

Networking Survival Tips

Working a Networking Event

Before you arrive at the event, you have some thinking to do: you should know what type of work you are interested in. Have it narrowed down to at least three or less fields or an industry. Otherwise, you may appear unfocused and not be taken seriously. The list below mentions other aspects that you should know about yourself before networking:

- Work interests
- Strengths (provide examples)
- Accomplishments
- Experiences
- Questions about the field or career

Networking Ideas

1. Help others make connections by introducing people.
2. Get to know faculty, administrators, and club advisor.
3. Join a sports team.
4. Volunteer in the community doing something you believe in.
5. Develop a networking card or business card.
6. Always ask questions and send thank you letters!
7. Send old contacts a holiday or birthday card every year to stay in touch.
8. Be a leader on campus (e.g. Washington Guide).

It is never too early to start networking. After all, according to a survey conducted by the New York career management firm Drake Beam & Morin Inc., 70 percent of successful job searches are derived from networking strategies.

Networking opportunities

- UMW Career Day
- Diversity Career Day
- UMW Northern Virginia Alumni Networking Reception
- Externships
- Informational sessions (check eRecruiting for schedule of employers)
- Internships
- Employer-presented workshops
- Social gatherings
- Informational interviews with organizations and professionals
- Campus activities



Initial Networking Interaction

- Gain the person's attention: catch his or her eye, smile, walk toward him or her with your eyebrows slightly raised.
- As you approach, offer your hand for a handshake.
- Introduce yourself; give your name and a reference point.
"Good afternoon, my name is Mary and I am a psychology major at UMW."
- Make the conversation meet your purpose: Tell more about yourself or ask a question. Know your strengths, marketable experiences, accomplishments, and motivations. Have questions ready.

"I am interested in counseling and I see that is your specialty. What can you tell me about your position?" "I currently have a remarkable internship at _____ that has confirmed my desire to go into this industry. In addition, it has fine tuned my organizational skills."



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Possible questions for networking contacts:

1. Did your college experience prepare you for this job?
2. What courses were most helpful to you as an entry-level employee?
3. Do you feel like the industry has changed since you have been a part of it?
4. Has the current state of the economy helped or hurt this industry?
5. Overall, do you think that the industry rewards employees who stay at one company a long time or employees who work for different companies as they advance in their careers?
6. Do you think this is a good time to be going into the field in terms of job availability, starting salaries, and geographic job locations?
7. Is there anything that you wished someone had told you about the work world before you graduated?
8. What university resources did you find helpful when you were looking for a position?
9. Do you have any advice for me as a senior?
10. Which entry level jobs offer the best opportunities for learning? (public or private)
11. Do companies offer any type of training for entry-level employees within this field?
12. What do you find appealing about the organization you are working for?
13. What sets your company apart from its competitors?
14. What do you find most challenging and/or rewarding about your position?
15. What type of work environment does your organization foster?

Exit strategy:

- Close the conversation by thanking them for the information.
- Indicate if you will follow-up.

If you are interested, you might say, *"Thank you for attending the networking reception and talking with me. This conversation has been very helpful to me in deciding that non-profit work is for me. Would you mind if I contact you in the future if I have more questions? May I have one of your business cards? Thank you again!"*

If you are not interested, you might say, *"Thank you for taking the time to share some of your experiences with me. It has been helpful. Have a good evening."*

- Write a note on the business card so that you will remember to write the employer a thank you letter.

eNetworking

There are several professional online networking sites. Career Services does not endorse any of the ones below, but they have been added as examples. Networking online has many advantages. It allows you to present more information about your experiences and provide examples of your skills, it's convenient for others to locate, and you can build your network contacts more quickly.

The main disadvantage with online networking is that people can misuse your information by sending you spam, selling your contact information to the highest bidder, or contacting you about bogus scam jobs. Listing too much contact information can be dangerous. Listing an email address is usually the norm.

www.ikarma.com

Create a profile; people can add comments about you.

www.zoominfo.com

Create individual career profiles or references lists.

www.linkedin.com

Create individual career profiles or references lists.

Creating a Networking Web

1. Make a list of all of your contacts and their contact information (friends, coworkers, supervisors, professors, neighbors, etc.)
2. Contact everyone on the list and ask for a moment of their time to aid you in your career development.
3. Ask questions to gain information. NEVER ask for a job. When the conversation comes to a close, ask the contact if he or she knows anyone else that you should talk with.
4. Keep a log of the people you speak with, when you spoke with them, what they said, and their contact information.
5. Don't get discouraged if nothing happens immediately. People may not be able to help you that day, but they may remember you the next time a position becomes open or when they meet a new person.
6. Create a goal! Speak with five people a day and relax for the rest of the day.