



# Networking Basics & Informational Interviews

## Why Network?

- Vast majority of jobs are filled through networking
- Referrals are hired 2x as quickly as people using a career site

### Remember!

It is normal to be hesitant when reaching out, especially to people you hold in high esteem.

## With Whom Do You Network?

- With your acquaintances or your “weak ties”\*
- With the acquaintances of your friends, relations, and colleagues

Yet, most people are willing to help others. And, you have the potential to make amazing connections when you take the chance!

## Why Contact Them?

- They either *know you* or they *know someone that knows you*
- They allow you to:
  - Build your network
  - Practice interviewing
  - Gather valuable info
  - Obtain referrals
  - Learn from what you heard

## Informational Interview

- Ask for an informational interview with an acquaintance
- An informational interview is **not** a job interview but a strategy for you to gather useful insights
- See if your connection can connect you to others in their field.

## Maintaining Connections

- Connect on LinkedIn.
- Circle back to those you interviewed at a later date. Let them know how you are doing. You may want their help and advice in the future!



## Informational Interview Steps

### How Do You Begin?

- Make your initial contact via email or phone.
  - Proofread any emails.
- Mention who suggested you contact them.
- Ask for no more than 15 min.
- Take only 15 min. on the interview day.
- Take notes during the interview.

### What Questions Do You Ask?

- **About the Work They Do**
  - Type of work?
  - Typical/composite day?
  - Like best/least?
  - Challenging aspects?
- **Any Career Advice They Have**
  - Critical skills to acquire?
  - How does hiring work?
  - Others I might speak to?
  - May I follow up later?

### What Do You Do After the Interview?

- Keep a spreadsheet with contact information, date, discussion summary, referrals, any follow-up, etc.
- Write a handwritten thank you note.
- Go back over your interview notes. What did you learn? What questions do you want to ask in the future?
- Try to match key topics/information you are seeking to specific referrals from your informational interviews.

\* Granovetter, M.S. 1973. “The Strength of Weak Ties,” *American Journal of Sociology*.