



**ALUMNI**

## JOB SEARCH & NETWORKING GUIDE

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## CAREER EXPLORATION

### ***Career development is a lifelong process.***

Are you headed toward or currently in your dream career? This guide is designed to help you think intentionally and critically about how to navigate a lifetime of career decisions.

It's only natural that your dreams and aspirations change over time. Changing interests and personal circumstances, combined with the rapidly evolving nature of the world of work, will require you to remain flexible and make numerous career related decisions throughout your lifetime.

Choosing your future career path or making a career path transition can be a very daunting and complicated decision that will continue to evolve throughout your professional life. Career assessment tools help you identify your strengths and skills, understand your work and communication style, and reflect on your core values.

You can access the following tools online:

#### [UCR Handshake](#)

Handshake is the largest career community for students and recent grads.

- Online access to UCR Handshake (job search database, CareerShift, Focus 2, Imagine PhD)
- Fill out your request to access UCR Handshake [HERE](#)

#### [UCR Career Network](#)

UCR Career Network is a free online mentoring and networking platform for all alumni and students.

- Network with other Highlanders in your region or career industry
- Serve as a mentor to current UCR students

#### [Individual Development Plan \(MyIDP\)](#)

MyIDP is a career development and planning tool that can be adapted for STEM disciplines.

MyIDP provides:

- Exercises to help you examine your skills, interests, and values
- An algorithm to help you identify which careers best fit your current skills and interests from a list of 20 scientific career pathways
- A tool for setting strategic goals for the coming year, with optional reminders to keep you on track
- An opportunity to help map out or frame your career development plans, skills and interests when meeting with your faculty advisor or PI

### [Strong Interest Inventory](#)

Presents interests and themes to discover a fulfilling career by drawing a comparison between your interests and those who have similar interests and successful careers.

### [Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator \(MBTI\)](#)

Most widely used holistic instrument to measure personality type. Measures: where you focus your attention (internal or external), the way you take in information, the way you make decisions and how you deal with the outer world.

### [Life Values Inventory Online \(LVIO\)](#)

LVIO was developed to help individuals and organizations clarify their values and serve as a blueprint for effective decision-making and optimal functioning.

- The program is comprised of 5 steps including an assessment portion and results and strategies section.

### [StrengthsFinder](#)

Discover StrengthsFinder, the Assessment empowering **21,650,610** people to succeed.

- Discover what you naturally do best.
- Learn how to develop your greatest talents.
- Use your customized assessment results to live your best life.

### [ImaginePhD](#)

Imagine PhD is a **free** online, confidential career exploration and planning tool for students and grads in the humanities and social sciences. This can be useful for ALL students in the humanities and social sciences, not just PhD students and postdoctoral scholars.

Use ImaginePhD to:

- Self-reflect on career-related skills, interests, and values.
- Explore careers paths that graduates in the humanities and social sciences pursue and more than 450+ curated, job-specific resources including job boards, sample resumes and profiles.
- Map out next steps for degree completion, career and professional development success.

## THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

One of the best ways to find out what an industry, company, or position is really like is to speak with people in careers you're considering. No one else can give you a better sense of the real-life experiences, the challenges and opportunities, the specifics and perhaps hidden demands, and the drawbacks and limitations of the career field.

***What exactly is an informational interview?*** An informational interview is a conversation with a professional in a career field you are considering, which will help you gather information and advice to assist in your career planning process.

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### BENEFITS OF CONDUCTING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

- Provides you with a realistic grasp of a career, industry, or company you're considering.
- Evaluate whether your career of interest is compatible with who you are (personality, interests, values, skills, and lifestyle).
- Receive specific suggestions and ideas on where to acquire experience.
- Expand your network of contacts for future opportunities
- Gain referrals to other professionals for additional perspectives.

#### ***Who should be conducting informational interviews?***

**EVERYONE** – at **every** point in their career development. Informational interviews are appropriate for undergraduate students, graduate students, and alumni. If you are in the process of making career choices, beginning/restarting a job search, or transitioning to a completely different career, the informational interview can be an excellent tool to explore your options and increase your career knowledge.

#### ***What are some typical subjects discussed during the informational interview?***

- Work Environment
- Industry Trends
- Ideal Skill Set/Qualifications
- Challenges/Rewards
- Career Path of Interviewee
- Lifestyle
- Typical Compensation
- Career Ladder of Field

#### ***How does the informational interview work?***

The informational interview works best if it is done in person in the setting that you are interested in working (i.e., a hospital, investment bank, consulting firm, or nonprofit organization, etc.). However, it can also be done over the phone or Skype.

