

BYU | CONNECT

NETWORKING GUIDE

Did you know that 85% of all jobs are found by networking?¹ Forming friendships, connections, and business relationships is a practice that will help you land an internship, secure your first job, or transition between jobs down the road. When done well, networking helps you build relationships with people who genuinely want to see you succeed.

Although it may seem intimidating to speak with professionals, this guide will help you network.

Here are nine best practices, a sample email, an example of how to share your story in an informational interview, and sample questions for professionals.

BEST PRACTICES

1. Craft and proofread your emails to give a good first impression. Be concise.
2. Prepare five relevant questions you honestly want answered; be ready to learn.
3. If reaching out to multiple people in the same company, do not send the same default email to everyone.
4. When setting up your phone calls, suggest two or three different times to talk to ensure your schedules will align.
5. If you're networking by phone, it may feel odd to jump from small talk to the purpose of the call. Transition to that by saying: "Thanks again for being willing to speak with me. May I tell you a little bit about myself? After that I'd love to hear more about you and your career."
6. Once you have transitioned, talk about yourself for a minute or so—where you are from, year in school, what you're studying, and why you're interested in the profession. If you want an

internship or full-time employment, talk about what you've done to get experience in this industry. Finally, state your purpose. If you are calling to ask questions, say so. If you want to expand your network in that field, tell them!

7. Keep phone calls around 15 to 20 minutes.

8. If the call went well, consider saying: "I really enjoyed our conversation and want to learn more about [career/industry/etc.]. Is there anyone else you know who I should talk to?" Asking this simple question can expand your network.

8. **BE RESPECTFUL.** BYU is extremely lucky to have helpful, friendly alumni, so it is absolutely critical for you to be polite. These informational interviews have the potential to further your career and could also have an impact on the careers of many students after you. You are influencing the professionals' impression of BYU students, so make it count.

9. **SAY THANK YOU.** Start and end the conversation by genuinely expressing gratitude for their time and thanking them for their advice. Finally, always send a follow-up thank you email. Professionals' time is valuable, so showing gratitude for the mentorship is imperative.

LinkedIn Article, 2016¹

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Sample Email

"Hi [first name],

My name is [name] and I am currently a [freshman, junior, etc.] at BYU studying [major]. I got your information from [source] and am hoping to get some insight regarding [industry/occupation]. I am interested in learning more about this field and would love to hear your perspective.

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Would you be willing to speak on the phone for 20 minutes or so? I am available [First availability] or [second availability] this week, but can be flexible if there is a time that works better for you. Please let me know what works best with your schedule.

Thank you for your time! I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Best,

[name]"

Sample Story (Your story may be simpler than this one and that is totally okay! Professionals know you are in college and are still trying to figure out what you want to do.) As mentioned above, this is the story you tell at the beginning of the informational portion of the interview or when they ask you to tell them about yourself. Practice and polish this story.

I am from Seattle, Washington and am a freshman here at Brigham Young University. As I hope to work in the film industry one day, I am planning on applying to the Media Arts program next year. I first became interested in movies as a young kid. My grandfather would pull out his box of old film reels and show us classic black and white films.

One memorable night, he showed us an old Western movie. It was then when I decided I wanted to make movies someday. I took a film class in high school and started a club while there. After high school, I set up lights and held a boom mike for my neighbor who directs commercials. Since starting at BYU, I have worked on the sets of a couple student films. Working on these productions has confirmed this is what I want to do.

One of my greatest aspirations is to work as a director or screenwriter. I wanted to talk with you today because I hope to get as many perspectives on

the industry as I can. Your career is a good example of what I hope to do. I am also hoping to get an internship with a production company next summer and hoped I could get your advice on how to do that.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

1. "Can you tell me more about your experience? How did you get to company XYZ?"
2. "What led you to choose [occupation]?"
3. "What led you to choose [company name]?"
4. "What do you enjoy most about your role with [company name]?"
5. "What can I do now to increase my chances of getting a job in/at [industry/company]?"
6. "Do you have any advice for a student interested in working in [industry]? What did you wish you had known when you were in my shoes?"
7. "I really appreciate the insight you have given me; do you know anyone else I could benefit from talking to?"