



# Networking to Investigate a Career

## Overview

Networking offers invaluable insights into a career field by connecting you with professionals who have firsthand experience. Through conversations and informational interviews, you can gain insider knowledge about industry trends, job expectations, and potential career paths. Networking provides opportunities to ask questions, seek advice, and learn from others' experiences, helping you make informed decisions about your career direction. By tapping into the collective wisdom of your network, you can gain a deeper understanding of the nuances of the field and identify opportunities for growth and development. Ultimately, networking enables you to gather valuable information that can guide your career trajectory and enhance your professional success.

## Steps to Network

### Research Occupation Online

- Delve into various online resources to thoroughly investigate the occupation, including job descriptions, industry reports, and professional forums, to gain initial insights into its requirements and opportunities for growth.

### Prepare Customized Questions

- Formulate personalized questions tailored to your non-negotiables, interests, and long-term career aspirations, ensuring that your interactions with professionals in the field are focused and productive for your career exploration journey.

### Compile Networking List

- Create a comprehensive networking list comprising individuals within your existing network, as well as potential contacts sourced through social media platforms and professional associations, to expand your reach and access diverse perspectives on the occupation.

### Seek Referrals

- Leverage your networking list to reach out to contacts and inquire if they can provide insights or connect you with professionals in the field who are willing to share their experiences and insights, facilitating deeper exploration of potential career paths.

### Follow Up via Email

- Craft thoughtful emails to follow up with leads, expressing gratitude for their time and insights, and reinforcing your interest in exploring the occupation further, fostering ongoing connections and opportunities for continued learning and engagement.



## Conduct Informational Interviews

- Engage in informational interviews with professionals in the field, either virtually or in person, to gain firsthand insights into the day-to-day realities of the occupation, its challenges, and rewards, empowering you to make informed decisions about your career direction.

## Express Gratitude

- Demonstrate appreciation for the insights gained from informational interviews by sending handwritten thank-you notes or thoughtful emails, fostering goodwill and maintaining positive relationships within your professional network.

## Reflect on Experience

- Reflect on your career exploration journey through journaling, capturing key learnings, insights, and reflections on potential career paths, enabling you to refine your career goals and priorities based on newfound knowledge and experiences.

## Follow Up and Expand Network

- Stay proactive in following up with leads and expanding your network by participating in industry events, workshops, and online communities, seizing opportunities for further exploration and connection-building to support your ongoing career development.

## Update Original Contacts

- Keep original contacts informed about your progress in exploring the occupation, expressing gratitude for their support and guidance, and reinforcing the value of your professional relationship in nurturing future career opportunities and collaborations.

## Source

University of Colorado Boulder Human Resources, Career Development (2020, August 18). *Types of Networking*. August, 2023, from <https://www.colorado.edu/hr/learning-development/career-development>