

What is networking?

Networking is about gathering information and asking for advice. It is talking with people and creating relationships that are mutually beneficial. Networking is an ongoing relationship rather than an activity that has a particular start and end. It is also a way to learn about different career industries, occupations and job prospects.

Networking is not about asking for a job. However, it can result in getting hired. Do not ask directly if someone has a job or internship opening. The answer will most likely be “no.” Instead, have a conversation with them. Explain your passions and career goals and ask for suggestions and information. If you are polite and respectful of people’s time, you are not bothering them. People like to talk about themselves, their career, and give advice. Of all of the jobs available only about 25% are advertised. You can market the other 75% of the jobs that are not advertised through the people you know.

Preparing for Networking

Identify what information about yourself you want people to know and practice delivering the information. Use the 30 second pitch guidelines to compose what you will say when you introduce yourself to a networking contact. Also know what you want to learn from the people with whom you will meet. Research the person on the internet and with social media such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter or Blogs.

Step 1: 30 Second Pitch

Use this pitch when requesting a networking opportunity or in an interview when you are asked, “Tell me about yourself.”

THREE PARTS:

1. Who are you?
2. What are your major accomplishments/passions/unique skills?
3. What do you want/Where are you going?

Step 2: Start with a Starter Question

- How did you get started in your career? Was this your original plan?
- What’s one thing you wish you knew before entering your field?
- What do you enjoy most about your job, and what are some challenges?
- What skills do you think are most important for success in your industry?
- What trends or changes do you see happening in your field over the next few years?
- What professional groups might be a good resource in learning more about this industry?
- What advice would you give to someone just starting out in your field?
- Are there any projects or accomplishments you’re particularly proud of?
- What does a typical day look like for you?
- What’s the company culture like where you work?
- How does your organization support professional growth and development?
- Are there common entry-level roles in your field that are a good way to get started?
- What’s the best way to stay updated on developments in this industry?
- Could you tell me about a memorable experience or challenge you’ve had in your career?
- How did you handle your transition from college to the professional world?
- What would you recommend as the best way to get my foot in the door in this field?
- What’s a recent trend or technology in your field that excites you?
- Are there specific certifications or further education that you would recommend?
- Is there someone else you recommend I connect with as I continue to explore this field?
- How do you balance work with your personal life in this career?

With whom should I network?

Anyone can be a networking contact; your friends, parents, faculty, staff, coaches, former supervisors, health care professionals, hair dressers, etc. Everyone you know might know someone who would be good for you to meet.

Brainstorming Networking Contacts

To begin networking, start with who you know. Think of your relatives, family friends, contacts at or through Shippensburg University and from previous employment. Your contacts do not necessarily need to be working in your field of interest, but they may know other people who would be valuable contacts for you.

Relatives

Family Friends

Your Friends and Classmates

Social Media (LinkedIn/Facebook)

Contacts from Internship or Volunteering

Professors

Alumni/ae

Other College Staff

Networking Action Plan.

Develop a networking action plan and document this plan in the Networking Plan Worksheet. Begin by listing your career goal and the current member of your network. Next, identify what steps/actions you can take to enhance your network and specify when and how you will engage in these actions. Once you have engaged in these actions, summarize the outcome.

Goal: _____

Your Network: _____

Steps: What do you need to do?	Plan/Action: How and when will you do it?	Benefit/Result: What was the outcome of this action?