

# Networking at a Glance

\*Please refer to Career Services' Staff, Career Planning Guide and/or Web Site for further information, [www.career.vt.edu](http://www.career.vt.edu)\*

*"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main" ~John Donne*

## Networking Is:

- Exchange of information or services
- Getting the help you need when you need it from those whom you need it
- Building relationships before you need them
- Helping Others

## Networking Isn't:

- Selling anything
- Bothering or Pestering someone
- Receiving a donation
- Securing fund

## Types of Networking:

1. **Strategic**- This is planned. There is a specific person that you want to meet for a specific reason. You ask people who know both parties for an introduction
  - a. Has a stated purpose and therefore a desired outcome
  - b. Prepares one for the serendipitous moments
2. **Serendipity**- This is an unplanned chance or encounter that leads to a mutually beneficial relationship.
  - a. Since nothing is planned there are no expectations and there isn't any time to get nervous

## Different Styles/Different Strengths of Networking: (from Monster Careers: Networking, Taylor and Hardy 2006)

1. *The Swan*- introverted and quiet, the kind of person whose natural inclination is to stay at home. Not a natural networker, the Swan's ability to organize and focus on a step-by-step plan can make his/her networking very efficient.
2. *The Butterfly*- meets new people all the time- the raw material for a great career network- but flits from one contact to another, rarely pausing to develop work relationship. Have a great head start, but need to learn about organization and follow-up.
3. *The Dolphin*- the networker who balances meeting new people and nurturing the relationships they already have. Their networking tends to be active and comfortable.
4. *The Lion*- focuses on forming just a few deep relationships. They may be introverted or they may very intense work lives. They can be very effective, but miss opportunities out of their areas of focus.

## Getting Started:

*"Conditions are never right. People who delay action until all factors are favorable are the kind who do nothing."*  
~William Feather

- A) *Create a Plan*- what are your networking goals (business development, professional development, job search, nonprofit, social, etc.) and what results are you seeking
- B) *A Few Good People*- you want quality contacts, not quantity. So don't spend all your time trying to gather 50 contacts, spend your time making five contacts with one person
- C) *Inventory/Organize Your Current Networks*- makes it easier to find the right person for the right problem, and helps you to not mix up your networks
- D) *Evaluate Your Network*- what is his/her relationship to what you need and of course how you can give back
  - a. Who has the power to help you (power as in access)?
  - b. What do you need from these people? Have you written it down?
  - c. What is the best way to approach them? Who can make an introduction on your behalf?
  - d. What is their value? What do they offer you?



### Exercise 1: Your Web of Relationships

Step 1: Write your name in the center of a piece of paper, then write the names of three or four people you know- friends, schoolmates, coworkers, and the like. Connect your name with each person and note the nature of the relationship.

Step 2: Expand the connections by naming a friend, relative, or coworker of each friend you listed. There's already some overlap here-your brother Pete is friends with Tom and his wife Shirley. Thus you connect to Shirley through two people.

Step 3: Now if you really want to see how the web works, add a friend, relative or coworker to each of the new names, and fill in every relationship, like this:

### Career Services' Resources to Assist You (all of which can be accessed at [www.career.vt.edu](http://www.career.vt.edu)):

1. VT Career Link- alumni database
2. Career Search- online listing of companies (by industry and geographic specific)
3. Post Graduation Reports- where are alumni from your major/department currently working or attending graduate school?
4. Career Fairs- <http://www.career.vt.edu/Fairs/JobCareerFairs.html>
5. Departmental Career Advisor

### Preparing for Networking:

1. *Organization*- in the first days and weeks of career networking, it's easy to remember who you spoke to, what they said, what you promised you'd do, who they referred you to, etc. You could write it all on scrap paper. But as your network grows those scraps add up. In turn, make a record of each networking conversation. Things to include are:
  - a. Name
  - b. Company/Organization
  - c. Position
  - d. Address
  - e. Phone/email
  - f. Referred to you by/How you found them
  - g. Relationship
  - h. Date met and meeting roles
  - i. Follow up

2. *Create a Personal Brand (aka: One Minute Commercial)*- you want every contact in your career network to have a clear idea of who you are, what you offer, and what you are looking for. Give them something SIMPLE!
  - a. Start with a single sentence describing what you do (i.e. I'm currently a senior at Virginia Tech, working toward a degree in Agriculture and Poultry Science. I chose this career path because...)
  - b. Add your best "selling point" as an employee-your best talents, work skills, or outstanding work achievements.
  - c. Explain why you want to connect with them.

