

# Networking

Less than 30% of all job openings are posted. That means that the other 70% are found through word of mouth, or by being at the right place at the right time—in other words, by networking!

The first guideline in networking is to feel comfortable talking about yourself and your career goals.

Networking simply means getting the word out to people about what it is you want to do. For networking to be most effective you need to spread as wide a net as possible by talking to lots of people and make lots of contacts. The next step is to nurture those contacts by approaching them for information, advice, guidance, and moral support as you pursue work in your field of interest.

Although networking is easier for some than others, if you're in the job market, it's high time you learned to develop your networking skills.

## HOW DO I KNOW WHOM TO CONTACT?

There are several resources readily available to help you develop a targeted list of contacts, starting with your own connections. **You never know who may have a sister, a neighbor, or a friend that works in your field of interest.** Reaching out to these contacts is a good way to begin.

- Make a list of all the people you already know in your field of interest.
- Ask parents, relatives, and friends if they know anyone in your field of interest.
- Search for alumnae/i online through our eRecruiting.com service.
- If you are thinking of relocating, ask the Alumnae/i Relations Office for the names and phone numbers of alumnae club members in that area.
- Talk to your professors/advisor.
- Look through job/internship listings on eRecruiting.com, in periodicals, and print materials, to find organizations and contacts of interest to you.
- Attend parties and professional association meetings, and talk enthusiastically to lots of people about what it is you want to do.
- Contact former supervisors and co-workers.
- Research organizations through company and organization directories and on the Internet.

## MAKING CONTACT

**Fact:** People generally like helping other people.

Put aside any feelings of awkwardness and psyche yourself up to begin making contacts. Starting with the person you are most comfortable contacting (e.g., your roommate's friend), make a list of people to call or write. A letter is the preferred method of contact. However, in some instances, calling may be appropriate. Either way, here's the information you'll want to cover:

- A brief description of yourself
- The name of the person who referred you.
- The reason you are writing or calling.\*
- An outline of your background: how you developed an interest in the field.
- When you will follow up.

*\* If possible, ask to schedule an informational interview. Otherwise, asking for advice, information on companies, etc. is the next best alternative.*

## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

An informational interview is an opportunity for you to gather first-hand information about what types of job opportunities/career paths exist in a certain field or organization.

It allows you to obtain advice from people in your area of interest on the best ways to market yourself to employers, as well as suggestions on coursework and/or part-time employment that may be helpful for entry into a particular field.

To prepare for an informational interview, pick up the Informational Interviewing handout available in the Career Education Center, W-109, or locate it on our Web page [www.simmons.edu/resources/career](http://www.simmons.edu/resources/career).

## THE 30-SECOND INTRODUCTION

While networking or searching for that perfect job or internship opportunity, you will frequently need to introduce yourself with a brief description. Your introduction will be the first impression an employer has of you, so make it crisp, cogent, and informative. The occasions on which you will use this short but important speech can range from introducing yourself at a career fair or networking meeting, to explaining your goals to a well connected seatmate on a plane. Your goal should be to sound focused, clear, and directed. The introduction should include your school and major, a brief summary of your volunteer, intern, and work experiences, your goal, and how the person you are speaking with can be helpful. The following is a sample 30-second introduction appropriate for networking:

Hi, I'm Judy Castillo. My neighbor, Sue Samuels, suggested that I contact you about my interest in working in the publishing industry. Sue said that she worked with you on the Scholastic Books Project and that you were very helpful.

This May I will receive my degree in English from Simmons. I've focused my studies on literature and writing and have been a contributing editor for the *Simmons Voice*, the campus newspaper. My internship at *GirlTalk* magazine and my part-time job in the Publications Office at Simmons have given me extensive training. I also took a comprehensive course on the editing process.

My goal is to obtain an entry-level position in the publishing industry. I was hoping that you could give me some suggestions, guidance, and contacts.

## WHAT TO DO AFTER MAKING A CONTACT

Fact: Polite persistence pays off!

The #1 rule of networking is to stay in touch!

- › If you were given information, or exchanged cards, etc., write a brief thank-you note.
- › Mention that you will update that person periodically on your job search.
- › Mark your calendar every 4-6 weeks to follow up with contacts who were particularly helpful by sending a brief note or, depending on the situation, by calling them.
- › Be persistent, but not a pest. Always be polite. Be assertive, not aggressive.
- › Follow up when you say you will.
- › Keep contacts that are most helpful informed about the progress of your job search.
- › It is a good practice to ask a contact if s/he knows anyone else in the field that might be of help to you.

## The Simmons College Career Education Center

is available to students and alumnae/i throughout their careers. Our services include, but are not limited to, workshops on resume writing, interviewing skills, and networking, self-assessment tools, job search strategies, on-campus recruiting, career fairs, and private consultations.

Simmons College  
Career Education Center  
300 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02115  
Phone: 617-521-2488  
Fax: 617-521 3172  
Email: [careers@simmons.edu](mailto:careers@simmons.edu)  
[www.simmons.edu/resources/career](http://www.simmons.edu/resources/career)