

Networking Skills

Top Tips



Build networking into your routine

Build relationships with your colleagues, classmates, lecturers, line managers etc., you never know where your paths may cross in the future!

Be open to connecting with new people

Meeting new people is a natural event, therefore every gathering is a networking opportunity. Networking is not limited to formal events or specific circumstances. It can happen anywhere at any time.

Have conversations with people you've just met

Maybe you've just spoken to someone you met at the bus stop or in a coffee shop. Networking can be daunting but you benefit a lot from just taking the first move. Being proactive can help you become more memorable (just don't be a pest). Perhaps you overhear a conversation about your dream job, why not try to politely join in...

Maintain your networks

To make the most out of the connections you've built, it is important to invest time into these relationships so that people keep you in mind for future opportunities.

Follow Connections

Follow experts in your field/industry, take a genuine interest in them (i.e. their interests, perspectives, ideas) and what they do. Connect with their content on social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube etc.).

Networking Etiquette

When interacting with potential connections, a first impression is always important. Make sure to be yourself, but also be aware of how you communicate (i.e. be polite, think about your grammar, proofread emails etc.)

Keep adding to your network

As your goals change, as you develop professionally, so will your network. It's therefore helpful to keep thinking about what you want to accomplish and who might be able to help with this at different stages of your career.

Keep up with current affairs

It is helpful to keep yourself informed of key events or trends within your field/sector as this can help you to insert yourself into field-specific conversations and help people to remember your contributions afterwards.

Find what works for you

There isn't a one size fits all approach and you may need to try different strategies.

Set reasonable expectations

Do not go into a networking event without a plan nor with unrealistic expectations. Take time to reflect on what you want to gain from the event beforehand. For example, instead of focusing on collecting 25 business cards in an hour, perhaps focus on making one or two meaningful connections. This may actually prove to be more helpful and productive in the long run. It is not a numbers game.

Ask for introductions

If you are feeling nervous about being at an event where you do not know anybody, approach one of the event organisers, introduce yourself and seek their advice. Ask them who they think you should meet and if they mind making an introduction. Again, it is important to be clear on your goals and expectations. Mentioning that you want to meet important people so that they can help you get your next job is not going to be a good look. However, explaining what is unique about your situation, your aim for the event and the value you can add to others is more likely to serve you well.

Listen more, talk less

This is self explanatory. Be curious, be present and be patient.

Be prepared

Bring ideas with you which could help you strike up conversation. From fresh icebreakers to interesting questions, having a few alternatives of initiating contact will make you feel more comfortable. Thinking outside of the box to capture someone's attention may also make you more memorable.

Don't be afraid to make the first move

Confidence can go a long way, just make sure that you are genuine. It's not about handing out the most CVs, getting the most business cards or how many connections you have on LinkedIn. It's about genuinely taking interest in people. Ask thoughtful questions. "How did you become the CEO of your company?" "What does your day-to-day look like?" "Any advice for a young person who's looking to get into your industry?" "What are some important things I should look for when applying to jobs?"

Network early and often

Networking isn't only for when you are out of job. If you follow this approach, it is more likely that you will have to build connections from scratch when you really need them. Being able to network online means it is easier to get involved and connect with people at any time: i.e. commenting on a LinkedIn post or commenting on an industry forum.

By making sure you are actively networking (whether or not you are searching for a job), your connections will be 'ready to approach' when you most need to. Your online relationships can really save the day when you're in need of advice, a referral or even a new job. Having a strong network is the best way to climb up in your career.

Connect with the right people

In addition to trying to connect with leaders in your industry, it is a good idea to connect with your peers in your industry. It is a given that following well-known people is a good way of making yourself aware of current trends, but the people you should really be getting to know, are those you are likely to work alongside.

Help people out

Establishing an online network can actually put you in a position to better help others. For example, your referral could really support someone with an application process. You can also support others by sharing their work: a blog post, a video or a tweet or even promoting their webinar or blog that you personally find interesting. This is useful for the person creating the content and others in your network who may benefit from it. When someone posts their portfolio or CV, passing that along to your followers is another great way to help them as well. Just remember that the people you help today could be the ones helping you tomorrow. When you help others grow their network, yours is growing along with it.

Be grateful regardless of the outcome

Of course you wish to get a lovely and prompt reply back from those you're trying to connect with, but oftentimes your desired outcome may not come to pass. If you do not get a response, do not lose confidence or take it personally. There are various reasons why someone may not reply straight away, and taking time to ponder on 'why', will not be helpful to you. Additionally, the seed you have planted may unexpectedly grow and you could be surprised by a response at a later point.

It could also be that you do get a reply but it is not what you had hoped for. Still strive to nurture a healthy relationship and say thank you, and move on. Again, maybe this person will remember you at a later occasion, you never know what the future holds.



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