*Note: The statements should not say "I'm looking for a job." Instead, it focuses on something the next contact can deliver, and that is a referral.*

### **Exercise 2: Your Personal Brand Statement- One Minute Commercial**

What I do:

My best selling point(s):

What I want to connect with them:

Follow Up Intentions:

**Note: Does it sound like you? Is it memorable? Keep it fresh, for your personal brand statement can change as your career network gives you new information and insights to the job possibilities in your area.**

3. *Get Your Kit Together*- contains items contacts commonly ask for and information that helps the conversation move forward
  - a. Clean copies of your resume (in the event you are asked for one)
  - b. Business cards with a phone and e-mail information (if you have one)
  - c. A list of specific target companies-places where you think you might find a job
  - d. Detailed and memorized stories about your work achievements (on index cards, as reminders)
  - e. A professional business outfit for face-to-face meetings
  - f. A pen and notebook. Pocket-size is best for taking occasional notes or writing the address of someone who forgot their card
  - g. Comb, breath mints, tissues, extra pair of stockings for the ladies
4. *Nonverbal and Verbal Communication*
  - a. Body Languages
    - i. Have at least 18 inches of personal space around you when you talk to others
    - ii. No slouching. Shoulders should not be confused as earrings
    - iii. Shoulders and hips parallel
    - iv. SMILE and Maintain good eye contact
    - v. Keep your hands out of your pockets and avoid playing with your fingers/nails

- b. Voice and Tone
  - i. Question or Answer- Inflection: Make a Statement!
  - ii. Have energy, enthusiasm, and sense of purpose: Smile When You Speak!
- c. Words
  - i. Select a vocabulary level that is appropriate for the audience
  - ii. Avoid acronyms and sports analogies
  - iii. Refrain from slang or vulgarities or clichés
  - iv. Speak in complete sentences

*Note: When we send email, we forfeit 93% of our communication power!*

**Ways to Network:**

1. Written Correspondence/Email: Do not send them a laundry list of questions. Introduce yourself first and ask if there is a good time when you can email them questions or call to follow up.
2. Telephone: Be sure to have an introduction ready to go-SCRIPT your message. You want to avoid asking them questions on your first phone call. Show them you are mindful of their time and if it would be possible to set up a time to speak.
3. Face to Face: see the chart below for meeting preparation

Conducting the Interview	Questions to Ask During the Meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control the time</li> <li>• Have an agenda</li> <li>• Listen and take notes</li> <li>• Ask for referrals</li> <li>• Thank the person for their time and ask for a business card so you can follow up later</li> <li>• Do not be overly assertive</li> <li>• Be open about everything you are doing</li> </ul> 	<p>ALWAYS ask Open Ended Questions and LISTEN carefully!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How did you prepare yourself for this position?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Job               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do you have a typical work week? If so, can you tell me about it? If not, why?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lifestyle               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are your work hours? Are you expected to work late nights or on weekends?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Future               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is the future predicted to look like in your line of work?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Follow Up Techniques:**

*“Networking is a recurring commitment” ~Pam Alexander, Alexander and Ogilvy*

- Use email when time is absolutely of the essence, but your voice/tone isn’t. For example, you are giving someone directions for a meeting the next day.
- Use voicemail when the energy of your voice is important. Or if by chance there was a misunderstanding, the kind tone of your voice made it less of a problem.
- You can never go wrong using snail mail. I’ve never heard anyone complain about receiving a handwritten thank-you note.
- BEST Technique: Ask the person what he or she prefers when you follow up. Some people definitely have a preference.

**Information for this document referenced from:**

Darling, D. (2003). *The networking survival guide: Getting the success you want by tapping into the people you know.*  
 Taylor & Hardy, D. (2006). *Monster careers: Networking*