

University of Pennsylvania  
Career Services

## **Cultivating meaningful connections:**

Guide to building &  
nurturing your networking  
relationships over time





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## Why it is important to nurture networking relationships?

Networking should *not* be seen as a one-time transactional encounter. Ideally, these are conversations that turn into meaningful long-term professional relationships.



### **If cultivated properly, networking contacts can (eventually) become:**

- sources of information (about industry trends, AND job leads)
- sounding boards for advice
- advocates in your inner circle
- possibly even mentors



# How to achieve long-lasting meaningful connections

*Purpose:* People who are willing to do informational interviews like to feel helpful. As such, they typically appreciate it when you stay in touch to let them know how things are going and if the advice or information that they shared was useful.

## *Method:*

- Follow-up via email on any suggestions/advice that was provided to you in an informational interview (e.g. if someone suggested that you read an article or check out a resource, do that and let them know what you thought).

## *Frequency of contact:*

- Be wary of taking up too much of someone's time so being in touch too often with questions or additional asks will sour the relationship. Best practice is to provide updates every few months.

Long-term, there may be ways in which you can be helpful in return – start by taking an interest in their professional growth/journey.

## **It's a two-way street:**

*Relationships are about give & take.*

- Be respectful of their time
- Tailor your questions to their expertise
- Follow-through and report back on suggestions offered to you
- Take an interest in *their* personal and professional journeys as well





# Easy strategies for staying in touch

- Send holiday greetings wishing this person well
- Follow their organization (and them) on LinkedIn and react to/comment on relevant posts
  - Congratulations on a new position
  - Celebrate a success/milestone
  - Comment on an org post of interest
- Send news/industry articles of interest occasionally
- Provide period updates (every six months or so) on how you are doing
  - Send thanks via email when you get a new job or score an interview
  - If you are announcing a new professional milestone, acknowledge (and tag) that person on social media as a thank you for the advice given along the way

