

Connect it

Networking

Who you know is equally important as what you know. Networking is about establishing and developing social relationships. It is about making a connection with people. When you make a connection with someone, you not only make a connection with the individual, but you open the potential to connect with the person's network of individuals. This network serves as a type of social capital that can be tapped into and leveraged. When you network, you take an active measure to realize your goals. Chances are, you already network and don't realize it. Below are suggestions for networking.

You know you Networked if:

1. At the end of a conversation, you have the name of a person who is in a position to help you
2. At the end of a conversation, you learn of a new employer or organization that is of interest to you
3. At the end of a conversation, you learn new information that helps you in the realization of a goal

Planned Happenstance & Opportunity

Planned happenstance is ability to create opportunity from unplanned events. Much of career development focuses on planning, preparation, and known events; i.e. résumés, interview skills, attire, and career fairs. Planned happenstance is about planning and preparing for the unknown and creating opportunity from seemingly chance experiences. It is a perspective that transforms chance events into opportunity through purposeful action. Planned happenstance does not ignore planning and preparation. It evolves it to a level of mastery (Mitchell, Levin, and Krumboltz, 1999).

Networking Principles

1. Take risks
2. Do what you love
3. Talk to people
4. Act; put yourself out there
5. Engage others
6. Persist; keep at it
7. Leverage your student-identity

Networking opportunities

There are multiple ways to network; planned or unplanned. The following are recommendations to help you get started:

- **In-person** - at your place of employment, internship, research, etc.
- **USC Trojan Network** – a database of USC alumni available for career guidance and networking.
- **LinkedIn** – you can search by alumni, career, and even major to find people with similar backgrounds and request to learn about their career path
- **Informational interviews** - conducting an informational interview is a great way research a career and network. Simply, locate an individual who is in a career of interest and request an informational interview
- **Professional associations** - join associations in your area(s) of interests
- **Faculty** - you have the opportunity to network with 1-4 faculty members per semester
- **Networking events**—participate in campus networking events
- **Whenever, wherever, & with whomever** - opportunity presents itself!

Informational Interview Best Practices

Purpose: The purpose of an informational interview is to learn a first-hand account of your career choice of interest from professionals working in the field. You may learn additional information not available through traditional exploration guides or on-line resources while providing the opportunity to practice communication skills.

Do

- ◇ Research the company and person with whom you are conducting the informational interview
- ◇ Prepare a list of questions that you can ask
- ◇ Bring a notepad or tablet for you to take notes
- ◇ Ask if it is okay for you take notes during the interview
- ◇ Dress professionally
- ◇ Have your personal business card ready
- ◇ Follow up with a thank-you note, either handwritten or e-mail, within 48hrs.

Don't

- ◇ Don't ask for a job
- ◇ Don't give them your resume (unless they request it)
- ◇ Don't be late

Suggested questions to ask:

- ◇ How would you describe the environment you work in?
- ◇ How would you describe a typical day at work?
- ◇ What portion of your job involves interacting with others?
- ◇ What college courses have been most helpful to you in your job?
- ◇ What types of special skills are necessary to perform your job?
- ◇ Is special certification, training, or an advanced degree required for your job?
- ◇ What personal qualities do you see as important for success in this occupation?
- ◇ What do you like most about your job?
- ◇ How did you get interested in this area of work?
- ◇ What was your undergraduate major field of study?
- ◇ Did you have any practical experience or training, other than college?
- ◇ How would you advise me to prepare myself for a career in this field?