

Introverts can network, too!

No matter your personality, you can build a strong network and feel good about it. Start with what feels comfortable for you!

For Introverts

- **Clarify your purpose:** Write down 1-2 specific goals for each networking interaction (e.g., *"Learn about data science roles in biotech"* or *"Ask about transitioning from academia to industry"*).
- **Start small:** Set a manageable target, such as reaching out to one new contact per month (like an alum or industry professional), using a short, personalized message that references shared interests, backgrounds, or experiences.
- **Leverage small groups:** Join focused groups (e.g., journal clubs, project committees, or student organizations) where you can contribute through defined roles – this makes networking feel purposeful and less overwhelming.
- **Use written follow-up:** Maintain connections by sharing relevant articles or brief updates by email or LinkedIn every few months; written communication can play to your strengths and lets you strengthen relationships at your own pace.

For Extroverts

- **Be intentional:** Before events or meetings, prepare a list of targeted questions to ensure your conversations stay focused and informative.
- **Be a connector:** Proactively introduce contacts to each other, share job postings or resources, and invite peers to collaborate on projects, as helping others can strengthen your own network.

For Everyone

- **Track your network:** Use a simple spreadsheet or a networking app to record names, roles, conversation notes, and follow-up dates for each contact. This will help you identify new goals, new questions, or new people to connect with.
- **Schedule regular check-ins:** Set a monthly reminder to reconnect with someone in your network, even when you're not actively job searching.

10 Minutes-a-Day networking steps

Did you know that networking is a skill you can build with practice? Like any muscle, the more you exercise it, the easier it gets. Here are some easy steps to grow your network and confidence:

- **Set a daily mini-goal.** Think of one career-related question you have, and identify someone (an alum, peer, or professional) who might help you answer it. Reach out with a brief, thoughtful message as part of your information gathering.
- Take a few minutes to **review your LinkedIn feed each day.** Comment on a post, congratulate someone on a new role, or share an article with your own insight. Go beyond "adding" connections and focus on the goal of starting a real conversation.
- After any networking conversation, **spend a few minutes reflecting** on and writing down what you learned – sharing what you learn with your peers will help you remember these insights and supports people in your network too!



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Helpful informational interviewing questions for exploring career paths

Informational interviews are a chance to learn about career paths and build genuine connections. Consider asking some of these questions to uncover insights as part of your exploration:

1. What does a typical day or week look like in your role, and what do you find most rewarding about your work?
2. Which technical or transferable skills do you use most frequently, and how did you build them?
3. What are the biggest challenges you face in your position or industry, and how do you address them?
4. How did your graduate/postdoc training help for this role?
5. If you were involved in hiring your team, what qualities or experiences would you look for in a candidate?

How to keep the conversation going after meeting someone

- A quick follow-up can turn a brief meeting into a lasting connection: Send a brief thank-you email within 24 hours, mentioning one specific topic you discussed.
- Connect on LinkedIn with a personalized message referencing your meeting.
- Share a relevant article or resource related to your conversation.
- Communicate your appreciation if you followed the advice that the person gave you and it went well.

What people say about networking

- Genuine interest in people matters more than collecting business cards or adding LinkedIn connections
- A personalized LinkedIn request can increase your response rate by around 50%. It helps if you can mention a prior interaction you had with the person (e.g., at a conference, career fair, workshop, etc.)
- Finding someone to give you a referral for a job is just one possible outcome of networking, but few people will do this unless you have connected meaningfully or authentically first. Focus instead on gathering actionable information you can use in your application and interviews, as learning from others is the most valuable goal of networking.
- Most people enjoy helping others. Don't be afraid to ask for advice or introductions; people like to pay it forward. Every meaningful career move often starts with a single conversation

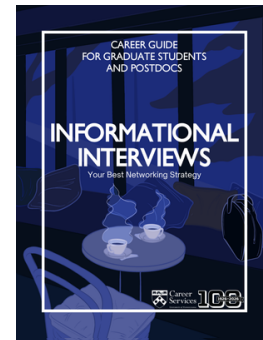
Networking resources

Resources for Everyone!

- [myPenn](#) - A database of >490,000 Penn alumni
- [LinkedIn alumni tool](#) - Explore the profiles of >200,000 Penn alumni
- ["How to network" page on CS website](#)
- [Schedule an advising appointment to talk about networking strategies](#)
- [Networking Workshop playlist on the Penn Career Services YouTube Channel](#)
- [Vault Guide to Networking](#)
- [Career fairs](#) - Network with recruiters and alumni at these in-person and virtual events
- [CareerShift](#) - Find email addresses for contacts you hope to connect with
- [LinkedIn Masterclass](#) - Network using LinkedIn best practices
- [Photobooth](#) - Free professional photos for the Penn community

Resources for Grad Students/Postdocs

- [Informational Interview Guide](#)
- [PhD Career Training Platform](#) - Networking advice for PhDs/postdocs
- [Beyond Graduate School](#) - Networking advice for Master's students



Scan to access our complete [Informational Interview Guide](#) for Grad Students and Postdocs



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