

EVANS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & GOVERNANCE
UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

GUIDE TO NETWORKING

Evans School
Career Development

Curiosity, Confidence, Courage.



NETWORKING

Networking is the most effective way to find a job or internship.

According to a survey from the Department of Labor, networking accounts for at least **69% of all annual hires**. It is a major job and internship search strategy, and we know that employers always prefer to hire someone they know, or who has been referred or recommended to them.

Networking is the process of building a relationship between you and another individual who is currently in a position, field, or organization of interest to you.

Why should you network?

1. Increase your career connections

Connect with managers, supervisors, and colleagues to plant seeds for future long-term employment.

2. Build relationships

Networking is not only about connecting with professionals with shared interests, it's about building long lasting relationships that are mutually beneficial.

3. Gain information on

- fields of interest
- skills necessary to succeed
- realities of the jobs
- career pathways and trajectories

Tips for Success

Don't limit your network

You could be missing out on opportunities. Consider alumni, employers, professional associations, and faculty members for your network.

Nurture your network

Networking is a long-term process of maintaining relationships with individuals in your field. Find ways to reconnect (LinkedIn, phone calls, etc.).

Have an online presence

Creating an online profile on platforms such as LinkedIn can open connections to new contacts and organizations.

Introverts can network too!

Networking can be overwhelming. Be prepared with questions and strategies that help you relax in social environments.

PRACTICE YOUR PITCH

Your professional pitch (elevator speech) gives you an opportunity to positively position yourself when introducing yourself to others.

Develop the components of your elevator speech by answering the questions below. Consider what will be most relevant to your audience. Your speech should be under 30 seconds long.

CATCH THEIR ATTENTION:

Who You Are? Why are you talking to them?

CAPTURE INTEREST:

What do you do? What is your specialty?

CREATE DESIRE:

What value do you offer? What can you give?

CALL TO ACTION:

What value do you offer? What can you give?

Tips:

1. You **won't be able to use all of the above points** in your elevator speech (it will be too long).
2. Components of your pitch can be woven into your **networking conversations, informational interviews, cover letters and interviews**. So, keep in mind that your pitch is **not a memorized statement**, but **rather a group of points** that you can use to highlight your relevant experiences and skills

NETWORKING EVENTS

A prepared elevator speech will assist you in connecting with prospective employers, mentors, and colleagues at networking events. But, an elevator speech *coupled with a strategy* to **enter**, **maintain**, and **exit** a conversation will allow you to utilize a networking event to the fullest.

ENTER	MAINTAIN	EXIT
<p>When meeting someone new:</p> <p>Make eye contact and shake hands.</p> <p>Share your elevator speech in 30 seconds or less.</p> <p>When trying to join a group:</p> <p>Make eye contact with someone you know or someone in the group and approach the group.</p> <p>Use some of the components in your elevator speech when you introduce yourself.</p>	<p>Ask open ended questions: in order to foster in-depth conversations. (e.g., What projects are you currently working on?) Yes/No questions halt the conversation.</p> <p>Prepare informed questions: research the organization and department of key people you would like to talk to ahead of time.</p> <p>Discuss mission and values: What are the values of the organization and how do they align with your values?</p>	<p>Say thank you, be specific: e.g., Thank you for talking, it was great learning about your department's goals to support wage equality in Seattle.</p> <p>Exchange business cards: A great way to keep in touch. And show interest. (e.g., It was great meeting you. Can I have your business card to stay in touch?)</p> <p>Follow up: Did you learn about a field of interest, receive advice or a referral? Send a thank you note the following day.</p>

Tips:

1. When enjoying food and drink, try to **keep one hand free to shake hands**.
2. **Take note of the person's name** and organization (get a business card, write it down, or note in your phone) so you can follow up.
3. **Wear something with pockets** or a place to keep business cards.
4. Choose clothing that is **professional, yet memorable** (ex: a bright color).

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

One way to “*nurture your network*,” and engage in a job/internship search, is to conduct an informational interview. If you met someone at a networking event and would like to know more about their role or organization, you can request an informational interview. You can also request informational interviews through **LinkedIn** or by **getting a referral** from someone in your existing network. Informational interviewing is when you “interview” someone else to learn more about their work, organization, or advice. There is not a job on the table, but it is an opportunity for career exploration and information gather. **Below are recommended steps for informational interviewing:**

STEP 1: IDENTIFY PEOPLE TO INTERVIEW

Think about individuals that are in your policy area or in a functional role within an organization that you’re interested in. **Take a few minutes to think of a few names.**

STEP 2: INITIATE CONTACT

Contact them via email and tell them about yourself and why you are reaching out. **Use a few of the points from your elevator speech.**

Explain that you want to learn more about their organization/position and would appreciate the opportunity to meet with them or talk over the phone for about 30 minutes. ****Sample Request Email is on the next page**

If after one to two weeks you haven’t heard a response from your potential informational interviewee, send a follow-up email.

STEP 3: PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

Do your research! Before your interview read about the job/career and organization of the individual you are interviewing.

Write down questions while researching related to the work they do or their area of concentration.

Prepare experiences and stories about yourself related to the work the organization does to share in your meeting.

STEP 4: CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW

Thank the interviewee for their time. Use components of your elevator speech to share who you are, your interests, and what you would like to learn from them.

Be an active listener and don’t be strict on getting all your questions asked. Go with the flow of the conversation.

At the end of the conversation, **ask if they recommend anyone else** who can provide further guidance or insight on your field of interest.

STEP 5: FOLLOW UP

After the interview, be sure to **send a thank you note or email within 24 hours.**

Request to connect with the person you met with on **LinkedIn** (if not already connected).

Nurture the contacts that you make throughout this process. **When you get a job, you might want to contact them and thank them again for their advice and support in your job search process.** Invite them to call upon you if they need anything as well.

Make a point to **touch base every 6-9 months** to see how things are going or offer an update. It can be nice to forward an article or paper he/she would enjoy.

Sample Interview Request Email

Dear ____:

I am a graduate student at the Evans School of Public Policy & Governance, and I found your information through _____. I can see that you are an Evans School alum as well—I am currently pursuing my Master of Public Administration degree with a focus on public finance. I am exploring various types of organizations and agencies to better determine what would be a good fit for my career interests after I graduate. I saw on LinkedIn that you work at XYZ Agency. Your career path was very interesting for me to see and I was hoping you would be willing to conduct an informational interview with me? I am particularly interested in hearing about what you do at XYZ Agency, how you got there, and if you have any advice for someone looking to enter this field.

My schedule is flexible, and I can work around your availability to meet in the next few weeks. I am able to come to your office for a meeting, or am happy to talk over the phone if that is easier.

I can be reached at 206-998-0000 or student@uw.edu. Thank you in advance for your time, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Anita Job

Sample Informational Interview Questions

Career path & policy area

- What is your background? | How did you get this job? | What might this job lead to?
- How do people traditionally break into this field? Are there internships available at your organization?
- What factors (or academic training) are hiring decisions in this field based on? Any advice for how I should be preparing during my time in school?
- What other organizations are doing work in this policy area?
- Who is doing the most innovative work now? | What are trends in this field that I should know about?

Organizational culture

- What is the work environment like? | Do you enjoy working here?
- What is the organization structure? | What are the opportunities for advancement?

Job function:

- What kinds of skills do you need to succeed in this position?
- What are you most satisfied/challenged by?

And the last two questions:

- Do you have any specific advice for me? | Can you recommend anyone else for me to contact?