

NETWORKING: Make a connection and start a conversation

Did you know that an estimated 85% of all jobs are never advertised or posted? They are filled through connections, referrals and recommendations.

What is networking?

Networking is about communicating for the purpose of sharing information to help with your career exploration and job search. It is **not** asking someone if they can hire you. Networking is an effective way to learn about career options and gather advice for achieving your goals.

Whether you realize it or not, you already have a network – your friends and family, faculty, people you know in your field placement, your volunteer or part-time work and everyone in your co-curricular activities. Simply put, it is the process of building your relationships.

Why is networking important to your career?

Networking provides opportunities to:

- Connect with potential employers and decision makers in organizations and companies
- Showcase your skills, interests and expertise
- Explore your career options and clarify your goals
- Understand what employers are looking for
- Learn about career opportunities that are not publicly advertised

What does Networking look like?

Most people picture a large scale event when they think of networking. It can take place at an event; but networking is so much more than a one-time occasion. If you start with the premise that it's about making a connection, then networking looks different depending on **why you need to connect**. Networking often looks like this:



GUIDES: are best to network for **job seekers**. These are often friends or acquaintances who have recent experience and can give **practical advice**. They are often two steps ahead of you and can offer **Human Resource contacts**.

ADVISORS/MENTORS: are best for **exploring your career**. They have experience and can give **professional advice**. You can **find Advisors through your alumni groups** or professional associations. Advisors have figured out how to succeed in their chosen career so they can advise you on how it works. They can give you an overview of their industry, provide career direction and make introductions for you.

SUPPORTERS: are best for providing **supportive advice**. They offer insight for **special circumstances** e.g. newcomers to Canada. Supporters have already been where you are right now. They understand your challenges and can anticipate some of your questions. Supporters can be **found through your LinkedIn connections**, your community groups or you can ask people you trust for introductions.

CONNECTORS: offer **general advice**. They often have no experience that is relevant to yours but can **offer surprising contacts** that you would not have thought possible e.g. someone you met at the gym is the accountant for the law firm you want to work as a paralegal. **Connectors can be found by chance** at a coffee shop, grocery store or anywhere. Source: www.mangoconnects.com

DC COFFEE CONVERSATIONS: Increase your knowledge network before you graduate!

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You can schedule and set up a coffee chat in-person or online.

Sign up today at durhamcollege.tenthousandcoffees.com/signup

EVENTS: Sometimes networking looks like an event. Events, like job fairs, don't have to be intimidating. Come to an event to make a connection by starting a conversation.

How do you start the conversation?

- Be prepared to give a short pitch much like an introduction (30 seconds or less)
- Talk about your plans for the future and the steps you have taken to reach your goal.
- Be curious and listen — employers and mentors are eager to share their experiences and stories. You do not have to and should not do all the talking.
- Good conversations happen when you **engage, explore** and **enjoy** the conversation. So have fun with it!

What is the 30-second pitch all about?

The 30-second pitch, sometimes referred to as an "Elevator Pitch", is a concise message that is delivered in the time it would take to ride up an elevator. The 30 second pitch answers the questions: Who are you? What do you do well? What would you like to do?

The 30-second pitch provides you with the chance to communicate your skills, education and career goals whether you are at a networking event, job fair, conference or a chance meeting — any forum where an opportunity can arise.

Think about the 3 C's when making the connection

It will sound:

- **Concise** – not longer than 30 seconds
- **Clear** – using language that everyone understands
- **Conversational** – capturing your listener's interest making them want to know more about you

How do you create a 30-second pitch?

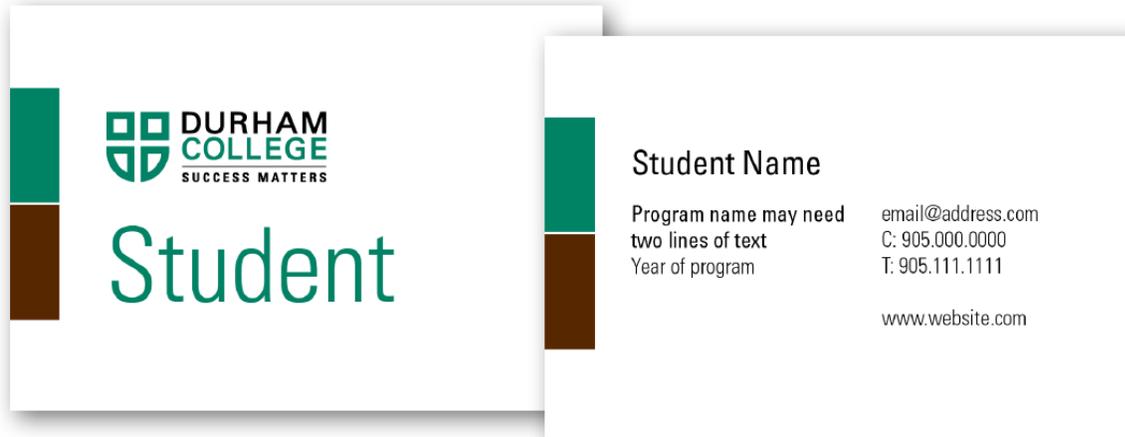
1. Write down key information about yourself
 - Education
 - Experience
 - Interests
 - Training
2. Write a very short story that illustrates what you do best.
3. Read it back. Eliminate anything that is unnecessary.
4. Piece together everything you want to keep.
5. Do a final edit cutting as many unnecessary words as possible.
6. Rehearse – do this in front of the mirror, webcam, or friends — until it comes naturally and feels genuine.

How to pull your 30-second pitch together

Remember you are engaging in a conversation not writing a cover letter, so don't list your areas of study or accomplishments. Let the conversation take you there with an opening that may start like this:

Hi my name is _____. I'm currently studying Advertising and Digital Media Management at Durham College. One of my greatest strengths is persuasive story telling. I've always been interested in social issues. I'm looking to write for publications and websites focused on climate change so that I can create content and campaigns urging others to take action and increase sustainability for future generations.

NETWORKING CARDS



Networking cards are like business cards for people without business cards. They demonstrate where you aspire to be rather than where you are currently. Your card will leave a professional impression and is a great way to get your contact information across to professional and social contacts in a neat, succinct format. At this stage, your networking card will emphasize your education and area of expertise. There are numerous resources for creating and ordering networking business cards.

How to make the most out of a networking event

Prior to the event

- Set a goal for yourself – what do you want to achieve?
- Practice your 30-second pitch
- Bring a pen and paper

At the event

- Check out the registration table
- Pack light so you can move freely through the event – check your coat and bag
- Be confident and smile
- Listen carefully and show interest
- Keep realistic expectations – remember you are not there to get a job on the spot; you are there to make new connections and possibly follow-up with a new contact

After the event

- Follow-up with the contacts you have made to continue the conversation or provide them with the information they asked for at the event

CONTACT US

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