

# Networking, LinkedIn and Social Media



CAREER  
STUDIO

## Why do I need to network?

- 85% of jobs are filled via networking
- 70% of jobs are never advertised
- It's part of a lot of jobs, so it's a good skill to develop and have on your CV

Some find networking to be daunting and unnatural, like playing a game. However, you get out what you put in. People are friendly and willing to help; remember they are there for a reason too. Networking helps to build trustworthy relationships and with preparation anyone can do it!

## What is a professional network?

- A connected community of professionals with related business interests
- You will have your own network already which will include current and former colleagues, people you went to school or university with, contacts made at work functions or conferences, and those you've met at dedicated networking events
- Interacting with people to gain information and useful contacts and to give and receive career support
- You don't need hundreds of contacts – a smaller number of quality contacts can be much more useful, but ensure that you have regular communication with these contacts

A professional network can give you:

- Access to vacancies
- Career support
- Mentoring
- Useful information and knowledge
- Company to company relations
- The opportunity for speculative applications
- Mutual support network

## What is an elevator pitch?

An elevator pitch is a quick 30-60 second personal statement or soundbite that you can use to introduce and 'sell yourself'. The idea is that you can deliver your pitch to someone in the time it will take to get where you are both going in an elevator.

Practicing your Elevator Pitch will help you to confidently and concisely summarise your skills and experience and is particularly useful when meeting a potential employer by chance or at career and networking events and as the foundation for cover

letters and email introductions. It is designed to pique their interest, so they want to hear more.

Things to consider:

- Share your skills - Your pitch should explain what qualifications and skills you have
- Keep it short and sweet - Restrict yourself to 30-60 seconds - your pitch should be a soundbite of who you are, what you want and what you do
- Be positive and persuasive
- Be upbeat and enthusiastic
- Mention your goals
- Add your own spin - spark their interest
- Practice - practice - practice
- Don't forget to follow up - offer your business card if you have one and follow up with a call, email or LinkedIn request or message

**“Networking helps to build trustworthy relationships and with preparation anyone can do it!”**

What to include in your 60 second pitch:

1. Who you are and what you study
2. Your specific goal/career interest. This will allow that person to help you or possibly connect you to someone who can
3. How you have demonstrated your interest. Give examples of things you have already completed. Don't just say "I have always wanted to work in Marketing," but rather "I have taken marketing modules and volunteered at the Student Union working on events promotion".
4. Demonstrate your qualifications, work experience, achievements, skills and strengths.
5. A question or request for assistance. E.g. "If your company offers Graduate Schemes, I would appreciate the name of the person in charge of that program, or perhaps I could meet with you in person to find out more about your company and any opportunities you may have."

## How should I network at careers events? Before the event

- Look at the exhibitor lists and pick out a few firms you want to meet
- Research them: what do they do? What do they specialise in? Does their culture appeal to you? Are they in the news? What type of jobs has the company recently undertaken?
- Search LinkedIn for company content/contacts, follow the company on LinkedIn, you can post on your profile that you will be attending the event then companies can look at your profile beforehand
- Prepare your elevator pitch
- What type of jobs or graduate schemes does the company offer?

### During the event

- Meet the firms you are interested in first
- Make notes and get contact details
- Give them your contact details - either your CV, portfolio link or business card
- Ask questions
- Show your passion for the company/industry/role

### After the event

- Get in touch – connect via LinkedIn or drop them an email
- Thank them for their time talking to you
- If you do apply to them, going forward, mention in your application that you met them at an event

### How can I use LinkedIn to network?

With LinkedIn, you can network anytime and anywhere from any device. With LinkedIn you can apply for jobs and connect with people in your industry and former co-workers. It's great for networking as you can connect with people in your industry that you would've never had the chance to meet in person before.

**Connect with people and interact:** Once you have an up to date, engaging profile connect with people in your industry. Choose people who you would like to work for or who can provide you with insight into your desired career. Send personalised requests where possible. Comment on other's posts, "like" and share their content - don't be a silent connection or your relationships will never grow.

**Post engaging content:** Sharing a great article, you've read recently on the web is a good start but writing your own LinkedIn articles or creating your own related post is the goal.

**Join groups:** get noticed and make connections with industry contacts by joining groups. Find groups related to your industry and participate in discussions and answer questions.

### How can I use social media to network?

You can use social media to network with employers and to promote yourself, however it's important to manage your online presence so it helps, rather than hinders you.

Employers are using social media more and more to vet applicants and to reach out to potential employees. If you haven't already, use security settings to lock down any content you don't wish employers to see and consider separate professional and personal accounts if applicable.

A well-used social media platform can be used to:

- stay informed and follow developments in your industry
- raise your profile by participating in discussions and debates
- get noticed – you could only be a few tweets away from bagging your dream role
- demonstrate and promote your work
- network with employers
- get in touch by messaging with recruiters
- shows your personality online
- join related groups related– this isn't just for LinkedIn

Don't forget that if you are a student searching for work, you can select what industry and job role you would be interested in, filter the region and turn your job alerts on, this way you will be alerted when a job becomes vacant.

### How can I get further support?

You can receive peer to peer career support from our Career Coaches who can be found in our Career Studio in the Student Hub, Science Centre on Leek Road. The Career Studio is open Monday-Thursday 10am-6pm and Friday 10am-4.30pm. You can also receive career support via email at [careers@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:careers@staffs.ac.uk).

Other leaflets in this series:

Personal branding

Work experience

Life design

Available online at [www.staffs.ac.uk](http://www.staffs.ac.uk) or from the Career Studio