#### ***How do I set up an informational interview?***

UCRAA recommends a written request followed by a phone call. This professional and respectful approach can have a more favorable response. The letter, sent via email, serves as a preliminary introduction to help communicate the intent of your request—to gather information and advice about a career option (not to ask for a job). Remember, this is their first impression of you. Be formal and professional in your correspondence.

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## INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING CHECKLIST

### Searching & Preparing

- Research the field, company, and/or organization that you want to know more about.
- Consult with family, friends, faculty, co-workers, bosses or supervisors, or LinkedIn to find people in your area of interest to speak with.
- Contact the person via email or phone.
- Arrange a convenient time for the contact to meet such as a lunch or a coffee break (no more than 30 minutes).
- Be prepared to speak about yourself (education, interests, interest in the field, your experiences, etc.).
- Have a list of specific questions ready to ask (be mindful of the contact's time and schedule).
- Bring a professional folder with a notepad inside, pen, and copies of your resume.

### The Informational Interview

- For a face-to-face meeting, dress in professional attire.
- If you meet at the company's site, ask in advance if the contact is willing to give you a tour.
- For email or phone, correspond and speak professionally.
- Express your appreciation to them for taking the time to speak with you.
- Ask the questions you've prepared in advance and take notes.
- Be mindful of the time!
- Ask the contact if there are any other connections in their network that they could possibly connect you with for another informational interview.
- Ask the contact for their business card and whether you may follow-up with them in the future.

### After the Informational Interview

- Within 24 hours, send the contact a thank you card or email.
- As you continue to explore/transition, keep the contact updated about your progress.
- If you have decided to pursue the field, ask the contact if they would be willing to review your resume and provide feedback based on their industry knowledge.
- If you were given any recommendations (web link, article, book, podcast, or another contact) be sure to follow-up and mention what you have done with the recommendation. Example: "Thank you for recommending that I contact Ms. Highlander. She and I have a call scheduled for next week."
- Request to connect with the individual on LinkedIn.

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## REQUESTING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

### Develop an Outline/Script

Before you attempt to schedule an informational interview, develop an outline or script of what you are going to say. This will decrease your anxiety and increase your chances of getting the results you want. It may be helpful to rehearse out loud after you plan the kinds of things you will communicate.

- Say who you are and why you want to get together.
- This should not be a statement about how you are looking for a job and how they can help you.
- Mention a mutual personal contact or interest to stimulate conversation.
- Ask for a brief meeting at a time that's convenient for that person.

### Example of email:

Dear Mr. Thorne,

I hope this message finds you well. I am a recent graduate from UCR and am extremely interested in pursuing a career in higher education, specifically in the sector of career services. After speaking with your colleague Leigh Ward, she encouraged me to reach out to you. Your background in research and experience in higher education leadership is inspiring and I would greatly appreciate a few minutes of your time to get your perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in career services.

I have 10 years of organizational leadership experience and am highly passionate about students and them following their dreams to professions that they love. My professional email is kimberly.kampen1@gmail.com or you can message me here via LinkedIn. Thank you for reading my inquiry and I look forward to hearing from you!

Warmest Regards,

Name

contact info: email, telephone #

### Questions to Ask

You should develop basic questions about the career field to fit your particular knowledge and experience level. Depending on the interest and willingness of your contact to talk, you may have an opportunity to ask more specific personal, company, and industry questions.

Do some research about the career in advance in order to develop thoughtful, intelligent questions and make the most of the interview.

Based on your research, choose a few questions to keep within your meeting timeframe.

- Please describe a typical day as a \_\_\_\_\_.
- How did you get started? What was your path?
- What is your educational background?
- What do you find most/least satisfying about your job? Rewards? Challenges?
- What skills/qualities does it take to be successful in this field?
- What are the entry-level jobs in this field? What does the career ladder look like?
- What trends/developments do you see affecting career opportunities?
- How would you advise I gain the skills and experience necessary to enter this career field?
- What is the “culture” of your company?
- Are there additional resources you suggest that I look into that would be beneficial for me?
- Do you have suggestions of other people I can be referred to—to learn more?
- May I contact you in the future, should I have any more questions?

## JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES & CORRESPONDENCE

*The job search process is a job itself. An effective job search will incorporate a variety of different strategies.*

### Keep Yourself Organized

- Create a job search tracking sheet (Microsoft Office) that will help you keep track of the positions you have applied for.
- Set aside time to spend on your job search each week, block off your schedule and be sure to follow through.

