

Networking is the process of establishing contact with others to assist you in career exploration. It creates the opportunity to gain insight into a profession, job leads, current industry trends, hiring practices and referrals. Networking is the most efficient way to assist you in making career decisions regarding a job search. Most jobs are found in the hidden job market, not online.

Networking Tips

- Who is in your network and how can they help you gather information, suggest additional resources or contacts, and speak to your strengths? These contacts may serve as references for you in the future.
- Establish new contacts: join professional organizations and make connections with other professionals online or in person.
- Do not assume you are being a bother. People want to help, and many had to network to get to their position today.
- Networking is about building relationships. After you graduate or leave your current job for a new opportunity, maintain your professional relationships. This may help you in your future endeavors.
- Network for friends, ask them to do the same. If you meet someone who would make a good network contact for a friend, be sure to talk about them and then make the effort to introduce them. Ask your friends to do the same.
- Focus on what the other person is saying – listen carefully, be engaged, and ask questions.

Develop Your Networking Script

- Once you have your Networking Worksheet filled out, you should prepare your networking script.
- Most of these people cannot offer you a job. But they can refer you to other people who may have useful information, additional contacts, or possibly even a job opening.
- Your networking conversation needs to be concise, informative, and clear about what you are asking the individual to do.

Your message should include:

- Your name, who referred you, and the reason for calling.
- Your professional objective and your positioning statement.
- Request for contacts at some of your target companies.
- Request for information about companies that may be looking for someone with your background.
- Request for names of other contacts that might be of assistance.
- Offer to send your resume to them.
- Ask them if you could touch base with them from time to time throughout your search.
- Thank them for their assistance.

Your Professional Objective...

- Describes what you want to do.
- Gives direction for your search and helps you set priorities.

Your Positioning Statement..."Tell me about yourself"

- Defines who you are and what you have to offer.
- Must concisely and vividly describe your profession, expertise, strengths, and experience.
- Will be used throughout your search during networking, informational interviewing, and actual job interviewing.
- Must be consistent with your resume.

Network

Since most positions are filled by referrals, your contact network will be your most important source of job leads. You should have:

- Created your target organization list
- Filled out your networking worksheet
- Written your networking script

Contact the Names on Your Networking Worksheet

- Prioritize the people on your list based on your level of comfort contacting them.
- After you have experienced several successful contacts, you will be ready to approach everyone on your list.
- Remember to use your networking script and practice your calls before making them.
- Keep a careful record of each contact with the date, action, and follow up.
- When a contact refers you to someone, keep a record of the referring contact so you can remember how you originally received that person's name.

Daily Life

Do not be afraid to strike up a conversation with a stranger, especially if they are part of an organization you are interested in. Volunteer at a professional conference or help an organization with a project. Ask Career Services about organizations SSU partners within your field.

Networking Events

It is important to know why you are there – who do you want to talk to and what you have to offer them?

Every business event is an opportunity. Connect with as many people as you can. Be open to new opportunities and pay attention.

Elevator Pitch (30-second commercial)

****It is important to practice saying it so you are completely comfortable before you actually use it.**

Hello, my name is _____ and I am completing a _____ degree in _____ at Salem State (with a minor in _____).

I am interested in a career in (or position as a) _____ in the _____ field (industry).

I have been involved (during college) in _____, and developed skills in _____.

I have also had an internship position (or employment) as a _____ with _____ and discovered that I really enjoy _____.

Could you tell me more about _____?

Media

- Voicemail—make sure you have a professional voicemail message.
- Email signature—ensure your signature provides your current title, organization, and contact information.
- LinkedIn—do not just use this when you need a job, build your contact list, post field related content and engage with others. This is a great way to interact with people who have the job you want or connect with leaders in your company/industry.
- Follow professional blogs and Twitter accounts—engage, ask questions, highlight your abilities, request a phone call/coffee date to talk about the field, etc.
- Handshake Database—determine positions you want and who holds those positions, discover companies you want to work for and apply.