

CAREER SERVICES Presents

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY NETWORK

Why Networking is Your Friend

For many people, the word "networking" sounds daunting. Just the idea of it brings on anxiety! Our goal is to help you learn the art of networking as a form of relationship-building in a positive, unintimidating way. You've probably engaged in networking many times without realizing it. Like it or not, **networking is consistently found to be the most effective job searching tool**. Therefore, it's important to understand what networking is and how you can become confident doing it.

What is networking in its purest form?

Networking is about building relationships that provide an opportunity to learn from others' experiences, explore career options, learn phone interview techniques, and potentially obtain job search leads. Networking is NOT about asking for a job.

Networking Tips & Strategies

- **Know what you're after.** It's important to have a goal in mind when networking. What information are you looking for? It's important to be clear, concise, and confident when speaking with a contact. Be comfortable with your "30-second commercial" (More information later in this packet).
- **Start with your personal contacts.** Think broadly about who is already in your network - friends, relatives, faculty, church members, internship or employment supervisors, counselors, your roommates' parents, etc.
- **Be willing to connect with all types of people** – Even if their career path seems unrelated to your interests, you never know whom someone is connected to, and how their connections might impact you.
- **Keep a record of the people you meet.** Immediately after you make a new contact, write down their information: name, title, company, email/phone, referral sources, date of contact, and a few notes about your conversation.

- **Learn to ask for referrals.** After you know what you're interested in, ask the people around you if they know someone in that particular field. You might be surprised what you can find when others share their contacts.
- **Utilize networking resources.** LBC College alumni are an invaluable resource. They've been in your shoes and are typically happy to share insight about their experiences. See more in the section on "LinkedIn".

Networking Etiquette

Keep the following key points in mind when embarking on your networking journey:

- **Avoid asking for a job-** Instead, focus on gathering information. Use your 30-second commercial to communicate who you are and what you are seeking.
- **Respect their time-** When requesting a meeting or phone call with a prospective network, let them know how much time you plan to take - 20 minutes, 30 minutes? And stick to that time limit!
- **Always send a thank-you note/email-** After a meeting or phone conversation, send a thank-you note to that person for taking time to share information with you. A professional card or email is appropriate.
- **Stay positive-** Avoid any negativity when talking about people, past experiences, or what you have to offer.
- **Be professional-** When emailing or phoning, be mindful of your tone of voice and writing skills. Avoid slang, and proof read for grammatical errors.

Create Your 30-Second Commercial

What?

A 30-second commercial is a brief statement of what you consider yourself to have become at this stage of your life. It is an introduction.

Why?

To make a strong first impression! Your 30-second commercial makes the listener aware of your specific experience, strengths, skills, and goals.

When?

You will use your 30-second commercial throughout your professional life – introducing yourself to a potential employer, during networking events, professional and social events, at church, family Thanksgiving, anytime someone asks you, “What do you do?”

How?

Use clear, concise language to sell your abilities and experience, and to emphasize your strengths. Your commercial should be conversational and natural. Be memorable but not outrageous. **Practice, Practice, Practice!**

Step 1



Answer the following questions:

1. What is your career goal?
2. What skill, strength, or experience do you have that can help you realize that goal?
3. What accomplishment proves you have that skill, strength, or experience?
4. What are you searching for in a job or internship?
5. How can you benefit the organization?

Step 2



Based on your answers complete the sample script:

Hello, my name is _____. I am a _____ major at Lancaster Bible College. I'm interested in _____ (specific position or internship). I have experience/skill/interest in _____. Recently I worked/volunteered/ interned at _____ and was able to _____. I could apply these same skills, abilities in your _____ opportunity. I am looking to gain further experience in _____ (your career goal).

Statements

- I am good at...
- I have a talent for...
- My abilities include...
- My strongest skills are...
- I have been trained in...
- I am familiar with...
- My experience includes...
- I enjoy...
- I am interested in...
- I am passionate about...
- I would like the opportunity to...
- I have a solid background in...
- I have a good working knowledge of...

Power Words

- Solve
- Achieve
- Improve
- Become
- Produce
- Support
- Create
- Maintain
- Eliminate
- Save
- Provide the best
- Plan
- Analyze
- Manage
- Work with
- Help
- Teach
- Lead
- Prepare
- Build
- Trained
- Which gives my customers
- Which qualifies me to
- Facilitate
- Coordinate
- Design

Sample 30-second Commercials

Hello, my name is Job Seeker, I am a Business Administration major at Lancaster Bible College. For the past 2 summers, I have been working as a customer service specialist at Financial Bank. My ability to understand customer concerns and respond quickly has supported the bank's customer retention program. I am very accurate and well organized and have closed my teller drawer without error daily. I am interested in an opportunity to utilize my skills as a finance intern.

Hello, my name is Sam Son, I recently graduated from Lancaster Bible College with a degree in Pastoral Ministry. I have 4 years of experience serving as an assistant youth pastor. I lead worship, assist with weekly programming and train volunteers. I am a leader with a servant heart who is passionate about growing seekers into followers of Jesus Christ.

Final thoughts...

Be prepared for follow-up questions. You may be asked for more information or to elaborate on something you said which will keep the conversation going. Your strategy is to develop rapport. Practice is Key!

