Get Started Networking!

What Is Networking?
Did you know that networking is consistently the number one or two way that University of Alabama at Birmingham graduates find jobs? Networking is the process of developing relationships with others. So who is in your network? Start with those close to you—friends, parents, professors, advisors, supervisors. You are not trying to get a job from them; instead the information for a contact to add to your network who might have opportunities!

Elevator Pitch/30-Second Commercial
If you were stuck in the elevator with the CEO of your dream company, what would you say? This is where the term elevator pitch comes from. An elevator pitch allows you in 30 seconds to tell someone who you are, why you are qualified, and what you can provide. Elevator pitches can be used while networking, at a career fair, or to answer the interview question “tell me about yourself.”

30-Second Commercial Components
Here are some components to consider in developing your unique introduction; choose a combination of the following:

Greeting
Hello, my name is _____ (include your first and last name).

Year in School
I am currently a ______ (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior).

Major/Field of Study
My major is ________, and ________.

Type of Experience
I am looking for ________ (co-op, internship, part-time, full-time, summer, fall, spring, etc.) position).

When You’re Available
I am available ________ (year) .

Strengths/Abilities
My strengths are ________ and ________.

Accomplishments
I have ________ and ________ . Would you tell me more about ________ ?

Relevant Activities
I am involved in ________ and ________ .

Example of an Introduction:
“Hi, my name is Jane Blazer and I am a sophomore majoring in marketing. I am currently a Resident Advisor on a hall of 33 students. This past semester I managed a project where a group of 15 students provided a two-hour field day for two fourth grade classes at a local elementary school. I managed the planning meetings, as well as solving two logistics problems. The project involved twice as many students as the one from previous years. I am seeking an internship this coming summer in marketing to use my planning and problem-solving skills in service to your company. Would you tell me more about your internship program?”

Get Started Networking! continued

The Informational Interview

1. Know What You Want to Accomplish
The primary purpose of informational interviewing is to:
- Investigate a specific occupational field.
- Gain insights into a career field.
- Narrow options.
- Solicit advice on where you may fit in.
- Learn the jargon and current trends in the field.
- Expand your network for future reference.

Note: An informational interview is to request information, not a time for you to request job listings or interview for a job.

2. Prepare for the Informational Interview
Before:
- Learn as much as you can about the organization.
- Dress professionally.
- Bring copies of your resume. Only distribute them if requested.

During:
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early.
- State your purpose and why you are meeting with this particular person.
- Keep in mind that the informational interview is not an interview for employment.
- Be prepared to lead the conversation, since you are the interviewer.
- Keep in your request of 20-30 minutes.

B) Questions about the organization:
- What is the outlook for the future of this company?
- What types of training programs are available?
- What other personnel and/or departments work closely with you?
- What is the typical career ladder in this field?
- How would someone with my background fit into this organization?

3. Use These Sample Informational Interview Questions as a Guide

A) Questions about the career field:
- What is your job title? What are the associated duties and responsibilities of this job?
- What is your career path prior to obtaining this position?
- What preparation is required to qualify for a job like yours?
- What do you like most about your job? Least?
- Would you describe a typical day/month/season/cycle?
- What other personnel and/or departments work closely with you?
- What college courses or experience would help me gain additional knowledge to prepare me for a position like this one?
- What is a typical career ladder in this field?
- What salary range could I anticipate in this field?
- How would someone with my background fit into this organization?
- Can you refer me to others in this field with whom I might also discuss this career field?
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Informational interviewing is an effective tool in both career planning and the job search process. It may be one of your most valuable strategies in gathering information and establishing a network. Like all other facets of career planning, informational interviewing requires prior planning and preparation on your part. Make the interview open doors for you and your career.