

Experiential Learning: Networking in the Workplace – transcript

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Networking in the workplace

Turn sound on.

Turn closed captioning on.

Career Centre University of Toronto Mississauga.

Navigating the module

Module content: Shown in tab to the left under the heading Module content & Transcripts. Cannot be used for navigation.

Video Transcript: Located to the left under the heading Module content & Transcripts. You will see the complete transcript while the video is playing.

Resources: To download additional documents and an annotated bibliography, go to the resources tab on the top left of your screen under the module title.

Print: Print tab, above on the right to print or save everything that appears on the screen.

Exit: Exit tab, located above to the right of Print Screen tab. You may exit the module at anytime. When you return to the module you may be prompted to resume the module. The resume prompt depends on whether you cleared your browser history. Clearing the browser history will restart the module from the beginning.

Keyboard user: Press the tab key to move to the selection and press the space bar.

Networking at work

Video transcript:

Networking is a word that everyone seems to use when it comes to work or looking for work. It's another skill you need to learn in order to be successful. So what do we mean when we say networking? Think about how you gathered information about specific courses, talking to your profs about grad school and even friends you made in your jobs. Chances are you have been developing those networking skills all along. This module will help you gain an understanding of the role networking plays in the workplace, providing you with tips and strategies for striking the right balance so that you and your workplace benefit.

What you'll get from this module

Learning about networking and the importance of doing it effectively is knowledge that will help you throughout your career. By working through each topic you'll learn about becoming a better networker.

Select the topic by clicking on it or press the tab key to move to it and press the spacebar. At the end of each topic you will be returned to this page to make another selection.

When all the topics are completed, you will be taken to a summary page.

Networking in the workplace module contents

Networking defined: What you are already doing!

Benefits of networking: Why networking is important to your work goals.

Networking strategies: Tips for creating your network.

Balancing responsibilities: Personal network vs workplace goals.

Maintaining a network: Ideas for ensuring you network works.

Networking – What does it mean?

Video transcript:

Networking - what does it mean? It's a conversation. It requires listening and talking. It can happen anywhere. It can range from casual conversations with friends about the best place to eat, to formal networking sessions with employers.

Networking is gathering information. It's building relationships. It's helping others with their questions. It's ongoing, not just something you do when you need help.

Networking and information gathering

Think about how you find out about which course to take. Select the people below that you could talk to.

classmate

teaching assistant

person at an event

co-worker

professor

department advisor

Your choices

Below are the people you identified. Take a look at why they would be helpful.

Classmate – may have already taken the course; could tell you how it went for them.

Teaching Assistant – could clarify the workload of the course or know another student who has taken the course.

Person at an event – might know how the course could strengthen your skills or knowledge for your career.

Co-worker at your on-campus job – may have taken the course or know someone who has.

Professor— can provide overview of course content and expectations.

Department advisor – can help explain program requirements and your course options.

How would you connect with them?

These are all different ways to interact with your network. Which ones are you most likely to do when gathering information about the course? Check the boxes that correspond with the ways you are most comfortable gathering information.

call,

text.

through social media,

at an event,

office hours,

in class.

Summary – what is networking

You may have not thought about it this way before, but networking is asking people for ideas, advice, and information—just like you do when you ask people about a course.

You can do the same things when you are trying to get career advice, find out when new jobs are being created or how to get in on an interesting project at work. You already have the skill to network; you may just not think of it that way.

Now you can transfer that skill into your workplace.

Benefits of networking

There are many reasons to network at work. You learn important information, establish relationships and become a more productive team member, just to name a few.

Let's take a look at some of the benefits you might gain through various networking activities.

Benefits of networking at work

Select an activity and read the how it can benefit you.

Put a check mark in the box under the activities you could do at work.

Find out who does what - you'll know who to go for help, information or advice; find out who could use your support/help.

Connect with co-workers - you'll find out what others are doing, things you might want to get involved in to open up new opportunities for yourself, some that might never be publicly advertised.

Build strong relationships - your supervisor and your colleagues may then include you in conversations and see you as an ally.

Understand the organization's priorities - find out where your department and role fit, so you can be a strong contributor.

Find mentor(s) - mentors can give you specific advice and strategic information.

Overcome your hesitation - having a specific goal for networking can make it more focused and tolerable.

Here are the activities you selected

Who does what - You'll know who to go for help, information or advice; find out who could use your support/help.

Connect with coworkers - You'll find out what others are doing, things you might want to get involved in. This may open up new opportunities for yourself, some that might never be publicly advertised.

