



Networking

Networking can help you to clarify and define your interests in various career fields as well as connect you to internship and full-time opportunities. One effective way to begin networking is through information interviews.

What is Networking?

- Contacting people you know (and don't know) in order to find out about industries, organizations, jobs, hiring trends and emerging fields.
- Developing a professional connection that you initiate, which provides value to both parties.
- Demonstrating your appreciation for the time others spend with you to help you attain your professional goals.
- Remember, you may also be able to provide valuable information to your networking contact, so make sure you don't focus only on yourself.
- Asking if he/she knows anyone else that might be a helpful contact.

How do I Network?

- Research companies and positions that hold your interest. Use trade journals, industry publications, and web sites to pinpoint your interests in order to find the right contacts.
- Seek out your contacts by making a list of everyone you know that might have knowledge about your professional interests, including relatives, friends, alumni, professors, administrators and parents of friends.
- Register on the Trojan Network to identify alumni contacts.
- Decide what you are going to say and put together a list of important questions.
- Conduct the Information Interview. Begin by explaining how you found them, your current student status (graduating senior, junior, etc.) and your primary reason for networking (to learn about hiring trends, organizational culture, internship opportunities, etc.).
- Ask for additional contacts. Always ask your networking contact if he/she can recommend someone else for you to talk to in the field.
- Always send a thank you note or e-mail after your networking exchange—whether it was in-person or over the phone.
- Create a Rolodex or database to keep track of all your contacts. Maintaining a good filing system will help keep you organized.

What is an Information Interview?

- Contacting someone who is in a career field or position that interests you for the purpose of gathering detailed information.
- You may conduct an information interview over the phone, in-person or through e-mail.
- Creating a set of questions that will help you find out if the requirements of a field or organization are a match with your talents, skills and workplace environment expectations.

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Questions You May Want to Ask

- How would you describe the environment you work in?
- How would you describe a typical day at work, i.e. your routine or duties you perform on a regular basis?
- What portion of your job involves interacting with others, including co-workers and/or the public?
- What hours do you work? Is there any flexibility?
- What college courses have been most helpful to you in your job?
- What types of special skills are necessary to perform your job?
- Is special certification, training, licensing, or an advanced degree required for your job?
- What personal qualities do you see as important for success in this occupation?
- What do you like most about your job?
- What are the major personal rewards of your job? Any frustrations?
- How did you get interested in this area of work?
- What was your undergraduate major field of study?
- Did you have any practical experience or training, other than college?
- How did you get your current job?

How do I Get Contacts Through the Trojan Network?

Step One: First go to <http://careers.usc.edu> and click on Trojan Network. Then, simply click on "Students: Search for Alumni". You then use your current USC e-mail username and password to login.

Step Two: Once you enter the database, you will be able to search for contacts by profession, organization name, geographical location, job title, year of graduation, etc.

Step Three: Remember, the contacts are there because they have volunteered to provide you with career information. Please review the question examples on this sheet to help you prepare for a successful networking exchange.