

## 80% of jobs are found through networking!



Networking and informational interviews are essential **life prototyping tools** which help you learn about many things: career way-finding, industry changes, professional guidance, other potential connections, and of course, they can aid the job/internship search. Networking is like asking for directions – it's an overall process of learning, helping, building relationships and expanding your professional reach. Informational interviews are an important part of the networking process because they allow you to be the interviewer! You will gain valuable insights into the individual you are interviewing, as well as company culture and the industry they represent. These conversations can be mini-prototypes for the many things you may want to try out in the future. Networking can be done in-person and online. LinkedIn (see page 42) is a great resource to help with both.

### WHY?

Explore and clarify your career goals while expanding your professional network.

Build your confidence for job interviews.

### WHAT?

Obtain insider information and learn what is needed to excel in a particular job.

Become part of the "hidden" job market!

### HOW?

Get curious, develop questions on occupations, trends, ideas.

Find networking opportunities.

Prepare to network, dress professionally, send a thank you email.

## Valuable Networking Strategies

- Have a positive mindset. The people you are meeting are likely interested to learn about you as well.
- Understand your Value Proposition. Understand how your strengths and skills can contribute in a unique way to help others.
- Open your network. Expand your exposure to people of different backgrounds, ideas and points of view.
- Be curious, strategic and proactive. Seek out people and opportunities, and take advantage of the Career Success Center and any networking events.
- Follow-up with your connections. Always thank those who offered their time and advice.

## Informational Interviews

An informational interview is NOT a job interview and the objective is NOT to ask for a job. This is where YOU get to be the interviewer! The purpose is to learn more about another individual, opportunities, trends and general career/industry advice. Less spontaneous than organized networking events, you should plan ahead to engage a specific person who has some valuable insights for you. It is also a great life-prototyping tool (see page 12.)

### Here is the process:

1. Identify people to interview: Family, neighbors, faculty/advisors, friends, colleagues/bosses, alumni, mentors are good candidates. Invite them to a 20 minute conversation (mail/phone is ok). Offer them a cup of coffee!
2. Prepare to be the interviewer: think about what you want to learn. Research the interviewee and company online or via LinkedIn and other sources. Prepare good questions for your interviewee (see below).
3. Interview and follow-up with a thank you note. See page 39 for examples.



## Sample Questions to Ask

- Tell me how you got started in this field. What education or related experience might be helpful in entering this field?
- What are the daily duties of your job? What are the working conditions? What skills/abilities are utilized in this work?
- What are the toughest problems you deal with? What problems does the organization as a whole have?
- What obligation does your work put on you outside the work week?
- How much flexibility do you have in terms of dress, work hours, vacations?
- What do you find most rewarding about this work?
- What salary level would a new person start with? What are the benefits? What are other forms of compensation?
- Is turnover high? How does one move from position to position?
- What trends do you see for this industry in the next 3 to 5 years?
- How well-suited is my background for this field? How would I go about finding a job in this field?
- What suggestions do you have to help make my resume more effective?
- What are the most important factors used to hire people in this work (education, experience, personality, skills)?
- Will you refer me to three other professionals I can speak with? May I have permission to use your name when I contact them?
- Do you have any other advice for me?

**To: Fernando Gonzalez (fgonzalez559278@email.com)**  
**From: Pedro Public Health (pedro.p.health@mail.wcsu.edu)**

**Subject: Camila Counselor Referral - Informational Interview Request**

Dear Mr. Gonzalez:

My name is Pedro Public Health and as a current public health student at WCSU, I am very interested in working in health administration. My counselor, Camila Counselor who is a colleague of yours and connected to you on LinkedIn, suggested I reach out to you based on my interests in your current role in the healthcare industry.

Would you possibly be available for an informational interview? I would love to hear more about what you do, and how you got your start in health administration.

Please let me know if you are available to meet sometime next week. If your schedule doesn't allow, what about a 10 minute phone conversation? I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,  
 Pedro Public Health | 203-555.5555

# Networking Brainstorm Worksheet



Networking is a great way to prototype your life and career ideas. Every person you meet has the ability to connect you to (potentially) hundreds of more people. We simply can not know who everyone else knows. Be curious, genuine and helpful with as many people as possible. Anyone can be a lead, give you a lead, take your lead, or offer you a resource!

**BRAINSTORM PEOPLE YOU KNOW AND THINK WHO CAN BE A LEAD, GIVE YOU A LEAD, REFER YOU, OR OFFER YOU A RESOURCE**