Build strong relationships with your supervisor and your colleagues so they include you in conversations and see you as an ally.

Understand Organization's Priorities - You'll find out where your department and role fit, so you can be a strong contributor.

Find a mentor - Mentors can give you specific advice and strategic information.

Overcome your hesitation - having a specific goal for networking can make it more focused and tolerable.

Summary – networking benefits

Great, you now know the benefits of networking activities and have selected at least one you could do.

To get those benefits it is important that you have a networking strategy and a plan for maintaining your workplace network.

Networking strategies

There are all sorts of different strategies you can use when networking. When you're networking in the workplace you may want to be selective about which strategies to use and at which time.

Think about who you are talking to, the time you have for the conversation, how well you know them, and what their goals are when choosing your strategies in that situation.

You've got to have a strategy!

A lot has been written about how you can network. Below are some ideas you could implement in your job. Consider one idea from each list.

First list

- meet one new person each week;
- establish commonalities,
- share your stories,
- be a great listener,
- be authentic,
- just say hello.

Second list

- create a list of contacts;
- consider how the contact fits your career strategy;
- seek people outside your circle;
- ask your network if they know anyone;
- reach out via social media;
- ask your boss for advice on who to network with.

Third list

- communicate your value clearly;
- stay away from controversial topics;

- be positive, even when the topic is challenging;
- when and where appropriate, volunteer on initiatives;
- don't be too familiar, until you know the person better.

Reflect on the networking strategy ideas

Now that you have reviewed the lists, write a brief statement about the three strategies you see yourself using.

(e-module instructions) Use Previous button to review suggested strategies.
(Transcript) review lists of strategies.

Summary – networking strategies

Networking can be hard. Even when you know the strategy you want use, finding the words may be a challenge. The Career Centre has a conversation flow worksheet to assist you in planning your conversation. In addition, you can contact your Career Centre for help.

Download a Networking conversation worksheet.

(e-module instructions: The Networking conversation worksheet is also available anytime from the Resources tab. Resources tab is located in the upper left under the module title.)

Transcript instructions: Networking conversation worksheet is included at the end of this document.

Balancing responsibilities

Networking is a great tool and has many benefits for your work in the company. Keeping that in mind, employers have told us that it is important to balance networking with your work responsibilities.

Maintaining a balance is important

Take a look at the pros and cons of networking in the workplace.

Pros for networking at work: you can advance the department's priorities when it is done as a part of your actual role.

Cons for networking at work: making and maintaining connections can be seen as a time thief.

Pros for networking at work: you understand why you are asked to do certain things and ensure you are working on the priorities that can help you do a better job.

Cons for networking at work: you learn too much about office politics and it changes your view on the organization.

Pros for networking at work: people will follow up if they need your help in the future, if you are sincere.

Cons for networking at work: people may see you as a gossip.

Reflection

Now that you have reviewed the pros and cons, explain why it is important to balance networking with your work responsibilities.

Importance of maintaining your network

You put in the work to developing your network. You want to maintain this network as it can help throughout career. You never know who can help you and how you can help them.

Not every contact develops into a strong relationship, people come in and out of your network. But it's important to pay attention to those contacts.

Maintaining networking relationships allows you to keep your knowledge current, have people who will be your sounding board and can be your informal cheering section.

Actions you can take to maintain your network

- Share information e.g. articles as appropriate, but don't overwhelm.
- Introduce people to each other if you think they might appreciate the contact.

- Have occasional coffee meetings during breaks or lunch times.
- Offer to share your expertise once you are established.
- Connect back with questions as appropriate; people like to be seen as adding value.
- Use social media appropriately, e.g. LinkedIn congratulations.

What actions would you do?

Consider the actions presented for ways to maintain your network. In the box below, note two actions you could take.

Tips for maintaining your network

- when checking in, give them space i.e. “no need to respond, know you are busy”.
- when asking a favour, don’t forget to say please.
- keep a record of your contacts and when you contacted them, so you don’t overwhelm.
- don’t only contact them when you want help.
- send thank yous for any assistance or insight given by the other person, or congratulatory notes as appropriate.

Summary

Final thoughts about networking in the workplace

Remember that networking is not a one time event. It takes time to build strong networking skills and a strong network. The Career Centre is here to help you do this. The Career Centre offers learn to network workshops and appointments to meet with an employment strategist to develop your own plan.

Interested in reading more about networking in the workplace?

