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Networking

What is networking?

Networking is the process of interacting with others to exchange information and develop mutually beneficial relationships.

Your Personal Network

Your personal network includes professional, community, and individual networks. You have different networks for different purposes, including the people with whom you share similar interests, the people you learn with, the people you work with, the people you socialize with, and the people you pursue extra-curricular activities with, e.g., athletics, arts, volunteerism.



The connections you have with professionals in your field, thought leaders, professors, family and friends can create opportunities for you. Depending on the source, between 70 and 85% of positions are filled through networking.

Make Networking Meaningful

- The network you want is based on connection and caring, and demonstrating that you desire to know, appreciate and help other people.
- It requires initiating, building, and maintaining relationships.
- It starts way before you need a job and will impact your career and life in many positive ways.

Meeting New People

The following are some simple tools to help you meet and make people feel welcome and comfortable at an in-person networking event. The more you do this, the easier it will become.

1. **Appear warm and friendly.** Human communication is over 55% visual (appearance, body language), 38% vocal (tone, volume, cadence of voice) and 7% verbal (what you actually say). To initiate contact with someone new, greet them properly:
 - **Use open body language** – uncross your arms, stand tall, widen your shoulders
 - **Bring warmth to your face** – lift your chin, make and maintain eye contact, smile
 - **Stretch your right hand forward** (when not social distancing) – not aggressively where you claim the top position in a handshake and with the appropriate amount of pressure
 - **Speak in a confident voice** – “Hello! I’m Chase Jones. I am a ... (describe your role or connection you have to the event).”

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2. **Initiate a brief but enjoyable**

conversation. When you say hello, add additional information about yourself to give the person you are speaking to some context. They usually share the same kind of information with you. For example, “Hi, I’m Chase Jones. I am a mechanical engineering major at Trine and play on the basketball team.” The person responding usually shares similar information back. “Hi, I’m Jon Smith. I am a Trine alumni. I ran on the cross country team when I was here, and am now a mechanical engineer with XYZ company.” Use this information to turn the interaction into a quick conversation: “It’s nice to meet you, Jon. How did you end up at XYZ company?” Hint: Ask an open ended question to keep the conversation going.



3. **Learn to [gracefully exit a conversation](#).** Following an exchange of one or two questions and answers, after your new acquaintance finishes a sentence, you can simply stretch out your hand again, smile and say, “I’m so glad to meet you, Jon. I hope to see you on campus again.”

4. **Remember the person’s name.** To help you do this, repeat the person’s name in the course of the conversation. If you are a visual learner, imagine the person’s name written on her forehead or an imaginary name tag. There are associative memory tricks as well.

Getting to Know People Better

When you find someone interesting, and want to get to know them better, show appreciation for them by learning more about their work and interests. Famous adman David Ogilvy said, “If you want to be interesting, be interested.”

“Todd, you said you work at a Swiss bank? – what do you do there?”

“Debt capital markets.”

Even if you don’t know much about debt capital markets, don’t be shy about asking more questions. Some examples follow:

“What drew you to work in this particular industry?”

“Tell me about the business model – who pays whom and who is delivering value to whom?”

“What advantage do you offer over your competitors that get customers to choose you?”

“How big a piece of the overall business is your division?”

“Are there new technologies affecting your business?”

“It sounds like you’ve been successful. What makes someone successful in the role?”

“What’s your favorite part of the job and why?”



Getting to Know People Better (Continued)

For more tips on initiating and building positive, productive relationships, we recommend the following books:

- How to Win Friends and Influence People
- It’s Not All About ‘Me’
- How to Make People Like You in 90 Seconds or Less

Networking Events

Job fairs, professional association meetings, local business meeting mixers and workshops, college student and alumni events, trade shows, and professional [conferences](#) are all different types of networking events. These may be in-person or virtual events. Below are some quick tips to help you make the most of your networking event or meeting.

