

Making Connections



Connecting with your Primary Contacts

- Start with people you know – family, friends, faculty, and anyone you’ve worked or volunteered with who might have connections in the field you’re trying to enter.
- Set up a meeting with each person on your list. A coffee shop is a good environment in which to meet, but is not the only option.
- Ask your contacts if they have ideas on how to more strongly connect you with your desired field.
- Explain your goals clearly. You’re not asking for a job, but for help in identifying professional opportunities or the names of people who may help you pursue your goals.
- Leave them with your resume.
- Remember to send a thank-you note within 24 to 48 hours of your meeting.
- Within 48 hours, follow through with the ideas and suggestions provided by your primary contacts. (SEE BELOW)

Connecting with Secondary Contacts

Secondary contacts can either be referred to you by your primary contacts or have been found through your own research. (i.e. industry, alumni, professional organization).

Outreach email: Your first step is to write a brief, professional email to your contact. In this email, you should create a draft which:

- Explains how you obtained their contact information (i.e., who referred you) and your reason for writing to them.
- Uses formal language and is written in complete sentences.
- Outlines your background, especially parts that are relevant to the field you want to address.
- Asks them if you can meet with them at a time/place of their convenience.

Proofread the email before sending it. Careless mistakes might make your contact less willing to refer you to others.

- Follow up with a phone call if you do not receive a response within one week.

Following Up

If your secondary contact cannot meet or talk with you, thank him or her anyway.

- If it feels comfortable, ask if your contact if he or she can refer you to anyone else in the field who might be more available, and if you might use his or her name when introducing yourself.
- Prepare questions so when your secondary contact is available for an interview, you are ready.
- Send a thank you note to your secondary contact within 24 to 48 hours. Remember to share developments with your primary contact as well.

Prepare for the Interview



Preparation

- Do your research before the interview. Visit the organization's website, gain a basic understanding of the field and job, and try to learn some of the industry terminology.
- If you are meeting in person, dress professionally. (See the *Interview Guide* for tips on how to dress for an interview.)
- Arrive on time if you are meeting in person; call at the designated time if it's a phone interview.
- Prepare questions important to you but that also show your interest in the company or industry.
- Bring copies of your resume. Your contact may ask to see it, or you may have the opportunity to ask for feedback.
- Bring a notepad and pen to take notes.

During the Interview

- Introduce yourself with a solid handshake and a smile.
- Tell your contact your goal (something akin to the 30-second elevator speech).
- Listen carefully and ask the questions most important to you. Be aware of your contact's time constraints.
- Ask your contact for his or her business card.
- Thank your contact for his or her time and advice.

Possible Questions

- What are the duties/responsibilities of someone in this position?
- What is a typical day like?
- What parts of your job do you find most interesting? Any challenges?
 - ➔ Despite these challenges, what motivates you to remain in this field?
 - ➔ What parts do you find most enjoyable?

During the Interview

- How would you describe the culture or personality of your organization?

→ Is this typical for this field?

- What knowledge, skills and other qualifications are desirable for this job?

→ What do employers look for?

- What is the typical salary range for this type of work?

→ How high can your earnings go in the field?

→ What is a typical starting salary?

→ **You should not ask about salaries during a formal job interview, but an informational interview is a great place to get more information about the monetary side of things**

- What is interpreted as success in this field?
- What is the future outlook of this field? Is it growing, declining or holding steady?
- What obligations does your job place on you, outside the ordinary work week?
- How much flexibility do you have in terms of dress, schedule, vacation, etc.?
- What kind of background is necessary to enter this field?
- Are there courses or experiences, paid or otherwise, that you would recommend?
- Is a graduate degree preferred?
- What are books and periodicals I should be reading to better understand this field?
- How can students find summer jobs or internships in this field?
- Are there other means of gaining experience before graduation?
- How can I identify both advertised and unadvertised job openings?
- Is this an appropriate resume for the jobs I will be seeking?
- How might I best improve the form and content of my resume?
- Are there any other questions you expected me to ask?
- Do you know any other people doing this type of work (or related work that was suggested) who might be willing to talk with me, as you have?
- Could you give me their contact information?
- When I speak to them, may I use your name?

Following Up

- If you didn't take notes during the interview, take a few moments to jot down some important points immediately after.
- Write a thank you note to the person you met with within 24-48 hours. Email is fine, but a handwritten note will be more memorable and professional. You may also include a business card so they remember you and pass your contact information along to other people.
- Send them a personalized invitation to connect via LinkedIn within 24 hours.
 - ▶ LinkedIn is an important networking tool. You should build a profile and begin making connections as soon as possible. Here are some tips on using LinkedIn to your best advantage:

leisurejobs.com/staticpages/18285/the-ultimate-linkedin-cheat-sheet

- ▶ Job postings are sometimes available on LinkedIn even before they are posted on the company website, so this is a very important part of networking.
- Keep your contact information organized so you can easily find it later.

How to Stay in Touch

- Share relevant news articles.
- Share personal updates/success (i.e. Got an internship).
- Share how you took their advice
- Congratulate them on any success they have. You can see these on social media or in the news.