### Searching Online

- Utilize the UCR Career Center's online platform (Handshake) and attend workshops and fairs at no charge!
- Use various general and industry-specific job search websites to search and apply for open positions.
  - Use search agents or job alerts in order for websites to automatically send you new job postings.
- **Conduct a targeted search**
  - Utilize Handshake's "Saved Search" feature to get auto updates on new postings and opportunities.
  - Utilizing various Company & Industry Research Resources, identify the types of organizations you would like to work for, develop a targeted list, and research companies.
  - Look directly on the employers' sites for open job and internship postings.
- **Social Media**
  - Actively use LinkedIn, Handshake, UCR Career Network and social media to brand and market yourself.
  - View LinkedIn for Students tutorials to ensure you are leveraging LinkedIn to its full capacity!
  - Be consistent. Make sure all your social media accounts show the same job and education history.
  - Use social media to expand your network and to show interest in the field you are entering by sharing articles and actively participating in discussions.
  - Create or enhance your existing LinkedIn account. Not sure where to begin? Check out <https://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students> for resources to help students and alumni learn how to utilize LinkedIn effectively.
  - Join and participate in LinkedIn groups related to your career interests. Initiate and participate in discussions. Be sure to check your spelling, grammar and use professional courtesy when doing so.
  - Follow companies in your industry in order to learn more and show your interest.
  - Use your social media account to connect with people who can refer you to the jobs that you desire.
  - Connect with recruiters you met at career fairs, hiring managers you have interviewed with in the past, or peers who work in similar positions.
  - Express your interest in a new position and ask for their help. If you have an interview lined up, get insightful information about the company from an insider.

### Offline Job Search

- Attend Career Fairs. Visit Handshake, [the University of California Career Events page](#), [UCR Alumni Events page](#), and the [UCR Alumni Career Services page](#) to see the current schedules and register.
- Join professional associations.
  - Professional associations are groups of people who currently work in a given profession. They often host conferences, workshops, and networking events and are a great way to learn more about a career and meet people who may be able to help guide you. There is often a discounted membership rate for students.
  - Find a list of professional associations at [directoryofassociations.com](http://directoryofassociations.com).

- Volunteer to gain experience and expand your network.
- Leverage your network: Identify, list and prioritize your current contacts using your preferred format (i.e. Google drive, excel)
- Utilize LinkedIn to discover your hidden network.
- Reach out to contacts to schedule informational interviews (see the pages preceding this section).

## EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH EMPLOYERS

*Drafting and sending professional emails is a vital component of the job search process. Whether you are sending a thank you email, applying for a job, or following up on your application, it is important you remain professional. Below you will find some tips you can use when corresponding with employers.*

### Benefits of Sending a Thank You Email

When you meet a recruiter or employer at a networking event like a career fair or networking event, it is important that you follow up with them. This follow-up will show your interest and commitment to the position, and it also helps you stand out from other candidates.

#### Tips:

- Keep it concise
- Highlight something you talked about in your conversation/interaction
- Express again your interest in their company
- Attach your resume

### Applying to a Job via Email

Some positions will require that you email an employer your resume and cover letter to a direct contact, so it is important that your email makes a good first impression.

#### Tips:

- Indicate which position you are interested in
- Give some general background information (name, school, major, etc.)
- Briefly highlight some skills that make you qualified for the job
- Attach your resume and cover letter

### Follow-Up Email Template

It is appropriate to follow up with an employer if you have already completed their application or sent in your resume/cover letter. The follow-up email is a great way to show that you are still interested in the position and to find out where you are in the application process.

It is suggested to follow up between 5-10 business days from the submission of your application. Lastly, it is recommended to send no more than two follow-up emails. The Career Center staff are available for further consultation if you need specific advisement.

#### Tips:

- Indicate which position you applied for and when
- Indicate your interest in the position
- Use a positive tone when writing your email (avoid showing frustration)
- Include your contact information
- Include your resume and cover letter again



**Sample:**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

*I hope this email finds you well. I have applied for the \_\_\_\_\_ position through [where?] on (include exact date) and would like to inquire about the status of my application. I am very excited about the possibility of working for (include company's name), because (include a reason based on your knowledge of the company and your understanding of the position, highlighting the connection between your skills and the responsibilities you would have in that position).*

*For your convenience I have attached a copy of my resume and cover letter, previously submitted with the application. If you need additional information regarding my professional experiences or qualifications, please don't hesitate to contact me. I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward hearing from you soon.*

*Sincerely,*

*[Insert Full Name]*

## PERSONAL BRANDING

*“Personal Branding is about unearthing what is true and unique about you and then communicating that, through various mediums, to the right people.” – Dan Schwabel, Me 2.0*

