucky, you'll share a hobby with the person you are meeting.
- Sports. Do you know what teams are playing that night? How about where to get tickets for events?
- Share a highlight from your recent vacation.
- Are you an avid reader? See if you share a similar interest in books.
- Did you just discover a new productivity app? Mention why you like it. People always appreciate learning about online resources and ways to make their lives easier and more efficient.

If you're meeting someone you've done research on and you discover the person enjoys fishing and you do, too, work the topic into the conversation. It's not necessary to say, "In researching your background, I noticed you enjoy fly fishing; so do I." Even in an age when it's easy to find out anything about other people, this might seem a bit invasive. Instead, ease into the topic by saying, "Wow... This weather is great for fishing. I hope it lasts until the weekend." The new contact will likely pick up the topic and presto—a natural conversation ensues.

*You'll find many more conversation starters at the end of this material.*

### **Survey the Room**

Once you arrive at the event, note where the bar and food are located. People tend to gather in these areas making them great spots for starting a conversation with someone in line. You can also look for people who are standing alone and not already talking to someone. This is an easy way to engage someone in conversation plus it's a considerate, welcoming gesture that will be remembered. Most people feel uncomfortable attending an event alone, so by approaching them, you've helped alleviate the awkwardness. And finally, scan the crowd to see if you know anyone. Make sure to say a quick hello to people you know, but keep track of your time so you'll be able to meet more people at the event too.

### **Play Host**

Another way to get into the networking mood at a group event is to play host! Think about what a host would do. If this was your event, you would want to make people feel comfortable. One way to do this is by introducing someone you've just met to a person you know at the event or even someone standing by themselves. Or you may notice the person you are talking with needs a drink. Offer to go with them to the bar to get one. During your conversation, you may suggest introducing them to someone in your network. Share why you believe they would benefit from meeting one another and what you think they have in common.

### **Buddy Up**

Attending an event solo takes courage and determination. To ensure you don't back out of the event, and more importantly, that you have someone to talk to, invite a friend. You can either arrive together or meet each other there. Just set some ground rules. Agree that you are both going to the event to meet new people so you don't stand in the corner and talk with each other the whole time.

### **Set a Goal**

You don't need to stay for the entire event. Set a goal to meet two or three new people, or if your intention was to meet someone specific, this can serve as your motivation. Once you've achieved your goal, you are free to leave, unless you are having a good time, which can unexpectedly happen. ►



## How to Close a Conversation

Leaving a conversation can be awkward. But remember, the reason you are attending the event is to meet new people. And it's okay if you don't click with every person you meet. Find an excuse to exit from the conversation or explain that you would like to meet more people. If you do meet someone you would like to stay in touch with, be sure to ask for the person's contact information before you leave their side.

*You can find ideas on what to say to leave a conversation at the end of this material.*

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## Questions to Start a Conversation

### Any Group Event

- "What brought you here today?"
- "How's your week going?"
- "Are you from the area?"
- "I can't believe how beautiful/cold/hot/rainy it is today."
- "That [food or beverage] looks great. Where did you find it?"
- "Do you have anything interesting planned for the weekend?"

### At A Conference With Speakers

- "What did you think of the speaker?"
- "What part of the talk really resonated with you?"
- "What prompted you to come here today?"
- "Have you been to one of these before?"
- "What's been the best session for you?"
- "Who have you enjoyed at the meeting so far?"
- "What session are you most looking forward to?"

### At a Career Conference or Job Fair

- "Have you participated in events like this before? How does this one compare?"
- "Which company did you enjoy meeting so far?"





## **Ways to End a Conversation**

- “It’s been great talking with you, but I really need to say hello to a few other people. Hope you enjoy the rest of the event.”
- “Thanks for the time. Seems like we have a lot in common. Can I send you a LinkedIn invite to stay connected?”
- “I don’t want to take up all your time, it was great meeting you!”
- “It’s been good speaking with you! I’ve got to make a quick call, please excuse me.”
- “It was great speaking with you. If I don’t run into you later, I hope to see you at another event soon.”
- “I’m going to grab another drink, but it was fantastic to meet you.”
- “Well, I think it’s time for me to head out. I would love to talk with you again, though. May I have your card?”



