
Career Connections Homework



ScholarMatch

Networking

Overview

Networking is a form of marketing. The purpose is to get someone to notice you, contact you, and to tell other people about you. It allows you to grow in your career by making connections with people in a professional setting.

Networking Is:

Networking is formal and informal. A lot of us get a sense of dread when we think about "networking"-- imagining an awkward or crowded networking event where you have to go pitch yourself to a bunch of strangers. While those types of events definitely do exist, networking can also be informal, comfortable, friendly, and natural. For example, say you are doing an internship or volunteer work, and meet someone who you 'click' with, who is doing work you think is interesting-- having a conversation, asking them questions about their work and interests, following up with an email, and getting together later on for lunch or coffee is networking. It's a lot like making friends, and you may find that people who start out as networking connections may become good friends. You never know who will turn out to have a lot in common with you.

Networking Is Not:

Networking is not only stuffy and formal. While starting out in your early career, it may feel like the only way to get 'out there' are through official networking events, but you have a lot of other resources. Whether that means doing volunteer work, joining a book club, or joining an adult soccer league, there are a lot of ways you can meet people and spark up a conversation about life, careers, anything.

Networking is also not just about talking to people in your exact right dream job. You absolutely never know who will turn out to be an awesome networking connection. Your dentist or the person who cuts your hair could be how you land your next job-- seriously. So, be kind. Be friendly. Be open-minded. Be curious about people. Share about your dreams. It will pay off.

Benefits

- Learn about careers and industries from people who have the inside scoop
- Make new friends and feel connected to others
- Learn about yourself, and what you do and don't like
- Feel like you are a part of a community
- Find out about opportunities, organizations, books, movies, TED talks, etc. that you never knew existed
- Practice building professional relationships
- Find out about jobs that are not posted and you'll have the competitive advantage

Networking Tips

- Network with people who are active in your industry
- Network with people you already know
- Be specific – know what your message is (what your strengths are and what you would bring to the organization). Share your story, not just your elevator pitch
- Collect and keep all business cards (you never know when they will come in handy!) Take time to write a brief note on how you connected with the person- this will allow you to create a personalized follow up email
- There is power in face to face interactions
- If you think that networking is begging someone for a job- you're doing it wrong. Owner of CAREEREALISM, J.T. O'Donnell states, "Networking isn't begging, it's giving. You're giving the chance for the other person to get to know you. You'll be able to have meaningful conversations about the industry and related topics."

Types of Effective Networking

Find the type of networking that suits you best. Are you an introvert? An extrovert? Are you somewhere in between? Whether you go to a big party and mingle like a champ, or stick close to a tight-knit group of friends, there are ways to network out there for you.

Extrovert

Big networking events may be great for you—you'll get a boost in energy from talking with lots of people, and since small talk doesn't faze you, you'll be able to shine! Same goes for conferences, receptions, parties, career fairs, etc.

Ambivert

Ambivert is someone who is a little bit introvert, little bit extrovert. Sometimes you feel like going to a big party, sometimes you don't. Pay attention to how you feel and try out several different types of networking. An event with lots of new people may feel thrilling, or a smaller group activity—like a volunteer committee or taking a class you're passionate about, could be better.

Introvert

Find ways that you can network that don't leave you feeling exhausted. Think about where and how you feel most comfortable connecting with people and go from there. Brainstorm ways to network that include one-on-one activities, small groups, or involve a few people you already feel very comfortable around. Stretch your comfort zone and try new things—just schedule some solo downtime after to recharge.

Mentor Relationship

Purpose

- Someone who gets to know you and your goals in a unique way and can provide guidance or share relevant experience to help you grow professionally
- Someone who can help you understand yourself, your career, and your goals from a different perspective
- Someone who has ‘been there’ and can help you to navigate difficult situations
- Someone who has your back, believes in you, and wants you to succeed
- Someone whose example you can learn from—how do they handle stress? Build relationships with co-workers? Work to accomplish goals?

Benefits

- Reciprocal relationship where both the mentor and mentee create a meaningful experience
- Feel supported and build a meaningful relationship
- Benefit from someone else’s wisdom and experience
- Space to be a person who is still learning-- a Mentor knows you aren’t perfect, and that you don’t have all the answers. You can ask them questions, advice or perspective on something you don’t understand
- Boost in happiness – the more support, fulfilling relationships, and feelings of connection you have in your day-to-day life, the happier you’ll be. Same goes for your mentor. It’s a win-win.

Tips for working with a Mentor

- Every mentor relationship is different. Some are formal and some develop over time through working relationships or personal connections
- Be willing to ask questions, say you don’t know, etc. It feels vulnerable but the more authentic you are, the more both of you will get out of it.
- Be polite, friendly, and respectful. Show that you appreciate their generosity by replying to calls and emails quickly, saying thank you, and arriving to meetings on time and prepared.
- Don’t beat yourself up or compare yourself to others. Jealous that your roommate has a great mentor, and you can’t figure out how to build the same type of relationship? Ask them about it. How did they connect with their mentor? What do they talk about?
- Remember- if your mentor recommends you, they are putting their reputation on the line too
- Don’t take things too personally. It might take time to find the right mentor(s) in your life, and at some point, you’ll approach someone who will be too busy, not interested in mentoring someone, or just not the right fit. That’s totally OK! Would you really want a mentor who doesn’t actually want to be a mentor? Didn’t think so. Keep your eyes out for people who show interest and genuine care about your success.
- To add value to your mentor and the relationship, stay in touch by sending relevant articles and up to date about industry news

Homework

After reviewing this article, respond to these six (6) questions and send the responses to: c2c@scholarmatch.org. Title the email [First/Last Name – Career Connections Homework]. **Also**, include three (3) questions that you plan to ask your Career Coach.

1. Why do people network?
2. What is a misconception about the purpose of networking?
3. List one (1) or more thing that you learned about networking from this article.
4. What type of networking personality (Introvert, Ambivert, Extrovert) do you relate to and why?
5. What advice from this article will you implement or do with your mentor (Career Coach)?
6. What is a benefit you will gain from working with a mentor (Career Coach)?