

What is Networking?

Networking isn't just an information exchange between you and another person. It involves establishing relationships with people who are in your community, in your career field, those you work or volunteer with, or others you want to know more. These people may be able to help you advance your career in many ways, just as you may be able to help them advance theirs.

A Networking Contact Might:

- Alert you to volunteer opportunities and community collaborations with others in your field.
- Share inside information on what's happening in your field of interest, such as future hires or new services and product releases.
- Provide you with the name of a person to contact about possible employment or informational interviews.
- Give tips regarding your job hunt, resume, or portfolio.
- Aid in job search advice specific to your field of interest.
- Expose you to a new career field.
- Introduce you to someone you may want to know more.



Who's in My Network?

Developing your network is easy because you actually know more people than you might think. People in your network, both personal and professional, may include:



Keep an ongoing list of the names and contact information of the people within your network. Check in from time to time and ask your contacts to introduce you to their contacts to keep your list growing. Be sure to reciprocate! Opportunities to network with people may arise at any time or place. Never underestimate a chance to make a connection.

Help! I'm Afraid of Networking

Sometimes putting yourself out there can be a daunting task. No one likes rejection, but it can be even harder to make connections if you're shy, introverted, or generally afraid of networking. But networking is the key to business success. It can help you find jobs, recruit talent, locate new customers, and even draw in investors. Networking also doesn't stop when you get a new job, especially if you land a job in a large company that offers many different job opportunities. You should continually expand your network by joining special interest groups and interacting with colleagues from different departments.

Start with those you know. Start slow and network with close family, friends, relatives, and acquaintances on a professional level.

Don't apologize. Believe in yourself—no apologies are needed or necessary when asking for help or building a network.

Smile! When you're nervous, it shows. It's natural for others to strike up a conversation with others who look friendly, so lose the scowl and perk up a bit.

Ask questions. When you're shy, you may find it easier to direct attention towards others while still contributing to the conversation. Ask smart, engaging questions to build credibility rather than giving a speech or sharing an opinion within group scenarios.

Listen with intent. Being an active listener is a networking goal since others like to talk about themselves. Be sure to say their name, too. It lets the other person know you're paying attention.

Don't be a schmoozer. Just be yourself! People will remember your authenticity.

Always be networking. Chatting online? In a school club? Going to an event? Take advantage of networking whenever you have the opportunity.

Bring up your hobbies. When you talk about things you're passionate about, you'll light up and appear more engaging.

8 TIPS FOR NETWORKING THE RIGHT WAY

- 1 Start networking long before you need to.
- 2 Have a plan. Everyone brings value — know yours.
- 3 Never dismiss anyone as unimportant.
- 4 Forget your personal agenda. Be genuine.
- 5 Figure out how you can be useful.
- 6 Connect the dots. See how you can connect your contacts to others.
- 7 Follow up and follow through.
- 8 Believe in the power of networking. Do your part.

Get rejected. You will encounter rude people and you will meet people too busy to chat. You'll need to understand that feeling to overcome it and not dwell on it or take rejection personally.

Take a risk. Once you defeat your fear of rejection, you'll find it much easier to strike up conversations with strangers. Don't assume everyone but you has it together—there are a lot of shy people in the world.

Social Media & Networking

It's important to build up your social network accounts before you may actually need them. But your online presence is much more than making a profile and interacting with others. Each social media platform holds different values for networking, some of which might surprise you.

LinkedIn is a social platform geared towards career networking. By joining groups of interest, interacting with others, and sharing information that's relevant to those in your network, you're building up your credibility and your professional contacts. You should keep your LinkedIn profile updated with your most recent employment information, so you're ready to job search at any time. And remember, since LinkedIn is a professional environment, you should keep this social channel work-appropriate.

Twitter is a great platform for researching or finding news related to a company, industry, vertical, person, or topic. It's easy to discover others with similar interests and careers. These are often digital connections, meaning you may not personally know the person responding to you. At some point, you may get a chance to meet in person at places like industry events, career fairs, or conventions.