# Seven Ways to Have a Blast at a Career Fair

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A major part of your b-school job search is getting yourself out there. What better way to do that than to attend a career fair. First, it is going to help you get more comfortable talking about yourself and build your confidence. Second, you have the chance to WOW people face-to-face!

Companies are not giving away jobs at a career fair. They are there to check out the pool of candidates. They are looking for the people who stand out as exceptional.

These are the seven things you need to know in order to make a great impression and have a blast at a career fair!

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## 1. Find Out What Companies Will Be Attending

It sounds obvious, but, if a company isn't hiring for the types of jobs you are interested in, why waste your time talking with them at a career fair? If you don't see your target companies at the fair, ask yourself if it is really worth your time to attend. If you do see your target companies, then prioritize the order you will visit them. Give yourself time to practice with companies you may not care about as much. Wait to visit your dream company once you are warmed up.

## 2. Visit Their Websites to See What Jobs Are Posted

Generally, companies that attend a career fair have posted jobs. If you can't find them on their website, check Indeed.com and LinkedIn to see if the company has posted job there instead.

## 3. Customize Your Resume and Cover Letter For Each Job and Company

Tailor your resume to address the specific job requirements for each job you are interested in. Most B-school students may not have the time to do this, so your resume may catch the attention of recruiters who are tired of seeing generic resumes. Your cover letter explains why you want to work for the company and lists your top qualifications for the job. Taking time to customize both your resume and cover letter shows a greater degree of interest.

## 4. Know Your Pitch

Confidently and happily convey your pitch. You won't have much time, so plan on using one that lasts less than a minute. Practice it in advance to make sure you include all the right information and time it to test its length.

## 5. Enthusiastically Ask the Recruiter Well Thought Out Questions

Two to three questions might be all you have time for. You want to leave the recruiter with a positive impression and show you are an interested and qualified candidate!

## 6. Ask When and How You Should Follow Up

"We'll call you" isn't good enough. Ask the best way to follow up and politely, but assertively, ask when you can call if you don't hear from them.

## 7. Write a Thank You Message

A good way to set yourself apart is to send a thank you email to the recruiter or person you met at the career fair. Include something specific about the conversation so the person will remember you. Also express your interest in the company and role. Be sure to send that within 24-hours of the career fair so the person doesn't forget who you are. ►

**Additional Tips:**

- Arrive at the career fair early while the recruiters are fresh.
- Have business cards on hand.
- Turn your cell phone off.
- Always look your best (wear a suit that is freshly pressed and clean, and a white or light blue shirt.)
- Use breath mints.



# 12 Ways to Stay in Touch With Your Network

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Do you have a drawer full of business cards, hundreds of LinkedIn connections and thousands of email addresses? Any one of those contacts could hold the key to your next opportunity. But you don't know which one. This means you need to find ways to stay in contact with as many as possible.

There 's a saying that "networking is not once and done." In order for you to stay top of mind, you will want to use memorable methods to show your network the value you provide and that the relationship you've build with each one of them matters.

Here are twelve twists to keep in touch with people in your network.

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## 1. Not Your Ordinary Holiday Wishes

It seems everyone sends a holiday card in December. Don't let your greetings get lost in the crowd. Instead, send holiday cards for off-holidays, such as Valentine's Day, Thanksgiving or Groundhog Day. You could even choose a more unusual holiday, such as National Gumdrop Day or National Cat Day, as your trigger to send your holiday wishes.

## 2. Pay Attention to Birthdays

Social media platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn send reminders to make it easier to remember birthdays. However, some of your contacts may not have shared this important date on a social profile, and so this important day might slip through the cracks. Be sure to note birthdays on your calendar and send an electronic note or go a step above by sending a card through the mail. It shows you've given a little more thought and effort to remember the person's special day.

