



MAXIMIZE YOUR NETWORKING EXPERIENCE

Goal

- Intentional forethought for your pre-networking planning, on-site action and post-event follow-up can produce maximum networking experiences & outcomes

Before You Go

- **Research:** Read the pre-event materials and website WELL IN ADVANCE (not just in transit) to understand the purpose of the event and who is attending. PREVIEW employer descriptions, speaker bios, and event attendee list to get a handle on who you could be meeting
- **Prioritize:** You won't be able to meet every firm or speak with each attendee, so be ready to engage strategically by CREATING A TIERED HIERARCHY to allow you maximize your time with preferred targets. Include notes on each employer to indicate SPECIFICALLY WHY YOU ARE INTERESTED and WHY YOU ARE A FIT
- **Hone Your Story:** Revisit [the CDO website](#). Depending on setting, you may use your short 30-second version (career fair), or a longer iteration (on-site interview). Consider your INTERESTS & PASSIONS as they relate to work, insights related to your VALUE-ADD STRENGTHS & EXPERIENCES, and your goals for YOUR NEXT CAREER STEP. Craft the two-minute story, and then distill it for your shorter versions. Work collaboratively with colleagues to refine your story OUT LOUD or RECORD YOURSELF with [vMock Elevator Pitch](#) or on your mobile device until you're satisfied

At the Conference

- **Stick to the Plan:** Be sure to attend to your original GOALS and OBJECTIVES, even when the energy of the event tempts you to veer off course
- **Be on Time by Being Early:** If a pure networking event, try to arrive as EARLY as possible so that the recruiters and company reps are FRESH. At seminars and programs, early arrival will allow you to take a great seat UP FRONT, where the attendees can see and hear you; additionally, you'll be able to APPROACH THE SPEAKERS to have a word with the presenters before the session if possible, and in place to be there first at the end of the session
- **Focused Flexibility:** Remember that plan from above? Be flexible when the occasion arises and open yourself up to the possibility of positive HAPPENSTANCE. When events get crowded or lines get long, strike up conversation with those around you. Keep an eye on attendees' name badges as well; that kind stranger in front of you in line could be a hiring manager at your TARGET company!

After the Introductions

- **Finishing the Conversation:** Tactfully ending a networking conversation can be more difficult than starting one. If you sense your conversation partner's attention waning, or their eyes start searching the room around you, it's time to WRAP UP; similarly, be on the lookout for a long line forming behind you at a networking table. THANK the person for their time and move along. Ending with, "I appreciate your time today, and hope you enjoy the rest of the event" or something similar can go a long way toward reinforcing a positive PROFESSIONAL impression



- **Get the Contact Info:** When concluding networking conversations, always set the stage for your follow-up. Ask for a CONTACT INFORMATION; jot down their name and ask if they're on LinkedIn or can share their email address with you. When in doubt, use your own version of the following ask: "It was great to speak with you; can I get your information in case I need to follow up with any questions?" Finally, JOT DOWN A QUICK NOTE (on a business card, if possible) about your conversation with the person so that you may REFERENCE IT LATER
- **Follow Up:** Confirming your interest with employers and networking contacts is crucial, and you need to consider your CONTENT and TIMING. The CONTENT of the message itself should be brief, specific and professional in tone, such as:

Dear Ms. ABC:

I enjoyed meeting you at the Yale SOM Networking Event this morning and am especially interested in applying my project management background to the rotational internship program we discussed. I will follow up with an online application as you suggested but wanted to be sure to thank you for your time.

Best Regards,

Eli Yale

The TIMING of your message can vary depending on the circumstance. Many employers will make same-day candidate decisions at a career fair or for at-conference interviews, so send your note by the end of the business day (making sure you review and edit appropriately). If the contact was informational or for long-term networking, your timeline is more flexible; following up within 24 hours is a good rule of thumb, and the method can be a traditional email note or even a PERSONALIZED LinkedIn connection request.

For additional help, review the CDO website (<https://som.yale.edu/careers>) on company research, story, and networking.

Be sure to try out vMock Elevator Pitch for video recording your story practice.
(<https://www.vmock.com/yalesom>)