Event Networking Do’s
RSVP – don’t show up at an event unexpectedly.
Do your research: Learn more about the event itself, including sponsors, the individuals attending, their industry or group.
Register on the event guide/mobile app – submit a bio, contact information and a professional photo so others can find you.
Set goals for your networking: What do you hope to learn? Who do you hope to meet? How many business cards would you like to get?
Dress to impress in a professional outfit you feel confident wearing.
Bring business cards.
Prepare an introduction that tells the listener who you are and what you do. See the career center handout, “Preparing Your Elevator Speech.”
State your first and last name when you introduce yourself.
Prepare some conversation starters . Ask open ended questions.
Maintain good posture and eye contact and smile when introducing yourself. Use a firm handshake.
Approach people who you don’t know and engage. Be the one who initiates.
Take notes to remember important details of each conversation. Ask for a business card so that you can follow up.
Understand the needs of the people with whom you are networking.
Make sure you say thank you to event hosts before leaving the event.
Follow through quickly and efficiently on referrals.

See the Career Center’s handout [“How to Work a Career Fair”](#) to learn what you can do before, during, and after the career fair to make the most your experience!

If you are comfortable shaking hands with people you meet, do it! Learn about [the science of the perfect handshake](#).

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Networking Events – Online

Here are some additional tips for networking during a virtual event:

1. Publicize your attendance pre- and post-event.

Let people know you're attending on social media

2. Be an active participant.

Engage with the sessions and presenters.

Post comments and questions, e.g., one comment or question per session.

3. Practice online meeting etiquette.

Enter the virtual “room” 5-10 minutes before the meeting.

Dress to impress.

Keep your camera on except when you need to pause it to minimize distractions.

Mute your phone or device except when you are speaking.

Use the chat feature to ask questions.

Sit with good posture, lean in, and smile and nod as appropriate

4. Follow-up with your new connections.

Email your event contacts with thank-you's or requests for further conversation.

Cross-reference your new connections on LinkedIn, send link requests referencing the event.

Post reviews online after the event. Be honest while being complimentary.

Informational Interviews

An informational interview is a conversation with someone who can give you an insider's perspective on a profession, employer, or industry. You might conduct an information interview to:

- Explore careers and clarify your career goals
- Access the most up-to-date career information
- Learn more about critical skills and qualities needed for success... in an industry, a company culture, or specific position
- Learn and practice the language of the profession
- Build confidence for your job interviews
- Develop relationships with people who can provide you with information that can differentiate you from your competitors in an interview



See the Career Center's [handout “Informational Interviews”](#) to learn how to conduct an informational interview to grow your network and stand out in the hiring process!

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Networking on Social Media

Online social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram can help you grow your network. Network on a social platform you enjoy, and that people from your industry enjoy as well.

1. **Facebook:** Join groups that target fellow students or those new to the industry and start engaging in conversations. Depending on the community you live in, Facebook can be a great way to connect with community leaders.
2. **LinkedIn:** There are dedicated groups to diverse professions and industries, and people from all levels of experience with whom you can connect and exchange ideas on LinkedIn. You can search a company's name and see who works there. You can search a job title, like "marketing manager," and see who might share mutual connections with you. You can search for connections in a specific geographic region. It's a great way to find and connect with Trine alumni.

Visit the [Networking](#) page on the [Career Center Resource Guide](#) for ideas on how you can build an effective LinkedIn profile, your first step to optimizing this powerful networking tool.

3. **Twitter:** Thought leaders from different industries use Twitter to share their views and interact with likeminded people. You can use hashtags or search curated lists with the "top people to follow in industry X" to identify and follow leaders in your industry.
4. **Instagram:** Instagram makes it easy to find people with common interests by searching for hashtags. Do a Google search to find out which hashtags are popular in your industry, or review which hashtags industry leaders you already know use in their posts.

Instagram shows you the top most "liked" posts of each hashtag at the top of the search page – helping you understand who's leading the conversation on this platform.

Networking on social media is also about building relationships. Remember to look for ways to be of value to your network.

Social Media Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Google your name and your school, home town, etc. to see what you find.
- ✓ Do have an online presence.
- ✓ Do keep posts, comments and other material you share positive.
- ✓ Do share information you think others would enjoy or find useful.
- ✓ Do maintain the highest privacy settings, but don't assume they work.
- ✓ Don't share anything you (or others) wouldn't want EVERYONE to see.
- ✓ Don't share offensive jokes, photos or material. Avoid controversial subjects.
- ✓ Don't share highly emotional content, about personal situations.



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References & Online Resources

Schedule an appointment with your career advisor to request an introduction to a professional in your field for an informational interview

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