## 3. Create Your Own E-Newsletter

Why would you have a personal e-newsletter? Because the technology is easy, and it's good personal branding for showing your interest and skills. Your monthly or quarterly e-newsletter should be useful to your target audience. For example, if many of your key contacts are in tech marketing, share current news about new gadgets or reviews of new technology from reputable sources. Include personal updates, such as major accomplishments, ongoing education or training, events you've attended or projects you are working on.

You can send a simple email; just be sure you blind copy recipients to protect privacy. And never spam people by adding them to your mailing list without permission or the option to opt out.

## 4. Say Congratulations

When your contacts are mentioned or published in the news, congratulate them on the visibility. You can use Google Alerts to customize the news updates on people and companies in your network. Monitoring LinkedIn will also help you keep tabs on major milestones, like a new job.

## 5. Send a Token

For people in your network who have gone above and beyond what you expected, you may want to send them something more than a message. Maybe there is a book you know they'll enjoy. If you are looking for less expensive alternatives, consider a gift card to a favorite lunch spot or store. ►



There are also ideas that may seem a bit over-the-top but that might just work. If you know a connection who loves to travel, send a postcard from your next trip that says, “Wish You Were Here.” Or bring back some swag from a conference and send it along with a message about your takeaways from the event.

### **6. Follow Up On Rejections**

Remember that job you were a runner-up for? Or that potential job lead that didn't come through? Don't give up. Send your contact a follow-up email about three months after the new hire was due to start. Sincerely express your hope that all is going well and that you are always open to future conversations.

### **7. Share Useful News**

Sending a message that says, “just checking in!” can feel like a waste of time for you and the person receiving it. Instead, share current news or a useful hack. Perhaps there are changes in regulations or policies with the industry; why not share these with those in your network who need to know? You are already keeping track of industry trends and company news, so share it with people in your network.

### **8. Pick Up the Phone**

Sometimes, just picking up the phone for a quick check-in can be a welcome surprise. Try calling first thing in the morning, at lunch or at the end of the day, when people are more likely to be near the phone and not in meetings. If you get voice mail, leave a short message with your name and phone number, and share a bit of interesting information.

### **9. Write a Recommendation**

LinkedIn is the perfect platform to recommend a past colleague, service provider or client. When someone receives an unsolicited recommendation, it is a welcome surprise.

### **10. Connect People**

Do you know two people you think would benefit from meeting each other? Be a matchmaker and introduce them. Send one email to both people and explain why you think they would benefit from meeting. Provide enough information so each person can understand the potential in the relationship and know how to research and contact one another.

### **11. Invite Someone to an Event**

The next time you receive an invitation to an event or fundraiser, consider inviting one of your contacts to join you. Just be sure it is a cause you both support.

### **12. Make It Personal**

Keep notes about the personal interests of the people you meet and keep in touch by referencing their hobby, travel plans, family members or life events. For example, if you met with someone and they mentioned their upcoming trip to Iceland, follow up after they return and ask about the trip. Or if you both share an interest in craft beers, send an announcement about a new microbrewery opening up. During your networking meeting, listen for these personal revelations which will help you stay connected and take your relationship to a new level. Check in with the people you've met on a quarterly basis by referencing something that is personally important to them.

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## **Make an Action Plan**

### **Get Organized**

Create your database now. Add important information about your network contacts like birthdays, names of partners/spouses, children, college attended, organizations, interests, favorite food and so on. You can use a formal customer relationship management system, a simple Excel spreadsheet or the LinkedIn contact notes section. ►





## **Carve Out Time**

Put reminders to send outreach and important dates on your calendar. Here are some suggestions:

**Weekly:** Check LinkedIn and Facebook notifications for work anniversaries and birthdays.

**Monthly:** Plan your outreach for the month — who do you need to touch base with and what will you do?

**Annually:** Evaluate the strength of your network. Have you done enough to stay in touch?

(See “Seven Techniques to Hold Yourself Accountable to Network”)