

NETWORKING 101

COLLEGE FOR CREATIVE STUDIES
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Why is networking important?

Networking is essential for:

- Exploring career fields
- Identifying leads in your job search
- Building and managing your career over time
- Building relationships and creating connections with others

When should I start networking?

Networking is a continual process that you can start **NOW**.

Get into the habit of talking about your future career goals with people you meet.

Remember, networking is not only about attempting to find a job; it is an ongoing process of building relationships and exchanging information. Throughout the process, be aware of ways in which you might assist others along the way.

How do I get started?

Be yourself. Remember to be confident, friendly and approachable.

Initiate conversations with people you interact with on a regular basis but don't be afraid to take advantage of unexpected encounters and initiate conversations with others.

Ask people about their career paths or if they can offer any advice.

Work on your ability to make small talk. Have some prepared topics in mind and be sure to ask open-ended questions of the other person. Remember: having a good conversation depends greatly on being an active, courteous listener.

Conduct an informational interview (see our handout on *Informational Interviews*).

Social networking sites can be a great networking tool as well as portfolio websites and blogs. Remember to keep all online profiles professional.

Join a club, organization or professional association. Getting involved in your community will connect you with others and open up new opportunities.

Attend workshops, seminars, lectures, conferences and gallery openings.

Participate in on-campus Career Services supported events such as portfolio reviews, alumni panel presentations and workshops.

Important Tips

Organize your networking list into a database. Include names, titles, company names, and contact information.

Create professional voicemail messages and email addresses.

Be ready. Have your resume, cover letter and portfolio (digital and hardcopy) ready to send the next day.

Keep track of your correspondence with each person on your networking list.

Always remember to follow-up. Write a brief thank you note to each person who offers advice and provides leads.

Keep the individuals on your networking list informed of your job search progress, and keep in touch once you accept a position.

Have your promotional materials ready (work samples, business cards, website etc.). Having your own website is now essential for marketing yourself in the world of art and design. See our *Self Promotion Resources* under *Career Resources* on Blackboard for suggested links for creating a website and other promotional materials.

Who do I contact?

Brainstorm a list of anyone and everyone you know!

Never underestimate how valuable each person's assistance might be or what connections they may be able to help you make.

Keep business cards and contact information organized and your on-line profiles and contact information up-to-date. Keep all job search application materials and self promotion materials current.