Navigating a Networking Event

Many types of organizations conduct networking events for employees, volunteers, donors, clients, etc. These events are typically held at functions such as professional conferences, political campaigns, fundraisers, or recognition dinners. The idea of attending a networking event may be overwhelming even to experienced networkers. The tips below will help you successfully navigate your next event:

- **Bring professional networking cards** with your contact information.

It's typically NOT recommended that you bring a resume to a networking reception; however, it is encouraged that you create professional networking cards to hand out to any contacts you meet.

- **Try to talk to a variety of individuals** at networking events. Keep in mind that people from all stages and walks of life can provide helpful advice, so do not simply stay with your friends or converse with the same person all night, focus on quality dialogue.

- **A polished appearance** will help you make a positive first impression. Dress neatly and professionally. Do not overdo makeup, jewelry, or accessories. Extend a firm handshake, maintain eye contact, and smile.

- **Hold food or drink in your left hand**, so that you are free to shake hands with your right hand. Don't try to balance food and drink at the same time.

- **Snack lightly**. Do not overload your plate, and avoid spending all your time eating. It's recommended that you eat a small meal ahead of time.

- **Check the guest list**. Try to find out who will be in attendance. This will enable you to research the people you may come in contact with and the organizations they represent. This ensures that you can enter into intelligent conversation with anyone you meet.

- **Close conversations instead of just walking away**. When you're ready to leave a discussion, simply excuse yourself by saying something like, "Thank you for your time. I enjoyed meeting you and hope we have the chance to connect again. Enjoy the rest of your evening." This is also a perfect opportunity to hand out your professional networking card.

Networking & Social Media

When utilized correctly, social media can be a fast and effective way to network. The following platforms offer a unique way to connect professionally with others:

LINKEDIN – The most popular, international networking resource! Utilize LinkedIn to connect professionally with others in your field of interest, join professional groups (including the LBC College Professional Network), follow companies, and search for jobs.

TWITTER – In addition to connecting you with others in your field, this platform can provide you with access to a wealth of information from industry experts. Twitter is a fantastic way to view job postings, as over one million job openings are tweeted each month (be sure to utilize **TweetMyJobs** to expand your search). When using Twitter, it is recommended that your profile be professional in nature, and include a link to your LinkedIn profile.

FACEBOOK – Before you begin to utilize Facebook to network professionally, be sure ALL of your postings, pictures, and updates are appropriate. Some effective ways to use Facebook when networking include: linking your blog or website to your Facebook page, reminding others of your job search through your status updates, and/or posting a professionally-written note about your current career situation onto your profile page.

LBC ALUMNI- Be sure to sign up to be a part of LBC's online LBC community designed for Alumni & Friends at lbc.edu/alumni. This password-protected Alumni Community allows graduates to connect with college friends, read alumni updates, and join networks related to specific majors.

GOOGLE- Yes, google your name to see what a potential employee would see if they researched you online.

Networking Samples

Read below for sample questions and script to refer to as you begin networking:

Potential Questions to Ask When Networking

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- What was your major in college?
- What was your career/vocational journey like once you graduated from college?
- How did you prepare for entry into your profession?
- How did you locate and secure your current job?
- What specific degree or experience is necessary for this kind of work?

B. CURRENT ROLE INFORMATION

- What is a typical workday like for you? What are some common tasks throughout the day?
- Do you have opportunities for a varied schedule, such as telecommuting or job sharing?
- What are the interesting aspects of your job? What are some difficulties and frustrations?
- What are the most significant changes facing your field/organization?

C. YOUR INTEREST IN THE FIELD

- What experiences would you recommend (coursework, internship, volunteer, study abroad, campus involvement, etc.) to prepare for a job in this field?
- What does it take (personality traits, strengths, competencies, experiences) to be successful in this field?
- What do I need to have on my resume to be considered for employment in this field?
- Can you recommend helpful informational resources about the field?
- What are some related occupations that I might investigate?
- What professional organizations would you recommend? Publications to read?
- What specific advice would you give a person entering the field?
- Can you provide me the names of others in this field who might talk with me and provide additional information? May I use your name?

Sample Script for Initial Email Contact

Dear Ms. Sandy,

I obtained your name and contact information from my academic advisor. Currently, I am a junior counseling major at Lancaster Bible College. I am interested in learning more about the art therapy profession, your organization, and your career path.

I would greatly appreciate an opportunity to talk with you about your experience and advice if you can find 20-30 minutes in your schedule to talk with me. Thank you in advance for your time. You can reach me at 717.555.5555 or berin@lbc.edu.

Sincerely,
Brian Erin

Following Up

A key ingredient to effective networking is proper follow-up. When possible, obtain a business card or jot down contact information so that you can send a thank-you note or email to your new contacts. After a meeting or a phone conversation, send a thank-you (within 2 business days) to that person for taking the time to share information with you.

Be sure to reference any noteworthy items which you discussed. If appropriate, you can even ask for an additional meeting to further any conversation or request an informational interview. Also, be sure to utilize LinkedIn to connect with your new contacts.

No matter what path your career journey takes after LBC, networking opportunities will likely be a part of your working life. By perfecting your networking skills now, you will be more equipped to succeed in the future. Also, remember to return the favor when you are advanced in your career and someone contacts you!

CAREER SERVICES

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