

# Building your Professional Network

connecting to your future by connecting with others



WHITMAN COLLEGE

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Career and Community  
Engagement Center

# Why “networking”?

1

build relationships

2

research options

3

get answers

**"The single greatest 'people skill' is a highly developed and authentic interest in the other person." -- Bob Burg, business author and podcast host**

**"You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people, than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you." -- Dale Carnegie, American writer & lecturer**

**"Success isn't about how much money you make; it's about the difference you make in people's lives." -- Michelle Obama**

# Where to look?

## Personal Network

- ❖ family friends
- ❖ neighbors
- ❖ classmates

## Professional Network

- ❖ past supervisors
- ❖ former co-workers
- ❖ professors

## Whitman Alumni Network

- ❖ 17,000+ strong
- ❖ source of professional support
- ❖ history of connectivity

# Reflection Activity

Consider the following questions:

- 1) Create a list of 3 “dream” organizations that you think you would like to work at some day.
- 2) Consider how you might learn more about and get connected to those organizations? Who in your circle of relationships would you talk to first about your interests?
- 3) What steps would you take to expand that circle of relationships?

# Where to find contacts?

In-person situations to build your network might include:

- **discussing your interests at a large family gathering** or with friends and families in your community
- **asking your former internship, research or summer job supervisor** what steps they took (or what skills they needed) to move into the role their in now
- **striking up a conversation with that chatty person** next to you in the plane seat, coffee shop line, or conference event
- **attending a Whitman student-alumni networking event** like Whitties Helping Whitties

<https://www.whitman.edu/newsroom/archive/2016/whitties-helping-whitties>

# What are the tools?

## LinkedIn Alumni Tool

publicly accessible data

12,000+ strong

alumni and student profiles

good for research

need a profile to start

## Whitman Connect

closed proprietary tool

new platform, growing quickly

alumni and student profiles

alumni advice and mentorship

set-up your profile to connect

<https://blog.linkedin.com/2020/may/june/12/four-tips-to-network-on-linkedin>

# How to reach out?

**Begin with curiosity**

**Keep it positive & professional**

**Follow-up is crucial**

**Give back to the network**

<https://www.youtern.com/thesavvyintern/index.php/2011/03/10/job-search-nightmares-introductory-emails-to-alumni/>



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# Writing activity

Take the next few minutes to read through the article shared on the previous slide, then begin crafting your introductory email to a new connection that you are meeting for the first time.

- 1) How would you introduce yourself? What is the pertinent information from your background that you should include?
- 2) What types of information are you seeking? What questions do you have for this individual to help you learn more about their field, career trajectory or current role?
- 3) How do you want them to respond?
- 4) How will you close your note?



# What to say? (when in person or in the informational interview)

## Warm up

- ❖ How did you get your start in this field?
- ❖ What projects are you working on right now?
- ❖ How is (interesting industry development) impacting your work?

## Achieve your goals

- ❖ Gather information about an organization
- ❖ Gain insight about skills and knowledge relevant to the field
- ❖ Learn more about programs for current students

## Tap into their networks

- ❖ Who else do you think I should be talking to about my interests?
- ❖ Are there other organizations that you suggest I research or connect with?

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/3-steps-to-a-perfect-informational-interview>

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/5-tips-for-nonawkward-informational-interviews>

# Share your “elevator pitch”

The “elevator pitch” is the information you would share with someone on a 40-second ride up an elevator if you wanted to initiate a relationship. It’s an extension of your introduction.

## EXAMPLE:

Hello, My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I’m a \_\_\_\_\_ studying \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ at Whitman College. I’m interested in/curious about a career in \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ field. I have been involved in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ where I developed skills in \_\_\_\_\_. I also interned/worked at \_\_\_\_\_ where I discovered that I really enjoy \_\_\_\_\_. I’d love to learn more about opportunities to build a career in \_\_\_\_\_.

# How to stay connected?

Follow-through is crucial - it's the most important step!

1. Send a Thank you note (24-48 after you talk with them)
2. Send a LinkedIn connection request (around the same time as above)
3. Set a reminder to reconnect (3-4 weeks during recruiting, 6-8 weeks otherwise)
4. Give to the network - share an article, news, trend info or personal update

<https://blogs.whitman.edu/sec/2016/03/28/do-you-thank-you-notes-from-a-professional/>

<http://blogs.whitman.edu/sec/2016/09/28/what-to-do-with-new-alumni-connections/>

# Keeping organized

This type of tool can help you keep on top of the relationships you've begun and those you need to reconnect with:

Name	Company	Source	Outreach Date	Meeting Date	Meeting Notes	Other Notes/Next Steps	Thank you sent
Jessica James	Starbucks	Worked together previously	5/1/2016	5/5/2016	She is on the communications team and can connect me to her manager and/or teammates to learn more. Traveling this summer to Peru, make sure to ask how the trip went.	Follow up by 5/15 if he hasn't made introductions; he's leaving for his trip on 6/2	5/6/2020
Sam Stone	Starbucks	Intro from Jessica James	5/5/2016	5/10/2016	Asked me to send my resume as a follow up and wants to connect me to a internship recruiter.	Send resume ASAP and follow up by 5/20 if he hasn't made introductions yet	5/11/2020

# We're here for you!

Contact Us

<https://www.whitman.edu/after-whitman/career-and-community-engagement-center>

509-527-5183

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Schedule an alumni network appointment at: <https://whitman.joinhandshake.com/>

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