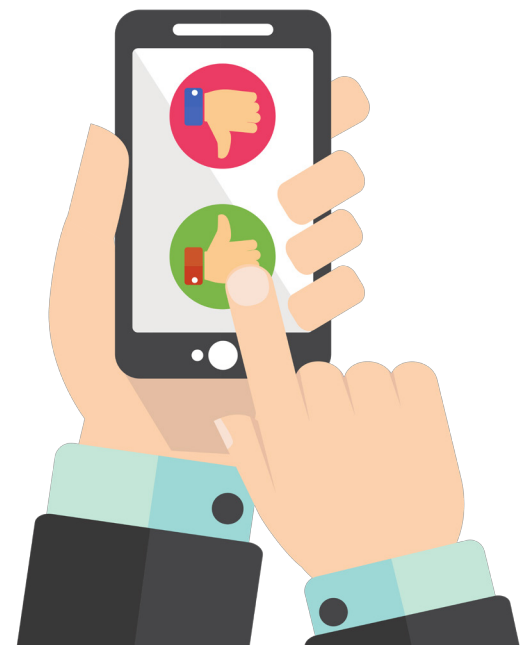
Facebook is generally catered to personal relationships, but you can use it for professional networking, too. Many organizations have company profiles you can interact with, which can be an excellent way to discover the tone and voice of a company, or to conduct research. You can also access Facebook groups, networks of others that have similar interests where you can share stories, tips, tricks, and more. Using groups can be quite valuable if you can find a group that is active and talks about your interests. Be engaging in your group communications.

Instagram & Pinterest traditionally haven't been considered for networking purposes. However, they're excellent places to share information. Consider searching these networks for visuals and hashtags shared by prospective employers and/or those in your targeted network to discover new areas of interest and additional resources.

Do Employers Use Social Media to Recruit?

Of course! Employers, hiring managers, and recruiters have been expanding their hiring procedures to incorporate social networking sites. Hiring managers and recruiters use social media to source candidates, to post jobs, and to accept job applications.

Using social media for job searching can help hiring managers get a clearer sense of any prospective employees' personality and potential fit within the company. Keep in mind that people have acquired and lost jobs based on their use of social media.



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Your LinkedIn Profile

For potential employers, clients, and networking connections, a LinkedIn profile acts as a digital footprint. It proves that you, the professional, actually exist. More importantly, it differentiates you from others. Signing up for a LinkedIn account is free, but you must be at least 16 years old.

John Smith
Business Management Major
Middletown, Delaware | Business and Finance

Current Dover Federal Credit Union
Education Appoquinimink High School

Summary
I'm a senior at Appoquinimink High School aspiring to become a finance manager. I was accepted into the University of Delaware's Alfred Lerner College of Business & Economics where I plan on studying Business Management. While in high school, I was a member of the NAF Academy of Finance. Currently, I am a bank teller at Dover Federal Credit Union in Middletown, Delaware.

Experience
Bank Teller
Dover Federal Credit Union
December 2017 - Present


- Examine checks for endorsements and negotiability
- Assist with preparing change orders for business accounts
- Assist in ATM and Electronic Cash Recycler replenishment
- Assist with verification of cash from Federal Reserve
- Perform greeter duties as necessary

Education
University of Delaware
Bachelor of Science, Business Management
2018 - 2022

Appoquinimink High School
Diploma
2014 - 2018

Skills
Cash Management Basic Computer Literacy Customer Service Written and Verbal Communication
Time Management Conflict Resolution Leadership

Certifications
A*S*K Fundamental Business Concepts Certification
A*S*K Business Institute
January 2018

Groups

NAF Academy of Finance

Networking Tips:

- Upload a high-quality, work-appropriate photo of yourself in professional attire.
- Your summary is a quick "all about me" for networking connections. Keep it strong but short, no more than 3 paragraphs. Highlight past and present positions.
- Post your most relevant experience first and include the job title, company name, start and end dates (using present if still employed), and a brief description of duties. Be careful regarding the amount of detail you provide. Many companies have strict policies regarding the level of detail you can include in your profile. For example, it's okay to share that you are a "Marketing Services Associate," but it may not be okay to talk about specific projects or your accomplishments.
- If you plan on going to college or a trade school, make sure your network knows. Include the name of the school and the degree or trade you're pursuing.
- On LinkedIn, people can endorse you for skills and even add others that they think fit you well.
- Have you taken a course or become certified in something that can help your career? Be proud of that and show it off here!
- Joining LinkedIn groups is a great way to find connections. It's also a way for others to get a glimpse into your professional and personal interests.

Looking for Job Listings

When you're just starting out, looking for a job can be overwhelming, especially if you've never done it before. However, thanks to the internet, finding potential jobs is easier than ever. Once you've got your resume polished and your personal pitch ready to go, try looking for workforce opportunities through one of these channels:

Job websites. Lots of new websites have appeared in recent years to help people look for jobs. Businesses pay to post job listings on these sites, which you can browse and sort by industry, experience level, compensation, and more. Most of these sites let you upload your resume directly to your profile, too. Some popular job websites include Indeed, Glassdoor, ZipRecruiter, Monster, and CareerBuilder.

Company websites. Other times, companies post listings directly on their own websites. When you're on a company's site, look around for sections labeled "careers" or "jobs." Some companies use the more friendly wording, like "Join the Team" or "Work With Us."

Social media. Some social media platforms have sections where businesses can post about job openings. For instance, Facebook and LinkedIn both have dedicated jobs portals that businesses can link to their profiles. It takes only a few clicks to apply to jobs right through the websites.

Job boards. Head to your local library, community center, or school guidance office and look for any job boards. These displays are usually located in lobbies or waiting areas. Local businesses may post flyers advertising new positions at these locations. Some might even leave behind business cards.

Brick-and-mortar locations. Sometimes it's best to do things the old-fashioned way. Lots of small businesses, especially traditional mom-and-pop shops, still accept walk-in applicants. When you're out, look for stores with "Now Hiring" signs in their windows. Go inside and ask the manager about any job openings. Some managers may let you fill out an application while you're in the store. Others may direct you to an online portal, like the sites listed above.

Either way, that face-to-face meeting may make you stand out from other applicants. Make sure you are dressed properly, and be courteous and greet anyone you encounter. Remember, this is your chance to leave a positive first impression. No matter how or where you decide to look for a job, always remember to put your best foot forward.



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Career Fairs

Career fairs are a great place to connect with potential employers, distribute your resume, and find out what jobs are available in your market. They're also an excellent opportunity to network when you are both looking for employment or when you already have a stable job.

Here's how to network at your next career fair:

CAREER FAIR SUPPLY LIST

- Copies of Your Resume
- Briefcase, Portfolio, or Folder
- Notebook and Pen
- List of Questions for Employers
- A Positive Attitude

Don't anticipate interviewing, rather build a foundation. Identify organizations or people you want to connect with and introduce yourself. Wrap up the conversation by asking for a business card or contact information. This allows you a small "in" with a member of the organization to further connect.

Have an elevator pitch. Be prepared to clearly explain who you are and what you do in a short statement. This is your first impression and the opportunity to quickly sell yourself—make it a positive statement.

Do your homework. Research the companies in attendance beforehand. Jot down a few key questions and understand the positions they are hiring for in advance.

Give a handshake. Always shake hands, make eye contact, and smile when you meet someone new. Demonstrate confidence, enthusiasm, and interest.

Network with attendees. Don't forget others who are attending career fairs are also looking for networking opportunities. Talk with other attendees as you go; they may know of other relevant opportunities as well.



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