Networking Guide

What is networking?
- Building professional alliances and getting the word out about your career interests.
- Seeking out appropriate individuals in your field(s) of interest and gaining insight, info and contacts.
- NOT contacting everyone you know and asking for a job when you need one.
- A two-way street. You must not only accept info and guidance from others, but also offer it in return!

Why should I network?
Only 20-30% of job opportunities are publicly advertised, leaving up to 80% of jobs that are filled via word of mouth. Networking helps you uncover those jobs.

How do I network?
- Join on-campus clubs and organizations or volunteer.
- People you know: Talk w/classmates, neighbors...
- People you don’t know: Strike up conversations in waiting rooms, lines, airports, etc.
- The Internet: Post messages to mailing lists, newsgroups, or discussion groups. Join LinkedIn.

Where do I start?
- Make a list of all the people you know. Sort out those who have a connection to your interests.
- Ask parents, relatives & friends for referrals.
- Talk to your professors & advisor(s).
- Seek out Emmanuel Alumni.
- Attend parties and professional association meetings.
- Contact former managers and co-workers.
- Research companies and organizations of interest online.

Making Contact:
FACT: People generally like helping other people!
Keep this important fact in mind as you begin. You may want to ease into networking by contacting the person(s) you are most comfortable with first. Unless you know the person well, start off with a letter or e-mail.

This letter should include the following information:
- How you were referred to this person
- The reason you are writing
- A brief description of yourself and your particular interest in their field
- A date you will follow up on

Ask to schedule an informational interview. If that’s not possible, you can still get valuable information by asking for advice, information on companies, career paths, other contacts, etc. If you are calling a new contact, you should follow the same outline described above.

What is a 30-second Commercial?
A short, succinct personal summary is a key ingredient for successful networking. It is the 1st impression people get of you, so be engaging, informative, and BRIEF! Your summary should outline who you are, what you have done, what you hope to do, and what you hope to gain from the person you are speaking to.
Sample 30-second Commercial:
“Hello, my name is Thomas Jefferson. My neighbor, Benjamin Franklin, suggested I contact you about my interest in politics and government. **Is this a good time to talk?** … I will be graduating with a Political Science degree from Emmanuel College this May, and I’m very interested in state and national government. My coursework has focused on theory, and this spring I did an internship with the Massachusetts State House. I would welcome your advice and appreciate if you could refer me to other individuals in government sector who I might speak with.”…
“May I use your name when contacting them?”

How do I network in person or at a meeting?
Eventually, it will be time to take your networking skills on the road! You will find yourself in many situations where you need to engage individuals in conversation. Before you jump in headfirst, though, there are several steps you should take to capitalize on every opportunity:

- **Research** the organization and its members; know whom you will be networking with!
- **Devise a strategy** and set goals (“Meet 3-5 people who are in your chosen industry”). If there is a member directory available at the meeting, use it to pick and choose whom you will speak with.
- **Arrive early**; give yourself time to connect with people.
- Solo attendees waiting for their colleagues to arrive may be more willing to chat with you.
- **Wear a nametag**! Place your nametag on the right side of your upper chest for the greatest visibility.
- **Always make eye contact**, give a firm (but not too firm!) handshake, and avoid negative body language (slouching, arms folded in front of you, etc.).
- **Ask for business cards**, no matter how brief your interaction.

**SIMPLE CONVERSATION STARTERS**
- “This looks like an interesting agenda…” or “Have you heard any of these speakers before?”
- “This is my first time coming to this meeting. Have you been before?”
- “I’m looking to get more involved in this organization; which committee would you suggest joining?”
- “How did you get involved in this field?”
- “I can’t believe how long it took to get here- I must have hit every red light!”

The key is to smile and be pleasant and self-assured. Also be sure to quickly shift the conversation to career interests (otherwise you may end up talking about traffic all night!)

**GRACEFUL CONVERSATION CLOSERS:**
- “It’s been great speaking with you. Since this is my first time here, I promised myself I’d try to meet a few different people. Can I get your card? Maybe we could talk more in the future.”
- “I want to try a talk with one of the speakers before she leaves. It’s been great speaking with you; do you have a business card? I’d love to keep in touch.”
- “I’d like to get more involved with this organization, so I’m going to introduce myself to the membership chair. Can I get your business card so we can continue our discussion at some point?”

**DON’T:**
- Excuse yourself to go to the bathroom; the person you’re speaking with may follow!
- Excuse yourself to get a drink or snack; you might be asked to bring something back!

What do I do next?
**Follow-up is a critical step in networking.** Here are some main follow-up steps:
- Follow up your initial meeting with a brief letter or email to thank each new person you met (make sure you reference when and where you met) and to set up a future meeting.
- Add the new contacts to your database of professional contacts.
- Follow up with your contacts regularly (depending on the level of your job search activity); let them know what is new with you, and pass on any information you hear of that you think they may be interested in.