



# Networking Guide

*Univeristy of Minnesota*

**Office of Career  
& Professional Development  
*Humphrey School of Public Affairs***



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# NETWORKING: THE BASICS

## BUILDING PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS

- **Strive to meet new people**
- **Strengthen your relationships by:**
  - Spending time together
  - Giving & receiving help
- **Be proactive!**
- **BE:**
  - **Curious**
  - **Kind**
  - **Vulnerable**
- **Skills to have/build:**
  - Join/start a conversation
  - Talk about yourself
  - Find shared interests/goals
  - Have an orientation towards helping

## HOW TO MAKE CONNECTIONS: STEP BY STEP

1. **Develop self introduction**
2. **Take action** (reach out or sign up for an event)
3. **Make goals**
  - a. Ex: "Talk to one person at the event", "Reach out to one person a day", etc.
4. **Prepare & research**
5. **Attend the event**
6. **Follow up**

## HOW TO GROW YOUR NETWORK

- Let relationships flow **spontaneously**
- Connect with people you work with, live with, or practice similar hobbies with
- Ask your connections to introduce you to their connections
- Sign up to **LEAD** something at a networking event!
  - People will know who you are & approach you more naturally
- Take on projects or volunteer work that could broaden your circle
- Networking should NOT feel like a chore... Try to **HAVE FUN!**
- **HAVE A CURIOUS ATTITUDE**

### Networks also need **DIVERSITY**

- Close ties & weak ties are equally important
  - **Weak ties** → People who are bridges to jobs/resources we do not have direct access to

**[Learn more about networking and weak ties here!](#)**

# NETWORKING: MYTHS & BENEFITS

## NETWORKING MYTHS

- ***"Networking is slimy"***
  - False! It's a reciprocal relationship
  - People in the field benefit from talking to you so they can learn of new trends in the field, give back, and get re-energized for their work
- ***"Extroverts are better at networking"***
  - False! Introverts can be just as good! Play to your strengths by focusing on one-on-one conversations
- ***"Relationships should form naturally"***
  - Deliberate networking diversifies our horizons and resources
- ***"Our strong ties are the most valuable"***
  - Weak ties are equally as important. They can be the "bridge" to new opportunities
- ***"It's all about what you can do for me"***
  - No! Be generous to others and they will be generous back.
- ***"The bigger the better"***
  - Quality connections over quantity!
- ***"I should start with small talk"***
  - Start a conversation about your professional goals or what feels natural for the situation

## THE BENEFITS OF NETWORKING

- ***An avenue for exchange***
  - Networks foster a trade of ideas to sustain relationships and long term trust
- ***It makes you noticeable***
  - Standing out in expertise & services makes room for partnership, which builds your career
- ***Avenue for new opportunities***
  - When people notice you, it opens the door for new opportunities
- ***Improves your creative intellect***
  - Likeminded people who share their ideas with one another foster growth in their career path
- ***Growth in self confidence***
  - The more you network, the more comfortable you will be in interviews & future networking
- ***Develop long lasting relationships***
  - Giving and taking can open the door for a strong relationship



# PREPARING TO NETWORK

## Self Introduction / Elevator speech

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### DEVELOPING YOUR INTRODUCTION:

- 1. What are your career goals OR why are pursuing a graduate degree? What impact would you like to make?
- 2. When are you the most fun (professionally)?
- 3. What do you like most about your work?
- 4. Which courses are the most interesting to you?
- 5. Which strengths do you love using in your work?

### TYPES OF INTRODUCTION:

- **Facts focused example:**

"I am working on a Master of Public Policy degree at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs concentrating in social policy. I have 4 years of experience in a nonprofit where I managed a program budget of over \$500,000. My career goal is to start a nonprofit that serves people in poverty. For my internship experience, I would like to work in program evaluation with an organization in the Twin Cities."

- **Motivations focused example:**

"I am committed to improving the lives of people in poverty in our community. This interest comes out of my volunteer experience at a local nonprofit. I am studying the latest thinking on effective & sustainable programs at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. I am especially excited about learning how to evaluate programs to make sure that we tackle this issue in the most effective ways! I would love to use my new skills with an innovative organization in the Twin Cities."

# PREPARING TO NETWORK

Finding people to network with

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## FIND CONTACTS THROUGH:

- The Humphrey School Mentorship program
- Career fairs (Get business card & contact info)
- UMN job fairs
- Current or former places of work
- After class/work social hours
- Classmates and professors
- The Maroon & Gold Network
- LinkedIn - Humphrey School of Public Affairs page
  - 1. Go to the page
  - 2. Click "alumni" tab
  - 3. Search by keyword, title, company, location
  - **Note:** Alumni are often very engaging and want to help!

**If you are having a hard time with this step, please reach out to the Office of Career & Professional Development for assistance. Email us at [hfhcs@umn.edu](mailto:hfhcs@umn.edu).**

# WRITING AN EMAIL

## 5 emailing tips and example

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### 5 IMPORTANT EMAILING TIPS:

1. Less than 100 words
2. Mention your connection with them first
3. Discuss why you are interested in meeting with them and what you are hoping to learn
4. You are responsible for scheduling the meeting and following up. I.e. you make the calendar invite and send the zoom link, you call them, etc.

### EXAMPLE EMAIL:

Dear Janet Johnson,

I am a current Science, Technology, and Environmental Policy student at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. I found you on the Humphrey LinkedIn site and noticed you are an alumni of the school. I am reaching out because I am interested in the energy policy work happening at the Energy Policy Institute. I would love to learn more about your work at the institute and your career path.

If you would be willing to meet, we can find a time that is convenient for you. I understand that you are very busy, so even 20 minutes of your time would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for any help you can provide.

Sincerely,  
Steph

# WRITING AN EMAIL

## How to follow up?

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### BASIC STRUCTURE:

- Immediate "Thank you"
- Summary of the benefits gained or advice that resonated with you
- Try your best to personalize it using specifics from the conversation
- Request for further suggestions
- Think about what **YOU** can do for **THEM**

### EXAMPLE FOLLOW UP EMAIL:

#### After an informational interview:

Hi [contact's name],

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me last Wednesday over zoom! I loved learning about [something you learned/talked about]. I look forward to using this advice when applying to internships this semester! Good luck with your [upcoming/current work responsibility you talked about].

Thanks again!

[Your name]



# HOW TO GUIDE: INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

## INTERVIEW STEPS

1. Find a professional to reach out to (page 5)
2. Reach out to a professional using the email format (page 6)
3. Do some research on the person and organization they work for either through LinkedIn or the organization's website
4. Prepare about 10 questions in advance that you want to ask during the interview
5. Prepare your self-introduction (page 4)
6. Conduct the interview
7. Following the interview, send them a thank-you email expressing your appreciation (page 7)

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What are the most important skills for this specific field?
- Do you have any tips or advice for finding a job in this field in the area?
- What are typical career paths for people in this field?
- What does a typical day look like for you?
- What do you enjoy about your job? What challenges do you face?
- How do you handle your work-life balance?
- How would you describe the work environment at your company?
- Can you suggest other people I could talk to?

**[For more sample questions, click here.](#)**

# The DO's & DON'Ts OF NETWORKING

## DONT'S

- Talk about yourself  
the entire time
- Expect them to  
offer you a job
- Forget to say thank  
you
- Overwhelm your  
connections with  
emails and calls

## DO'S

- Send an invitation  
to connect on  
LinkedIn
- Follow up in a  
timely fashion
- Keep your initial  
email brief
- Include your  
LinkedIn profile link  
in your email  
signature