Networking is about building and maintaining relationships with other people who work in similar careers. If done correctly, networking is the number one way to obtain a position.

**Benefits of Networking**

- Creates the potential to develop professional contacts in different companies to share ideas and learn about the latest industry trends.
- You may learn about job opportunities not yet advertised.
- If you are interviewing for a job, you may know some of the people who are conducting the interviewing rather than going in “cold.”
- Networking can enhance your professional brand and reputation by making others aware of your enthusiasm, skills and expertise within a particular field.
- Once people get to know you, they may feel comfortable speaking with an HR representative or hiring manager within their own company to recommend you for a job.
- If unemployed, networking can help create structure and focus to your day and help you to feel proactive in the job search.

**The Process**

The actual process may differ depending on if you already know a person professionally, or if you are making the first attempt to contact a person within your field. What follows is a general outline if you do not know the person and you are making an initial contact.

1. **Identify** a career path, job title, an organization or alumni/professional of interest to you. You can do this in a variety of ways such as talking with friends, family, neighbors, or professors to see who they know. Don't forget to ask people in your clubs, organizations, and community service groups if they know professionals in your field of interest. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are good sources to find people in a variety of career paths too. Individual schools on campus may have their own social media groups and the [University of Hartford Alumni Group on LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/664821) as well as the [Alumni On-Line Directory](https://www. hartford.edu/alumni) are good resources.

2. **Research** before making any contact with a potential alumni/professional to interview! Research the field and the company beforehand so you can converse intelligently with the alumni/professional. Keep up-to-date about your industry by reading news from professional organizations, journals, or other publications.

3. **Prepare** questions ahead of time to ask the alumni/professional.

4. **Contact the alumni/professional and explain** who you are, how you obtained this person's name, and why you are contacting him/her.

5. **Ask** when a convenient time would be for the alumni/professional to speak with you and if he/she prefers to correspond by e-mail, phone call, or an in-person meeting.

6. **Meet, talk on the phone, or e-mail** the person at an agreed upon time. Be professional at all times in your interaction with the alumni/professional!

7. **Thank** the person for sharing his/her time, expertise and advice.

8. **Follow up** with a personalized e-mail thank you note or a handwritten thank you note.
### Networking Do’s & Don’ts

#### Networking DO’s:

1. Identify an organization, job title, career path, or person of interest to you. **DO RESEARCH** so that you can talk intelligently to your contact.

2. Make the first move. Send an e-mail or call the person directly. **Give a quick summary of WHO YOU ARE and WHAT YOU WANT.** Have a goal. State a purpose.

3. Be flexible. People are busy – you need to accommodate their schedule, not yours.

4. Ask for information and advice, **NOT A JOB.** Be prepared with a short list of questions or topics to ask.

5. If meeting in person, **DRESS PROFESSIONALLY and prepare like you would for an interview.**

6. **LISTEN attentively.**

7. **RESPOND with intelligent questions or comments.**

8. Ask for a resume critique. *(If the person has time.)*

9. If appropriate, ask for REFERRALS and always ask the person, “May I use your name when I contact this person?”

10. Be courteous – write a **THANK YOU note.**

#### Networking DON’Ts:

1. Don’t push yourself on someone who isn’t interested or able to speak with you. *(Only contact a person twice. If you don’t hear back, they don’t want to speak with you.)*

2. Don’t ask personal questions.

3. Don’t ask for a job. If appropriate, you can ask about potential job opportunities, but don’t expect the person to get you a job.

4. Don’t overstep your time limits.

5. Don’t come unprepared, either about the company, the career path, or yourself.

6. Don’t interrupt.

7. Don’t focus entirely on your own needs. You’re there to learn.

8. Don’t ask the person to circulate your resume for you *(unless s/he offers.)*

9. Don’t forget to say “thank you”.

10. Don’t become a pest, continually calling the contact for advice and referrals after your initial meeting.

*Adapted from the Rochester Women’s Network, Ellen S. Bevan, Ph.D.*
**Examples of Contacting Potential People for Your Network**

**PHONE:** (Leaving a voice mail message):

Hello, my name is Lydia Jones and I am a recent alumnus from the University of Hartford, the School of Communication. I majored in journalism and Roger Desmond, a professor within the program, recommended I contact you to gain additional information and advice about trends that are occurring in journalism, particularly in television news reporting. If possible, I would like to speak with you about your career path and hear about suggestions you may have about entering this competitive field. My phone number is (860) 555-5555 or, if it is easier for you, my e-mail is ljones@hartford.edu. Thank you.

**E-MAIL:**

Dear Ms. Newbury:

I came across your name on LinkedIn, through the University of Hartford’s Alumni Group. I noticed in your career profile that you are president of the Central Connecticut Society of Human Resource Management Professionals and I would like to speak with you about this organization. I have worked as a Human Resources Assistant for over two years and am looking for ways to become more engaged in the profession. My phone number is (203) 888-8888 or you may contact me at this e-mail address. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

William Bailey

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**Additional Information**

Informational interviewing is an important piece of networking, especially if you are looking into changing careers or finding out more about career paths if you are a new graduate. The Informational Interviewing handout may also be useful to review.

Excellent articles regarding networking may be found at:

[www.rileyguide.com/network.html](http://www.rileyguide.com/network.html)