

Networking

...tapping into the hidden job market

A lot of job opportunities are never advertised; they are filled through word-of-mouth or networking -- known as the "hidden jobmarket." Networking involves building authentic relationships and developing professional contacts -- people you meet through various community, social, business and educational functions -- and building on their knowledge in your career exploration and job search.

Sound SCARY? Well really IT'S NOT!

Networking is as simple as having a conversation.

- Start with your family, classmates, friends, and neighbours.
- Once you are comfortable, take the time to network with professors, bosses and colleagues
- Work towards networking with community members in your field, alumni and attend career events.

People in your network may be able to give you job leads, offer you advice and information, and introduce you to others so that you can expand your network. Networking allows you to build a community around you to leverage your strengths and connections to get further than you could have gotten alone!

Networking Anecdote

"I was volunteering with a local organization and they let me know about a job opening. I was the successful candidate for the job and one reason was because they knew me and my work."

Networking Tips

- The earlier the better! Developing a helpful network can take time. Making connections is like planting seeds that may later become opportunities.
- Know your goals. Who are you trying to meet? What are you hoping to discover?
- Prepare to contribute. When meeting a contact, do your research beforehand! Bring conversation topics and questions to ask.
- Your primary goal should be meeting someone, not getting something. It's important to work hard on building an authentic professional relationship. This includes staying in touch regularly and making the relationship mutually beneficial. This means that you aren't only contacting someone when you want something, rather you are finding ways to help them.
- Develop and update your LinkedIn profile. The majority of people will look you up online before agreeing to meet with you.

Ways to Grow Your Network

- Join clubs, groups and/or professional associations
- Attend Career Fairs
- Volunteer
- Connect and reach out to other professionals on LinkedIn, Research Gate and connect directly with Trent Alumni on Ten Thousand Coffees
- Attend Life After Trent Events
- Conduct Informational Interviews

For more information visit: trentu.ca/careerspace
Or drop by the Student Centre, room 3.10.

Informational Interviews

Informational interviews provide you with an opportunity to connect with professionals in your desired sector and learn about the industry, career paths and their day-to-day duties. These interviews aren't about seeking a job, they are about gaining knowledge and growing your network!

A Step-by-Step Guide to Increasing or Creating Your Network

1. Do Your Research

First, it is important to determine the type of career/sector you are interested in learning more about. Research this career online and identify companies within this sector. Look for people that might have the information you're seeking by asking your network (family, friends, faculty), or searching on LinkedIn. *Quick Tip: Visit [Trent University Alumni Tab](#) to see if any Trent Graduates are in roles that interest you!*

2. Connect

Identify the individual(s) you are interested in speaking with and try and gather information about their professional career. Start a document to keep this information organized and update it after you meet with the person. Briefly introduce yourself, explain your reason for wanting to connect and invite them for a virtual or in-person coffee chat.

Hello ____, my name is _____. I was recently speaking with ____ and they recommended you'd be a great person to connect with to learn more about careers in _____.

I'm currently studying _____ at Trent University. *Provide a brief overview of your interests, experiences and goals that are relevant.*

I'm interested in hearing about your experiences within the field and any insight you have developed through your experience. *Insert something specific about what you find interesting about their experience.*

I'm wondering if you might be able to find time to have a 20-minute conversation virtually or in person over the next 2-3 weeks. If you are open to that, please provide a few times that work best for you. Thank you for your time, I look forward to the possibility of hearing from you.

3. Prepare

Research the organization the person works for in more detail and prepare some meaningful questions. Be prepared with 8-10 questions and be ready to listen and take notes.

4. Questions to Ask

- What is your job like? What does a typical day look like?
- What do you find is most interesting or exciting about your work? What are some challenges?
- How did you get started in this sector? How did you get into your current role?
- Can you suggest some ways a student could obtain the necessary experience to secure an entry-level position in this sector?
- What advice do you wish you received when you started?
- Why did you decide to work for this company? What do you like most about this company?
- Which websites, professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?
- Are there other people in the field/company you would recommend I speak with?

5. Final Steps

Thank the person for their time and their insight. Always send a thank you email highlighting something specific from the conversation that really stuck with you. Maintain the relationship by sharing information, asking questions and advice and offering your assistance.