

# THE ART OF NETWORKING



Featuring the Do's & Don'ts of Networking, The Power of LinkedIn, and What Exactly is an Informational Interview anyway??

## Networking 101

According to the Department of Labor, networking accounts for at least 69% of all annual hires. Networking is the BEST way to find a job or internship. Throughout your life you will make networking contacts that develop into relationships including friends, colleagues, and profes-

sional prospects. Effective Networking isn't a result of luck—it requires hard work and persistence. You never know when you will encounter a networking opportunity so it is important to be prepared for the unexpected. Most people don't like networking because they don't

feel safe in environments that force them to meet new people— especially those who may serve in roles of greater influence and power. You must realize that networking is about genuine relationship building— be yourself and be professional and the rest should happen naturally.

### How Can the UCC Help Me Build My Network?

- ◆ Provide you with mentor contacts on RowdyJobs
- ◆ Host career panels, etiquette dinners, and employer networking events with professionals working in related fields
- ◆ Connect and refer you to our UTSA University Career Center group on LinkedIn to network with other students, alumni, and potential recruiters/hiring managers that want to hire you

**UTSA** UNIVERSITY  
Career Center

## Do's

- **Make an entrance.** Have good posture, SMILE and be noticed.
- **Start with a firm handshake**, along with good eye contact. Be sure to have your right hand free and ready to shake hands.
- **Use your personality** and your interactions to develop a rapport with others– remember that the first meeting is not business formal.
- **Create and use your elevator pitch** but be sure to tailor it depending on the situation and the people you are meeting. Keep your exchange light and informal– you are not making a hard sell within minutes of meeting them!
- **Sit/mingle with people you don't know** to maximize networking opportunities. The whole point is to introduce yourself and meet NEW people.
- **Ask insightful questions.** If possible, do a little research before attending the event and find out what topics they might be interested in.
- **Follow up and through.** Networking is where the conversation begins, not ends. Be sure you know the best way to stay in touch and take the initiative to get in touch within 48 hours after meeting to show your interest and availability to discuss further.

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## Don'ts

- **Rudely interrupt a conversation.** Find a way to ease into the conversation or wait until there is a noticeable opening.
- **Talk trash or get too personal.** It sends a bad message if you bad mouth your boss or share too much personal information.
- **Mention your business first or ask about jobs right away.** The point of networking is to first find common ground and build rapport that leads to lasting relationships.
- **Spend too much time with any one person.** You don't want to monopolize their time.
- **Get cornered.** If the discussion isn't working for you, politely find a way to excuse yourself and move on.
- **Just shake hands or collect business cards** from everyone you meet. Think quality over quantity; a few solid conversations are better than 30 business cards.
- **Ever run out of business cards.** And be sure to ask for theirs! This is your best chance at follow up and you want to be sure to include your contact information, including any relevant sites such as blogs, LinkedIn profile, etc...that portray your professional brand.



## Fast Facts about LinkedIn

- 238M+ Professionals
- 3M+ Companies
- 60K+ Colleges & University Alumni Groups
- 30M+ Students & Recent Graduates
- 150+ Industries
- Executives from EVERY Fortune 500 Company.

Over 80% of recruiters and hiring managers now use LinkedIn to find talent and potential hires for their company. It is also an excellent way to follow up with professionals after a networking event. Since the majority of employers are actively using this professional networking site, it is important that you have a strong, positive

impression of yourself represented on LinkedIn. This is also known as your “personal brand.” There are many other benefits of using LinkedIn in addition to networking. See below for some of the key features to take advantage of now.



## What's In It For me?

You might wonder how you can use LinkedIn as a student but students and recent grads are actually the fastest growing population on LinkedIn. After building a professional **profile**, you can add connections by inviting **contacts**

you already know, and reaching out to new people that you want to know. There is also an **alumni search** tool that allows you to find what other alumni are now doing and you can explore opportunities for your own career. In addition, you can

prepare for career fairs and interviews by **researching companies**, industries and schools. Finally, you can **search for jobs**, using the student and recent graduate job search tool to find a variety of internships and entry-level jobs.

**“It’s no longer enough to simply have a solid resume. Students now need a professional online presence.”**

## How Do I Get Started?

You can go to [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) to open an account today. There are many resources out there to help you learn how to build a professional profile, how to expand your network, how to tailor your profile to your

career goals, how to communicate effectively on LinkedIn, how to use the Alumni Tool, and how to research and prepare for interviews. We recommend [university.linkedin.com](http://university.linkedin.com). You can also schedule an

appointment with a Career Counselor to get personal feedback on your profile.



## HOW TO CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

So what exactly is an informational interview? It might have an intimidating sound to it but it is simply a conversation with an individual who can give you advice about an organization, a field of interest, or a particular career that interests you. Oftentimes, an informational interview follows a networking exchange or is the result of a follow up with a contact on LinkedIn. The purpose of this kind of interview is to determine if a career field or company is the right fit for you. It also allows you to gain insight into a particular employer and the realities of working at that company. Please understand that this is an opportunity to gather information and seek advice, not to ask outright for a job or an internship.

Before you dive in to this valuable exercise, you will need a solid understanding of your career interests. If you have not explored this yet, contact the UCC for help. Once you have some career options in mind, you should engage in a search to find people to ask and learn as much as you can about the career or organization. As you become more informed, you will be able to ask more relevant questions that will be more valuable in making career decisions. Remember that the person you are interviewing is a networking contact and he/she may be able to refer you to other people who can help you too. Be receptive and show that the information he/she is providing is important to you. Take notes so that you can reflect on what you have learned. Treat it like a regular interview when it comes to appropriate attire and non-verbal communication skills. Be direct and concise with your questions but realize that the nature of the conversation might become more casual— which is perfectly normal.

Always send a thank you note (e-mail or letter) within 48 hours after the interview that includes thanking them for their time in meeting with you and mentioning one or two things that really stood out as valuable information you gained. One person cannot give you all the answers so avoid making impressions about an area of work based only on one person's perspective.

### Sample Questions for Informational Interviews

#### Professional Journey

- How would you describe your current role and professional journey?
- Do you feel that your education adequately prepared you for a career in this field?
- What advice would you have for me as I consider entering the field?

#### Work Culture

- What is your job like on a day-to-day basis?

- What part of your job is most challenging?
- What do you find most enjoyable/rewarding?
- What are some of the downsides of your job?

#### State of the Industry

- What is your knowledge of the growth in this field?
- What developments/trends could affect future opportunities?
- Why do people leave this field?

#### Money & Advancement

- What do you know about the earning potential for this field?
- How and how often are people promoted in this field?
- What are the skills/qualifications of the most successful people in this industry?
- Can you suggest ways a student could obtain the necessary experience to pursue this career path?