Download the annotated bibliography for this module. (Included at the end of this document)

Your key points to remember

The strategies you could see yourself using are

This is what you said about why it is important to balance your networking with your work responsibility.

You noted these strategies for maintaining your network.

You have now completed the Networking in the workplace module.

If you are interested, check out the other modules available in this Experiential Learning series.

- Working in Teams
- Working Effectively with your Supervisor
- Disabilities and the Workplace
- ✓ Networking in the Workplace
- Diversity and Inclusion

Resources for Networking in the Workplace

Need more information and ideas about networking at work? The following are resources the Career Centre looked at to support the information presented in this module.

7 Ways To Maintain Your Professional Network Without Annoying Your Contacts

Rachel Grumman Bender

<https://www.fastcompany.com/3061118/7-ways-to-maintain-your-professional-network-without-annoying-your-contacts>

How to Network With the People You Already See Every Day

Martha C. White

Highlights: Ideas about how to go from uncomfortable elevator silences to being that person who seems to know everybody in the building.

<http://time.com/money/4165116/networking-with-colleagues/>

Networking at Work: How to Accelerate Your Professional Growth and Build Your Career

Eliza Shanley, founder and managing partner of Women@Work Network,

Highlights: 7 steps for developing your career strategy

<https://www.ellevatenetwork.com/articles/6236-networking-at-work-how-to-accelerate-your-professional-growth-and-build-your-career>

Networking at Work is Important for New Hires

John Rossheim | Monster Senior Contributing Writer

Highlights the whys, whoms and how to network

<http://mediabuzz.monster.com/benefits/articles/923-networking-at-work-is-important-for-new-hires>

Tap into the Power of Networking at Work: 5 Ways to Connect with the Culture

Erin Urban, Founder, Uppsolutions

Highlights: Common myths and Networking at work for Introverts and Extroverts



<https://besomebody.com/advice/2017/12/13/tap-power-networking-work-5-ways-connect-culture/>

Networking conversation worksheet

Networking is connecting with others to have conversations and discover what you have in common. To do this we exchange information about ourselves, ask questions and listen attentively for the clues that tell us about another person and what we may have in common. If you establish enough credibility and build rapport, there may be an opportunity to talk again and/or gain entry into their network (who do they know, would they offer an introduction between you and friend or colleague?) The key is to impart enough information about yourself so that they can determine if they want to continue the conversation with you at a later point and/or decide if there is anyone they know who might be a good connection for you.

Below is a worksheet you could use as a guide for a networking conversation.

Conversation flow	Example	Write your idea
<p>Introduction & Ice breakers – Introduce yourself and then offer a comment or question to begin the conversation (this can be specific to something that was said earlier or can be a simple ice-breaker question).</p> <p>! Body language is important, so remember to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smile • Make Eye Contact • Be Polite • Shake Hands (if applicable) 	<p><i>Hello, I'm Ruhina, I am a new member of the development team. I'm really interested in what you just said in your comments on the panel/lecture/keynote remarks. I was wondering if you thought....</i></p>	
<p>Transition – Phrase(s) to move conversation toward a new topic.</p> <p>! It is important that you actively listen to identify appropriate time to transition</p>	<p><i>When you mentioned (insert the point here), I wondered if....</i></p>	

<p>Body of the conversation – <i>Use active listening, questions and comments to engage in conversation with another person. Ask questions or paraphrase to clarify what you understand and provide information about what you know about a topic.</i></p> <p> During the body of the conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Courteous • Positive Body Language • Actively Listen • Speak Clearly, Attentive • Take time to think about answers 	<p><i>You said that you are doing research; can you tell me more about what that involves? I've done some reading about</i></p>	
<p>Transition and ending – <i>Summarize a point that was interesting, thank them for taking the time to talk.</i></p> <p> As you prepare to leave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank contact • Shake hands (if applicable) 	<p><i>It was interesting to find out about XYZ. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me. I was wondering if you would be open to me following up with you if I think of more questions?</i></p> <p>An additional suggestion for ending the conversation:</p> <p><i>“Thanks so much for your time and explaining the industry outlook to me. I'll leave you now so others can ask</i></p>	

	<i>you their questions.”</i>	
<p><i>Follow up –</i></p> <p><i>After you finish your conversation, note down what you promised to do and when, plus any information you learned.</i></p> <p><i>Make sure to do what you said you would do, such as follow up via email, phone call or LinkedIn, send an interesting article or website that you may have mentioned. Let them know if you have followed any suggestions they gave you.</i></p>		