



How to Network As a Student

Everyone says the best way to find a new job is through networking. But how does one do that? Here's a guide to use this great resource!

To start, be sure you know what your parents, their friends, and other adults in your life actually do for work. That band mom may work in the company you want to intern with or that coach may know the CEO of it. Getting to know those around you is easy and just requires a little time. Explain you are thinking about the job search process and you were wondering, what do you do? Most people will be happy to share that information and even why they like it!

LinkedIn is a great source of information and everyone in the business world should have a LinkedIn profile. You want to complete it as much as possible and include only those things related to work. When you write down your experience, be sure it conveys the messages you want people to receive – if you want people to know you are detail-oriented, have someone proof your information. If you want them to find you creative, be sure to put some effort into your descriptions so you don't sound like everyone else.

Once you have your profile complete, reach out to connect with those people in the industries you are targeting. Often you will find people at the company you are interested in working with on LinkedIn and can ask to connect. You can also connect with people you are interviewing with which should give you an idea of what they look like.

A complete profile includes:

A professional headshot – it is very obvious when the picture on LinkedIn is a casual picture or something cut out of something else. If you cannot get your picture taken, have someone take one of you outside, in the shade. This will give you the best lighting and will also be just from the shoulders, up.

Work experience – list internships, summer jobs, etc. here and be sure to explain what you learned or how you contributed to the company. A bagger at the grocery store has to learn customer service skills while someone detailing cars needs to be detail-oriented. Call out those skills learned for the reader so they don't have to guess.

Volunteer experience – It is a good idea to list your volunteer experience unless you are concerned it would be polarizing. Often the connection you make with someone is through your volunteer experience and interests so having them listed on your profile is ideal.



Recommendations – In the past, many people used to write reference letters for students. In today’s world of desktop applications, it is too easy to spoof a recommendation letter. Instead, ask people to write you a recommendation on LinkedIn. This can’t be spoofed and employers like to see them.

Contact information easily found – LinkedIn likes to provide contact information to others only after you connect but that can be frustrating for recruiters and others trying to fill positions. Putting your email address in the description allows them to find it quickly and will give you an edge over other candidates that the recruiter has to wait to connect.

Events – There are lots of career events, networking events, and other places people go that you can meet. Be sure you go where people are that are currently working. Networking with people who are out of work won’t necessarily get you anywhere! Be sure you have an answer to, “what would you like to do?” and keep it as short and to-the-point as possible. People will want to help you so make it easy for them!

Other Networking Tips:

- Shake hands with people and look them in the eye when you meet
- Clearly pronounce your name
- Be interested in the other person as well as interested in getting your agenda out there
- If you agree to follow up, do whatever you need to do to remember short of writing it on your hand. Put it in your phone, write it on a piece of paper, etc.
- If people say they are willing to help, follow up. They mean it!