Networking involves utilizing friends, relatives and acquaintances to learn about employment opportunities. Making acquaintance with people who can give you information about your career field and who to talk to within that field is a big part of the process. Moreover, networking is one of the most effective job search techniques that you can use. Many positions are never advertised, and networking is the best way to learn about these opportunities. Make it your business to know as many people as possible. Regardless of the stage of your career, the process of building a large number of contacts is invaluable when changing employment.

What is Networking?

Step 1: Make a Plan

A. Start by understanding why you are wanting to network. What are your goals of networking: Are you exploring career interests? Wanting to validate career interests by speaking to people currently doing the job? Do you know what you want to do but aren’t sure where and want to learn more about specific companies? Are you wanting interviewing insights?

B. Once you have figured out what your goals are, now you can start brainstorming who the people are that would be great to reach out to and connect with them. Start with making a list of who you already know friends, neighbors, professors, contacts from previous/current jobs and internships, connections from organizations, people you’ve met at UTD events, etc.

C. Decide what approach you will take: reaching out to people via LinkedIn or email, attending in-person or virtual networking events, on-campus employee meet and greets and information sessions (found on Handshake).

D. Update your resume and LinkedIn Portfolio. Before you begin connecting make sure your resume is up to speed so you can have it available to handout as needed as well as making sure your LinkedIn profile is complete and up to date (and with a picture). See the resume and LinkedIn guides to assist and also make an appointment with your career consultant to review both your resume and LinkedIn profile for feedback. You want your first impression to be a great one!
Step 2: Find Contacts

LinkedIn

This platform is a great place to locate professionals for networking. You can search by company, job title and filter for UTD Alumni, which is a wonderful place to start because you already have something in common.

Events

Attend networking events such as on-campus and virtual employer meet and greets (found on Handshake), networking events hosted by student organizations related to your career. For Example: Animation Guild, IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers), FLA (Financial Leadership Association), ASA (Actuarial Student Association), AMSA (American Medical Student Association). Check your school’s website for an extensive list.

Reach Out

Reach out to your faculty via office hours or email. Most faculty are well connected within their industry and are a great resource for connections. Be prepared to provide them with your resume and specifics as to what type of connections/job titles/company affiliations you are looking for so they can best assist you.

Collect

Collect business cards and/or names and contact information from the individuals you meet so you can add them to your contact list and connect with them on LinkedIn. It is also a great idea to follow up afterwards with email or LinkedIn message simply stating it was a pleasure to meet them and thanking them for the connection. You can also add something you learned from your interaction with them to make it more personal.
Step 3: Begin Sending Out Emails for an Informational Interview

• What Is an Informational Interview?

An informational interview is one of the best ways to obtain information about an occupation. Ideally, it is a 30- to 60-minute meeting at the workplace or via phone of an individual whose job you are interested in learning about. But be open to shorter amount of time, depending on the person’s availability. During this meeting, you have the opportunity to ask questions about work tasks, work environment, the person’s background, and how they obtained their position.

• Finding a Person to Interview

Ask family members, friends, neighbors, professors, employers, and anyone else if they know anyone working in a specific industry or at a specific organization. LinkedIn is an amazing resource to locate candidates to interview. Search by company and also by profession/job title. You can further sort by UTD Alumni – which is a great place to start!

• Asking for the Interview

It is best practice to plan in advance what you are going to say to the professional you wish to interview. It is imperative to include that you are only seeking information about the career field and not asking for a job interview.

For example:

Hello Mr. Thomas, My name is Temoc, I am a junior at UT Dallas studying ______, I see you are a successful ______ at _____company. I would really appreciate hearing about your career journey and what it’s like day-to-day in this role. Would you have time for 30 minute call or meeting to discuss what it’s been like working in this industry?

Of course, if you have a mutual acquaintance or someone that referred you to this person, you would also mention this in the initial outreach.
How to Conduct a Successful Interview

- Write out questions and don’t be afraid to refer to them. Ask open ended questions to stimulate discussion. (Not questions that can easily be answered with a yes or no) Think genuinely about what you want to know.

- If on site, ask for a tour of the building and examples of the person’s work. Take note of the work environment, ways people communicate, the dress, etc.

- Ask focused questions for conversation

- Start the interview centered on the person you’re interviewing and their career path.

- Take notes.

- If you have a resume, take it with you/send to them prior. You can ask for advice on how to improve your resume and what you need to

- Be yourself and approach the interview as a conversation
• **After the interview**

Remember to send or email a thank-you note. Take some time to think about what you learned. Work environments and jobs differ tremendously from one place to another. Continue to seek out people in the field to meet with to expand on what you have gained from this experience.

### Potential Interview Questions

#### About the Person
- What is your educational background?
- How did you get started in this field?
- How did you get to where you are today?
- What jobs did you have previous to this?
- What best prepared you for this job? Internships? Part-time jobs? Projects?

#### About the Job
- What do you do during a typical workday?
- What are the biggest challenges in the role?
- What do you like most about your work?
- Tell me about your experience working at your company.
- What skills or abilities do you find are most important in your work?

#### About the Career Field
- What are the basic skills and experiences needed for jobs in the field?
- What is the typical work environment like for a person in this career area? What is a typical day like?
- How long does it usually take to move from one step to the next in this career path?

#### About your Career Planning and Job
- Would you recommend any specific courses or activities to help prepare me for this field?
- Are there any resources you recommend I review or organizations I could join to
- Do you have any other advice or suggestions?
Step 4: Maintain your Connections

Networking is an ongoing process and rarely a one and done conversations. Keep a spreadsheet to keep up with your connections and interactions. Always follow up after your interactions. Set up calendar reminders and alerts to help remind you.

Here’s an example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Basic info</th>
<th>Date of last contact</th>
<th>How you’re connected</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary Jones</td>
<td>Works for Littlejohn, Walker; Editor; B.A. English Tufts; likes action movies</td>
<td>11/12/2014</td>
<td>Went to same college</td>
<td>Emailed 9/16/2014 - she responded next day. Met for lunch 10/07/2014 - she offered to introduce me to Peter Smith from BJK. Sent email 11/12/2014 telling her about mtg w/ Peter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Smith</td>
<td>Works for BJK; Sr. Mgr; UCLA MBA; has a dog; drinks lattes</td>
<td>11/11/2014</td>
<td>Knows Mary Jones</td>
<td>Met Peter at The Green Café 11/11/2014. He suggested I send my resume so he could show it around at BJK. Resume and cover sent same day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Google Images