

Networking Checklist

KNOW YOURSELF

- Be sure you know your goals, values, and interests. Revisit the information you learned through the self-assessments you took.
- Make a list of your skills and experiences. Highlight the ones you most care about or want to explore.
- Know what you offer. Practice talking to people about it. This exercise will help you get comfortable talking to strangers about your professional plans.
- Be yourself. It will be easier to communicate who you are if you're authentic.

CREATE YOUR ELEVATOR SPEECH

- Focus on key highlights of what you want people to know about you.
- Make it energetic, succinct, and impactful.
- Limit the length to 30 seconds.
- Practice in front of a mirror. Get comfortable talking about yourself.
- Create different versions for different audiences.

FOCUS ON YOUR NETWORK

- Use your social media to make connections with people you know and to introduce yourself to people. Twitter and LinkedIn are good places to start.
- Look to primary network—your friends and family—for ways to connect. Although focusing on professional connections is important, don't overlook people in your personal circle who can expand your professional network.
- Tell people what you're interested in—a new job, developing skills, finding a side hustle. They can't help you if they don't know.
- Update your social media to create a professional presence. As you review your accounts, consider your professional brand and make sure the content matches what you want to be known for.
- Update your resume. Then keep it up to date. Make sure you refresh it at least once a year or with every significant skill or experience you add.
- Get involved in local community organizations.
- Get involved in professional organizations.
- Join your alumni association.
- Identify people whose careers or jobs interest you. Ask for an informational interview.
- Ask people for recommendations of new people you can interview.

ATTEND EVENTS

- Look for events that match your career goals. Consider training events, job fairs, professional conferences, and volunteer events. Look at online events as well.
- Ahead of the event, identify the people you'd like to meet.
- Introduce yourself. Speak clearly and confidently. Don't forget to smile.
- Don't stick to people you know. Push yourself out of your comfort zone to expand your network.
- Ask questions—what people do, why they attended the event, what they're interested in. Showing interest in others will help you learn potentially valuable information and also make you stand out for taking that interest.
- Dress as the occasion suggests.
- Provide business cards.
- Brush up on current events or trends in your industry.
- But don't be afraid to skip the business talk and ask about people as people.
- After the event, follow up. Send notes or emails to express appreciation for the event and for people's time. Keeping in touch is a great way to keep a conversation going with someone you felt you especially connected with.
- Connect on LinkedIn with everyone you met; this connection will be easier if you got business cards from them.