

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

# NETWORKING 101



ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION


# INTRODUCTION

Networking: the big, scary career buzzword that is everywhere. What is it? And how can you master the art of it to advance your career?

Follow this guide to learn (or refresh you on) the do's and don'ts of networking, as well as tools and techniques to ensure your success both in-person and online.

## WHY IS NETWORKING SO IMPORTANT?

- 1. Provides access to opportunities:** Making valuable connections within your current or desired field can help you gain access to opportunities for collaboration or advancement.
- 2. Helps you build a positive reputation:** Growing your network is a powerful way to build a positive reputation in your industry and increase your visibility, which grows with you as you move throughout your career.
- 3. Enhances confidence:** Knowing how to network and build connections can help enhance your confidence in your job. In a survey conducted by PeopleGrove, 75% of people say that networking with alums made them more confident in their ability to be successful in the job market.
- 4. Can land you a job:** 85% of positions are filled with personal or professional connections making networking more important than ever.



When your company is hiring, what's the first thing you do? You think of anyone YOU know who might be a good fit. Make sure you're the person at the top of everyone's list.

## DON'TS OF NETWORKING:



### **Don't just see what they can do for you:**

Networking is a two-way street. Brainstorm skills, connections or access you have that someone you're networking with might need.

### **Don't expect everything to go perfectly:**

There may be some awkwardness or short conversations. That's okay! Not every connection is going to go well.

### **Don't talk more than you listen:**

More genuine relationships come out of two-way conversations. Come ready with questions and network with the intention to learn.

### **Don't ask for a job:**

It's typically inappropriate to ask for a job or internship right away. Instead, focus on getting to know the person and follow up about job postings at a more appropriate time. Naturally weave in information about your work ethic and accomplishments so the person you're talking to thinks of you for a job without you mentioning it.

## DO'S OF NETWORKING:



### **Do practice:**

Like anything else, practice makes progress! The more events you attend and the more you practice networking, the larger your networks will become and the easier it will get.

### **Do keep your energy up and stay positive:**

It's important while networking, especially in person, that you stay mindful about your energy levels. Try to remain positive and maintain a growth mindset while being open (both mentally and with your body language).

### **Do go prepared with questions and a plan:**

Before you attend your event or send a networking message, prepare your questions to ask people. Come up with some topics you're interested in learning more about, or ways to learn more about a person's company or organization. If there is a list of who is attending the event, do some research on who you may be interested in chatting with.

### **Do have a post-event plan:**

The follow-up is as important as the event itself. Get business cards from those you connected with or find them on LinkedIn to follow up and contact them later.

# WAYS TO NETWORK ONLINE

According to The New York Times, nearly 40% of the workforce in the United States is either partially or fully remote. Take the time to network online, as it can introduce you to people without geographical barriers.

# 1

## **Join Terrapins Connect**

Terrapins Connect is the University of Maryland's exclusive alumni mentorship and networking platform, with over 17,000 student and alumni users who are eager to connect with fellow Terps. Join a group that fits your needs or make connections based on industry—there are dozens of ways to capitalize on your Terp network.

# 2


## **LinkedIn**

If you attend an event, connect with people you meet on LinkedIn. Building your connections on LinkedIn is a great way to stay in touch, share successes and learn about industry news. 77% of recruiters use LinkedIn to find potential candidates. Having relevant connections on LinkedIn can land you a job.

# 3

## **Email or message to request informational interviews**

If you are interested in learning more about a colleague's or family member's career, then connect with them! Bonus: They may be able to introduce you to others.



Networking can be easier when you have a commonality with the person you're networking with. Being a Terp immediately breaks the ice and builds an instant connection.

## SAMPLE EMAIL FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW:

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

*I received your information from Lisa McKeldin as an expert in software engineering. I'd love to hear more from you about your success at Google.*

*Would you be open to a 30-minute phone call or meeting? I'm currently launching my own career and would greatly benefit from connecting with people like you and learning about navigating the tech space as a woman and new software engineer.*

*Hope to connect soon,  
Testudo*

# ORGANIZING YOURSELF

You have a larger network than you realize! Use a table like the one below to explore online connections or to prepare for an in-person or virtual event.



## EXAMPLE CONNECTIONS CHART:

A first-degree connection is someone you know personally. For example, your uncle or a professor you have a relationship with.

A second-degree connection is someone who knows a connection you have. While you may not know them personally, you have a mutual connection. Example: your uncle's friend or a professor's co-author.

Goal	First-degree connections who may be able to support me in this	Second-degree Connections who may be able to support me in this	Questions to ask them
<b>Learn more about the UI/UX design field</b>	Stacey Williams	Attendee at the conference who works at Google	<i>What skills are most often used in a UX/UI entry-level position?</i>
<b>How can I become a leader in my space?</b>	Coworker or supervisor	X	<i>How did you arrive at your position?</i>
	Professor Bates	X	<i>What's one thing you wish you knew earlier in your career?</i>



# INTROVERTED AND SHY?

## NETWORKING CAN BECOME EASIER WITH THE FOLLOWING TIPS, GATHERED FROM INTROVERTS THEMSELVES:

### **Connect with others one on one**

If group settings aren't your thing, focus on one-to-one connections that provide space for deeper conversations.

### **Find a networking partner**

Enlist a friend to attend networking events with you, where you can take turns introducing each other. There's power in numbers, and you may be more confident with a wingman.

### **Use social media to connect with people before and after the event**

If guest lists are shared ahead of time, get creative with how you can connect with people, breaking the ice before you meet face to face.

### **Be aware of your nonverbal communication**

What we say is only 7% of what people notice when talking to us, making it important to be aware of how we are standing, what we are wearing and how we engage with others.

### **Know your energy levels and be intentional**

It's okay if you can only network for a certain amount of time—know yourself and listen to your body. When it comes to in-person events, take a break or leave an event early if you need to.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- <https://terrapinsconnect.umd.edu/hub/umd/resources/mentoring-networking-tips>
- [Terrapinsconnect.umd.edu](https://terrapinsconnect.umd.edu)
- <https://alumni.umd.edu/career-resources>

