



# Networking: A Roadmap To Career Success

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Many have heard the term networking and thought “This is only for the well connected.” Networking does not require that you know lots of people or that these people be important. Anyone can network successfully. All you need is preparation, time, and a lot of effort. **Remember, 80% of all jobs are obtained through networking.**

## BENEFITS OF NETWORKING

- Focuses your major or career choice
- Gives you advice about your job search
- Validates your choice of career
- Refines your interviewing skills
- Uncovers information about a specific employer or job

## NETWORKING MYTHS

Networking is not:

- Only for the well-connected, influential, or extroverted types
- Bothering people who are unwilling to help
- Asking for a job

## GETTING STARTED

### 1<sup>st</sup> Step – Know yourself

To facilitate this self-assessment, consider your skills, interests, personality, and values. You can take a few minutes to reflect on these questions or schedule an appointment with your Career Counselor:

- ❖ What are your greatest accomplishments?
- ❖ What enabled you to achieve these?
- ❖ What are your common areas of interest?
- ❖ What are themes regarding your skills?
- ❖ What work or activities do you enjoy?
- ❖ What interests you professionally/personally?
- ❖ What do you dislike doing?
- ❖ What is important to you?

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Step – Decide your purpose in contacting your network

If you are in the early stages and exploring majors or career directions, then your purpose is to gather information about jobs and careers of interest to you. If you are in the later stages and looking for full-time a employment, then your purpose is to obtain advice on how to conduct your job search and to get job leads.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Step – Develop a list of potential contacts

- Your classmates
- CBU Alumni, especially recent grads
- Parents & other family members
- Parents of classmates or roommates
- Professors and other advisors
- Current and former employers
- Guest speakers & Career Expo Representatives
- Members of professional associations
- Members of clubs or other organizations to which you belong
- Internet on-line discussion groups, chat rooms, and web-based networks
- Other targeted contacts such as high school teachers, family doctors, your clergy, etc.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Step – Practice Introductions

A sound bite, or abbreviated introduction, can be used in situations where you don’t have much time to talk, such as at Career Expos. It is also a good lead-in for telephone conversations with contacts. The sound bite should include:

- An introduction of yourself by name
- Name of college, your major, and class year
- The purpose of your request
  - Are you wanting information about a career field or assistance with your job search?

## PUTTING YOUR NETWORK INTO PRACTICE

### Person-to-Person –

- Can take place in any stage of the networking process
- Start by talking to people you know really well
- These initial contacts will lead to meetings with secondary contacts
- This type can often take place at Career Expos

### Written Letters –

- Usually happens in the beginning or middle stages of the networking process
- Can be used when you have been referred to someone you do not know
- May also be used when contacting someone without the benefit of an acquaintance's referral
- The following guidelines can be followed:

**Opening Paragraph** – State why you are writing and identify yourself. Always lead with the name of the person that referred you. For example, “Mark Davis suggested that I write to you about my interest in working for a nonprofit agency. Currently, I am a junior psychology major at Christian Brothers University and I am seeking information about careers in nonprofit.”

**Middle Paragraph** – Provide information about your background and your career interests, no matter how tentative. For example, what work experience have you had and what are your goals? Remember, the purpose of networking is to gather information, not to ask for a job. Therefore, make sure to state that you are in the process of gathering information about career possibilities. Also ask about arranging a face-to-face meeting or a conversation by telephone or e-mail at the contact's convenience.

**Last Paragraph** – Thank your networking contact for their time and consideration. Do not ask them to call you. Instead, offer to call them after they have had an opportunity to review your letter, usually within one week, to schedule a convenient time for follow up.

### Telephone Calls –

- Have a script of your sound bite readily available
- Always clearly identify yourself, the reason why you are calling, and give the name of your referral
- Suggest a follow-up conversation by phone, face-to-face, or by e-mail
- Close by thanking them for their time

### E-Mail –

- Use this if you are familiar with the contact and know their organization's culture is e-mail friendly
- Do not be misled and send a message that is overly casual
- Follow the same guidelines for writing a letter outlined above

## KEEPING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Keep a notebook or a paper log of your activities to keep you organized and on track
- Another option is to enter this information in a database or spreadsheet for quick retrieval
- Here are some items to include in your notebook or database:
  - Contact Name
  - Company or Organization
  - Address
  - Referral Source
  - Date of Meeting or Contact
  - Key Points Learned
  - Suggestions from Networking Contact
  - Thank-You Letter Sent
  - Suggested Contacts
  - Next Steps

## PRESERVE YOUR NETWORK'S STAYING POWER – SEND THANK YOU NOTES

- Don't limit your thank-you letters to those contacts with whom you met face-to-face
- Acknowledge the assistance of *everyone* who was instrumental in your network
- Your consideration will reinforce the positive impressions made during your contact and present you as an organized person who pays attention to detail

*For more information on effective networking, contact Career Services and visit the Career Library.*

### ***Sample Introduction Letter***

Your Address  
Date

Ms. Cynthia Jones  
First Premier Bank  
82020 Park Avenue  
Memphis, TN 38156

Dear Ms. Jones:

Through CBU Career Services, I learned of your experience within the banking industry. As a current Psychology major at Christian Brothers University, it is my hope to obtain some career guidance from you through an informational interview.

As a rising senior, I am exploring several career opportunities this summer. I am particularly interested in banking and would very much like to find out more about your field and the skills and education necessary to enter it. A brief, 30-minute meeting in your office or by phone would be a great opportunity for me to gather this information.

If your schedule permits, I would like to call you next week to schedule a time for us to meet. I greatly appreciate any information you can provide. If you have any questions, you may contact me at 901-555-5555.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Doe

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### ***Sample Thank-you Letter***

Your Address  
Date

Ms. Cynthia Jones  
First Premier Bank  
82020 Park Avenue  
Memphis, TN 38156

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for taking the time to discuss your career with me today. It was very helpful talking with you about your job and the banking industry.

I am especially grateful for your suggestion of gaining some experience through an internship next fall. I am sending letters to the people you mentioned regarding possible internship openings and look forward to getting started in the field.

Again, many thanks for the warm reception you gave me. I will keep you informed as my career develops.

Sincerely,

John Doe