

Strategic networking guide

Five steps to effectively build your network

Strategic networking helps you proactively grow and maintain relationships that can enhance your career goals. Whether you're looking for advice, information or job leads, it's important to cultivate a network of valuable connections to support you on your career journey.

In this guide...

YOU'LL LEARN FIVE STEPS FOR BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

- 1 Establish your goals
- 2 Target your audience
- 3 Tap into connections
- 4 Expand your reach
- 5 Maintain relationships

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Establish your goals

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING TO GET OUT OF NETWORKING?

Before you dive into expanding your network, take a moment to reflect on what you hope to accomplish by forming more professional relationships.



Some common goals for networking include:

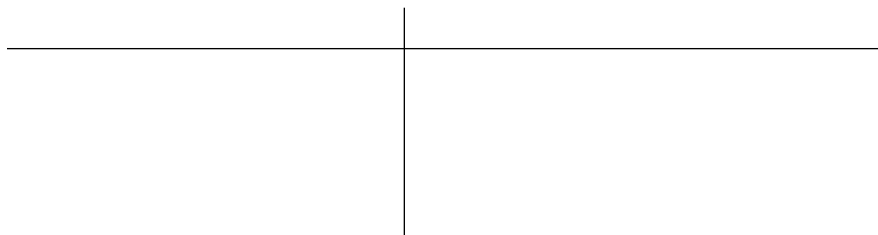
- Elevating your knowledge of a specific industry, company or role
- Getting referred to job opportunities
- Finding mentors who can provide encouragement and advice
- Learning about entry points into your desired field
- Uncovering “hidden” or unadvertised job openings

Besides helping you achieve your own goals, building a strategic network should empower you to help others achieve theirs too. Networking is a two-way street too. Do9Tm@1050

2 Target your audience

HOW TO MAKE STRATEGIC AND EFFECTIVE CONNECTIONS

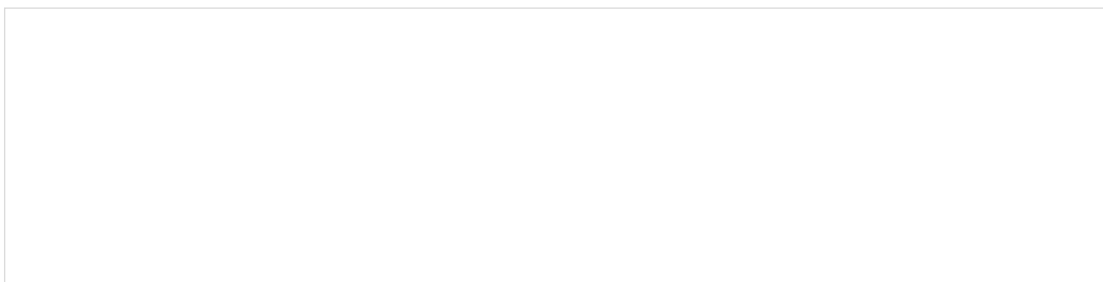
Your target audience is the specific group of people who can best support your career goals. To identify who those people



3 Tap into connections

HOW TO ACTIVATE YOUR EXISTING NETWORK

A good place to start building your network is by tapping into the connections you already have. Your current network is bigger than you might think! Here's how you can activate the people you already know to start expanding your network:



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Expand your reach

TECHNIQUES FOR MAKING NEW CONNECTIONS

Expanding your network helps you cultivate relationships with people outside of your existing social circles. Here are a few ways to make new connections and expand your reach:



Grow your network on LinkedIn

Once you've **created your LinkedIn account** you can start connecting with people who share similar interests and backgrounds as you. Start by connecting with alumni in your target audience by sending an invitation to connect with a short message asking for an informational interview. You can also request to join relevant LinkedIn groups and meet more people in your target audience from there.



Join professional associations

Professional associations are hubs for information on industry trends, professional development opportunities and networking events. Do some research on associations that align with your career goals and see if there's a local (or virtual) chapter in your area. If you're not sure where to start, **[click here](#)**.



Participate in networking groups or events

Research specific groups and events that focus on your professional interests or get involved in volunteer opportunities like serving on nonprofit boards to gain leadership skills and make new connections. Websites like **Meetup**, **Eventbrite**, and **VolunteerMatch** are a great place to start.



TIP

To quickly find a list of University of Phoenix alumni to connect with on LinkedIn, **[click here](#)**.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Here are a few sample questions you could ask in an informational interview:

- Why did this work interest you, and how did you get started?
- What's it like working for [company]?
- What are some pros and cons of being in this industry?
- What do you wish you knew about this industry before you started?
- What current issues and trends are you seeing in this field?
- What specific skills and personal qualities are most essential to be effective in your job?
- How would you describe the work culture at your organization?
- What are some challenges or frustrations you're currently facing both as an organization and in your role?
- Aside from schooling, how did you prepare for this work?
- Would you recommend any additional training for new professionals?
- Are there other people you suggest I contact?
Can I use your name in contacting them?
- Are there any organizations in the area you think would be a good fit for me given my interests in XYZ?

