Networking & Informational Interviews

The US Department of Labor reports that approximately 80% of open positions are never publicly advertised by employers. That means at least 80% of available positions are filled through some form of networking! The good news is you already have a network: your family, your friends, online networks...you just have to learn how to develop and grow it.

1. **Who Do You Start With?**
   - **Family and Friends**: Ask the people you already know if they can connect you with someone in an industry/profession/organization you are interested in.
   - **DePauw Alumni**: You can connect with alumni after completing the LEAP Networking workshop and gaining access to DePauw Connect in TigerTracks. You can also find them on LinkedIn!
   - **Professors and Academic Advisors**: DePauw faculty are connected all over the world in many industries.
   - **Hubbard Center Staff**: They have worked with a lot of students who are now alumni.
   - **Classmates**: Not only can your classmates help connect you now, but someday, they will be people you know in organizations all over the world.

2. **Where Do You Network?**
   - **Campus events** hosted by the Hubbard Center and other campus organizations
   - **Company information sessions** and **career fairs**, professional organizations or conferences in your area of interest
   - **Informational Interviews**
   - LinkedIn, FaceBook, Twitter, and other forms of **social media**
   - In line at Starbucks, at Kroger, Circle Center Mall … **everywhere you go!**

3. **How Do You Make Contact?**
   You will meet people online and in person when you network. You will be more effective networking if you make a strong introduction by developing a **30-second “elevator pitch.”** Your elevator pitch should answer the following questions for the person you are approaching:
   - **Who are you?** Introduce yourself, sharing your school and major.
   - **What do you have in common?** Are they a DePauw alum? Do you have a common acquaintance? Are you both members of the same LinkedIn group/professional organization/community organization/etc.?
   - **What is your value proposition or personal brand?** What sets you apart from others? Discuss off-campus studies, civic engagement, leadership positions, research, internships or volunteer experience.
   - **How can they help you?** Are you looking for more insight into a career field? Do you want to learn more about the company they work for? Do you want to schedule an informational interview? Help them help you by being clear about why you are reaching out.
What is an Informational Interview?

The informational interview is a 10 – 30 minute conversation you have by phone or in person with someone who is working in, or is connected to an industry, profession or experience you are interested in. During this conversation you ask questions that will help you:

- Decide if the industry/career/experience is a good fit for your values, interests, skills and personality
- Understand an organization’s culture
- Consider what major and off-campus experiences will help prepare you for a particular career
- Connect with other professionals who can help you learn more
- Gain feedback on your resume and job search strategy

How Do You Request an Informational Interview?

You can send an email or call the person you would like to talk to. You will introduce yourself, explain how you found their contact information, express interest in their career field, and ask for a 30-minute meeting.

The Process

- Prepare: Research the career/company/industry using websites, Google, Glassdoor.com, LinkedIn, onetonline.org, etc. Prepare a list of questions for the interview.
- During the Interview: Dress appropriately, arrive at least 15 minutes early, listen carefully to the interviewee and observe the environment. Take lots of notes, and be sure that you do not go over the agreed-upon length of time unless the interviewee is happy to do so.
- After the Interview: Send a thank you note via mail or email. Track your communication in a system that works for you (spreadsheets are common).

Dear Ms. Smith,

My name is Eva Hauser. I am an English major at DePauw University, and I am very interested in pursuing a career in human resources. I found your name in the DePauw Alumni Group on LinkedIn. Would you be able to meet with me for 30 minutes to discuss your work?

Thank you very much for considering my request.

- Eva

Sample’s.

Occupational requirements and experience:
- How did you get started in this field? Is that typical of most people?
- Describe a typical week. Would these duties be the same for anyone with your job title?
- What skills and personal qualities are most important for success in this job?

Occupational environment:
- How would you describe the professional climate in your office? In your industry?
- How much evening, weekend or overtime work is required? What about traveling?

Benefits and challenges:
- What are the greatest rewards of your work?
- What are the greatest frustrations?
- How do you deal with them?
- On what basis are professionals in your field evaluated?
- How is success measured?

Occupational outlook:
- What are the opportunities for advancement in this field? Could you describe a typical promotion path?
- What are some growth areas in this field and what impact is that likely to have on job opportunities?

Advice:
- What kinds of education or specialized training would best prepare me to do this kind of work?
- What classes can I take or projects can I complete that will also be helpful?
- Are there any professional organizations that would help me to build my network in this field?
- Where do people in this field typically look for internship and job opportunities?
- Can you recommend other people for me to talk to?
- Who makes the decision to hire someone for this kind of job?

To make an appointment with a Hubbard Center adviser, call 765.658.4622 or email opportunities@depauw.edu. Additional information is available online at http://www.depauw.edu/hubbardguides.