

Making Connections essential for search success

Networking is not something that comes naturally to most people, but it is a critical element to any person's career success. Most internships/jobs are found through a personal connection, so learning how to network will benefit you now and during your lifetime.

Steps to Developing Successful Connections

DETERMINE YOUR PURPOSE FOR DEVELOPING CONNECTIONS

- LEARN ABOUT DIFFERENT CAREERS
- CLARIFY YOUR CAREER GOALS & INTERESTS
- BUILD A NETWORK OF PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS
- ASSIST WITH CONNECTING TO INTERNSHIPS/ENTRY-LEVEL POSITIONS/GRADUATE SCHOOLS

FIND CONTACTS

Finding contacts is easier than it seems. Start with people you know: family, friends, faculty, co-workers. Then, use the following resources to help you develop a list of additional people who might be helpful.

- ALUMNI CAREER LINK
- LINKEDIN
- CAREER FAIR
- CAREER NETWORKING NIGHTS
- JOB SHADOW PROGRAM
- CANDIDCAREER
- ALUMNI CAREER INFORMATION PANELS
- EMPLOYER INFORMATION SESSIONS
- COMPANY SITE VISITS
- INTERNSHIP BLOG

INITIATE CONTACTS

■ LINKEDIN INVITATION REQUEST

It is recommended that you send a personal invitation, instead of the standard invitation prepared by LinkedIn. In many cases you may not know the person first-hand that you are connecting with. You will have the most success making a connection if you have a shared interest, career path, university or LinkedIn group.

Example: As a Finance Junior at Bryant University I hope to work as a Financial Analyst and would like to connect for some expert advice about "breaking into" this career field. I would like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn and look forward to following up soon via email.

■ EMAIL REQUEST

Successful email correspondence is well written and concise. Make sure you are very clear about what you are asking for and always ask for information and/or advice, never a job or internship. Be gracious and express appreciation.

Example: Thank you so much for connecting with me through LinkedIn. I was excited to discover that there is a Bryant alum working for XYZ Co., where I have applied to an internship opportunity in Supply Chain Management. I wonder if you would have 15 minutes to speak with me over the telephone about how I could make a stronger connection for the position to which I have applied. I appreciate your time and hope to speak with you soon.

■ MEET IN PERSON

If attending a Career Fair or other networking event, prepare a short introduction stating: who you are, what you do, and what you're looking for.

Example: My name is Joe Doe and I am a Senior Marketing major at Bryant. I have been interning at XYZ Co. and am hoping to continue in that career path after graduation. I am interested in following up with you after this event for any tips or advice towards my job search.

FOLLOW UP

Following-up with your contact is perhaps the most important step. Scenarios to consider:

- Initial contact results in an **Informational interview/conversation** via phone or in person. (see informational interview handout)
- No reply to initial contact. Wait a week and follow up by telephone or email. Remember, people are busy, don't assume the worst. Be polite and persistent. After a 3rd follow up with no response, discontinue follow up and move on to another connection.

ETIQUETTE TIPS

- SHOW INTEREST, ENTHUSIASM AND CONFIDENCE
- ASK GOOD QUESTIONS
- DRESS PROFESSIONALLY
- SHAKE HANDS FIRMLY
- MAINTAIN EYE CONTACT
- COLLECT A BUSINESS CARD
- PERSONALIZE CORRESPONDENCE
- KEEP TRACK OF CONTACTS
- ALWAYS WRITE A THANK YOU NOTE
- NEVER ASK DIRECTLY FOR A JOB/INTERNSHIP
- BRING A RESUME TO CAREER FAIRS, NOT TO NETWORKING EVENTS

KEEP IN TOUCH

Maintain your network by periodically following up. Let your contacts know where you landed a job/internship, send relevant articles, offer to meet for lunch/coffee or connect them to someone in your network. Give back where you can.