

Networking for Success



Getting ready to network

When you intend to network, it's worth making the most of their time and yours by being prepared. While listening is a big part of it, think about what you'd like them to understand about you.

This can make your conversations clearer, more effective and meaningful for both them and you.

What are your job preferences/parameters?

What do you need to find out as you network?

What is your 'personal brand'? What makes you a potentially good employee?

Make a brief list or outline of your skills and experience to refer back to.

What networking goals will you set for yourself? Eg. 2 meetings per week, etc.

How to network

Here are some strategies you can use as you begin networking with others:

Context: Opportunity at many stages of career planning

What is your purpose for networking? By being clear with what results you want from it, you can identify how you would best approach others. Here are some examples to help you effectively network with others:

- 1 Manage change:** Networking with colleagues can help you manage the impact of change and transition. This can help you build resilience, feel supported and reduce isolation.
- 2 Gain self-insight:** Networking with referees, colleagues and managers is an opportunity for you to know your skills, strengths, what value you add and what differentiates you from the rest.
- 3 Explore options:** Networking can also help in your search for jobs that are appropriate to you and your transferable skills. It's also an opportunity to find out about trainings or specific skills needed to move into a particular role.
- 4 Job search:** As you search for your next role, networking can help you maximise your access into the "Hidden Market", find information and identify opportunities. This can also help you identify information about an organisation's culture, job responsibilities, who is hiring or where roles are being advertised.
- 5 Landing a job:** Networking can help you understand recruitment steps and with negotiating a contract to help you land a job.
- 6 Onboarding:** Learn about your new organisation and establish connections when you get to know and network with others upon onboarding.

Identify and prepare

Every person has a network! This isn't just limited to your group of friends. Rather, this can also be people you may have studied with, your old colleagues or even people you've met at conferences. Either way, assessing your current connections can give you a solid starting point in networking with others.

Why not utilise it? Quickly examine who you know with these questions:

- 1 What do you want to find out?
 - What insight or information are you looking for?
 - What do you already know?
- 2 Who do you know could help you build this knowledge?
 - What do you know about them?
 - How are you connected?
 - Start warm, start small!
- 3 What questions do you want to ask?
 - A list of suggested topics and questions are included on page ___ of this workbook.
- 4 Be clear about your message.
 - Networking may be about listening, but you also need to think about what you would like the other person to know about you.
 - Why do you want to talk?
 - How will you talk about yourself?

Plan your approach

No matter how you plan to reach out (call, text, email, etc.), it's best to structure your message in a way creates a connection between you and the other person. Here is a guide on how you can get started with planning your messaging:

VIA MUTUAL CONTACT

Hi Kate,

I'm a friend of Martin Coxell, who worked with you at Marketing Solutions.

1 Name of mutual contact or referrer

He recommended you as an expert in the field of digital marketing.

2 Why them

This is an area I am researching and exploring as the next step in my career. I am passionate about extending my skills in digital design, especially multi-device solutions.

3 Reason

I would love to buy you a coffee and hear your thoughts and experiences on the industry at the moment. Any insights you could provide as I investigate this area would be really helpful.

4 Call to action

DIRECT MESSAGING

Hi Kate,

We worked together at Marketing Solutions about 5 years ago.

1 Introduce self and reminder of connection

I really rated your expertise in the field of digital marketing when we worked together previously.

2 Why them

I saw on Seek that there is a role in your organisation that would enable me to extend my skills in digital design, especially in multi-device solutions.

3 Reason

I would love to buy you a coffee and hear your thoughts about the direction of your organisation as it relates to this role. Any insights you could provide as I formulate my application for this role would be really helpful.

4 Call to action

Overcoming objections and rejections

You may find yourself facing objections and rejections as you try to connect with others. People will not always see your intentions right away, so how you respond to these objections and rejections matter.

1 “I’m too busy!”

Say you’re looking for a quick coffee catch-up to get their insights as part of your job search. Be flexible with timing or suggest a time that works for you and let them adjust if needed.

2 “Just send in your resume.”

Since your goal is to connect, replying with a resume is not the best course of action. Instead, ask them if meeting up is possible so you can ask a few questions or other reasons for connecting.

3 “I can’t help you.”

Restate why you’re reaching out and how they can help. The connection may not be clear to them, so explain it simply. For example, even if they don’t work in your field, they might help you understand the organisation’s culture or how things work internally.

What are other ways you can respond to objections and rejections?

Invest in your contacts

Individuals achieve more together than alone. Building your network is more than just piling up a list of people you know, but is also about being able to offer help. At the end of the day, networking is a conversation meant to build relationships. And, as with any relationship, a meaningful one starts with authenticity.

How can you show your genuine interest when meeting up and connecting with others?

The meeting flow

To get the most out of your meeting, it helps to start well and give a good first impression. Whether it's in person or virtual, a professional approach and respect for their time sets the tone.

Here's a general structure of a meeting with a connection:

- 1 Introduce yourself and thank them for their time.
- 2 Give an “ego boost”, letting them know why you value their time.
- 3 Reintroduce the purpose of the meeting.
- 4 Let them know you've put in the research beforehand, hoping their knowledge can further build on what you know.
- 5 Ask your questions/introduce topic. A general guide of questions is available below.
- 6 Express your thanks once more.

Suggested topics and questions during meetings

UNDERSTANDING TARGET ORGANISATIONS

- Specific industry trends
- What companies are leaders in the field?
- Which companies have a good reputation for [your interest]?
- Which companies seem to be growing?
- What do you know about the culture of the organisation/s?

UNDERSTANDING TARGET ROLES

- What is the scope of the role?
- What would an ideal candidate in this role look like?
- What experience or qualifications are valued?
- What other roles might be an option?

DISCOVERING OPPORTUNITIES

- How does the organisation source new staff?
- What is the general recruitment process used?
- What is the best way to explore if there is a current opportunity?
- Who else would you suggest I speak to who could help me?

Networking Plan

Keep a Networking Plan to help you keep track of who you've reached out to, what you've discussed, and what insights and information you gained from your conversations.

<p>Name and Position, Organisation, Contact Details</p>	<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; height: 100%;"></div>
<p>My context for connecting</p>	<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; height: 100%;"></div>
<p>What do I want to find out? What are my questions?</p>	<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; height: 100%;"></div>
<p>Other people they suggested I contact?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That they will introduce me to • That is ok to reference my contact's name 	<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; height: 100%;"></div>
<p>My next action(s)?</p>	<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; height: 100%;"></div>
<p>When will I re-connect with this contact?</p>	<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; height: 100%;"></div>