



NETWORKING GUIDE

Networking Defined:

Networking is simply reaching out to people for advice and information and building relationships with others. It is a powerful process that can help you both explore career options and expand your opportunities to secure positions. A high percentage of jobs are obtained through networking.

Networking *Is*:

- Building relationships
- Planned or unplanned
- Intentional
- A two-way process
- For all types of personalities

Networking *Is Not*:

- Asking immediately for a job
- A quick process
- A one-way process
- For outgoing people only

Networking Tips:

Topics to Discuss:

Ask About Them:	Share About Yourself:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career path and background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career interests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current academic interests/goals/projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends and updates in their industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accomplishments/Achievements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most challenging aspect of their job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future career goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their favorite part of their job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent work/volunteer experience

Joining/Leaving Conversations:

In-Person Networking

- Introduce yourself to each person at the table or group you approach
- Position yourself opposite the person(s) you have just met to leave room on either side
- Ask a question to get the conversation started
- Acknowledge a conversation that is already in progress; you can still introduce yourself, but try not to take over the current conversation
- Request a business card or their contact information to follow up when appropriate
- Write a note on the back of the card to remind you of the conversation
- Exit the conversation at an appropriate time: for example, at the end of a topic or politely excuse yourself to get food/beverage or meet someone else, etc.

Virtual Networking

- You may need to sign up in advance to schedule a time to meet with someone; take note of the format of the event before you attend and prepare accordingly
- Take note of everyone who is in the virtual platform (i.e. employers, alumni or other professionals) and keep track of who you'd like to speak with
- A virtual conversation is very similar to an in-person conversation, so utilize similar discussion topics and tips stated above
- Request email information or LinkedIn URL to be able to follow up with the person
- It is just as important to honor RSVP and commitments virtually as it is in-person; remember people are often donating their time

Follow Up:

- Send an email or LinkedIn message referencing the event at which you met
- Thank the person for their time and advice, referencing something specific from the conversation
- Set up an Informational Interview or ask for advice on who else you might reach out to

Networking Don'ts:

- Don't talk with your mouth full
- Don't cut someone off while they are speaking
- Don't check/answer your phone for texts or emails

FINAL REMINDERS:

- Be mindful of other people's time; recognize that you are asking for a favor, and be respectful of those individuals who have the potential to help you
- Networking is 2-way - consider that you might be able to help someone in return
- Be specific when asking for leads to expand your network. If you are vague or simply ask if the organization is hiring, you may not get the same reaction as you will by being clear about what you desire
 - For example, "I was wondering if you, or anyone you know, would be able to help me identify hiring managers in the data analytics space. I appreciate your help."

Sample Outreach Communication:

Sample LinkedIn outreach message through a group or direct message:

Mr./Ms. _____, (or first name if appropriate)

I am a freshman at William & Mary exploring career options, including those in computer science. I found your background in video gaming very interesting and was hoping to learn more about your career path, and get advice from a professional in the field. Would it be possible to schedule a brief meeting over the next few weeks via phone or video to talk more about advice for someone looking to break into the field? I am generally available on Tuesday and Thursdays after 3PM but can be flexible to your schedule. Thank you for your time. I look forward to speaking with you!

Sample LinkedIn outreach message through a connection request (300-character limit):

My name is Todd and I am a senior at W&M studying econ. I'm pursuing a career in finance. According to your profile, your professional background is very relevant to my goals. Would you be willing to set up a time to meet via Zoom or phone to share any advice you may have for a new W&M grad?

Sample Follow Up message if no response (300-character limit):

Hello again. I recently messaged to see if you'd be willing to chat about your career path and offer advice to a soon-to-be W&M grad. I'm touching base once more because I'm sure you are busy and I appreciate any advice. I'd like to connect at a time that is convenient for you. Thank you!