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### FORMULA FOR PERSONAL BRAND

**DIFFERENTIATION** (standing out in the crowd – trait, skill, strength)

i.e. analytical and creative thinker who is persistent, influential and patient



**MARKETABILITY** (providing something other people want and need)

i.e. strong negotiator who can think out-of-the-box



### PERSONAL BRAND

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### BUILDING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

- What is your superpower? What do you do better than anyone else?
- What are your top values – your operating principles? \*NOTE: if you are not sure, check out one of the assessments on values in the pages preceding this section
- What do people frequently compliment you on or praise you for?
- What is it that your manager, colleagues, friends, and clients come to you for?
- What adjective do people consistently use to describe you – perhaps when they are introducing you to others?
- How do you do what you do? What makes the way you achieve results interesting or unique?
- What energizes or ignites you? What are your true passions?

**TIP:** Ask friends, family, co-workers and professors to answer these questions about you as well. They may give you insights that you did not see in yourself!

#### **A few deliverables of your brand (for future reference):**

**Personal Pitch:** Individual should sound poised, articulate and energized when speaking about who they are, what they do/want to do, and why they are qualified to do it.

**Resume:** Clean formatting (see Resume & Cover Letter Guide), clear statement of intent or mission with quantitative and qualitative support for your value within a company or organization. Looking for a resume that does not read like a job description, it should show your responsibilities but more importantly, **how** you executed the responsibilities well.

**LinkedIn Profile:** Can mirror your resume in content, include a headshot. Build out portfolio section if you have proof of work to share, build your network and groups in areas of interest. Customize the profile URL.

**Social Media/Other Profiles:** Individual should be positioning themselves as experts or students of their field. Are you sharing industry trends, who are you following, what are you communicating?

*Be found. Find others. Engage strategically.*

“I think social media will ultimately change how HR recruits, and it is changing the entire talent marketplace. You are there to be found by your entire network, conceivably for the rest of your lives. That is a profound change. I believe that the effect will be less applying for jobs, more of employers finding you.” – Libby Sartain, Chief People Officer, Yahoo!

**TIP: Evaluate your online platforms and critically ask yourself – would I hire me? Make social platforms private to distinguish personal and professional.**

**Online Memberships/Affiliations:** Memberships such as Angel’s List suggest someone is interested in start-ups, a quora.com membership suggest you look to a community for collaborative discussion around a topic and/or you provide answers to a community.

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## PERSONAL PITCH

A personal pitch is essential when networking with career professionals and attending career-related events such as career fairs and networking nights. A personal pitch should be a short yet impressive introduction of yourself designed to market your experiences and skillsets. Important components of a personal pitch are listed below.

### Who You Are and What You Do

Introduce yourself – What do you want them to remember about you?

Name | Educational Background & Major | Current Position | Future Career Goals

### Your Skills and/or Your Accomplishments

*Talk about your major achievements and transferrable skills targeted to the person/company/industry. Incorporate your story so you are memorable.*

My strongest skills are...

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OR

Some of my accomplishments are...

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### Interests and/or Career Goal(s)

*Communicate your career goals or areas of interest. Is your mission tangible? Would someone be able to help you if they tried? What is your purpose?*

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### The Ask

*What do you want from this interaction?*

I am interested in learning more about...

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### Example:

I am a Los Angeles native and I just completed my BS in Business Administration with a concentration in Analytics at UCR. During my time at UCR, I held an internship with Esri as a Treasury Intern and was also Vice President of the Alpha Kappa Psi chapter at my institution. My education and cocurricular experience give me a solid understanding of what drives businesses and industries as well as an analytical focus to match my naturally creative thought process. My internship at Esri really blends my ability to leverage technology to help organizations understand their data and make business decisions based off that information. I am interested in learning more about how Resolution Economics serves their clients and brings clarity and focus to complex and unstructured problems and what you look for in an Analyst candidate.

**TIP: PRACTICE!** Record yourself and let others give you feedback.

## WHAT IS NETWORKING?

### *Networking is...*

1. To interact with other individuals, groups, or institutions to cultivate productive relationships, exchange information, and develop contacts, especially to further one's career/life.
2. A reciprocal relationship building process over time to exchange information, resources, opportunities and leverage existing relationships.

“Your **network is you net worth**. A strong network is like money in the bank. Your network can help you build visibility, connect you with influencers, and open up doors for new opportunities. Building and nurturing a network is one of the most powerful things you can do to support your career advancement.” – **Bonnie Marcus, Forbes**

**80% of jobs are filled through networking** according to a report by ABC News. Networking IS about landing a job in a desired career field, but it is also about...

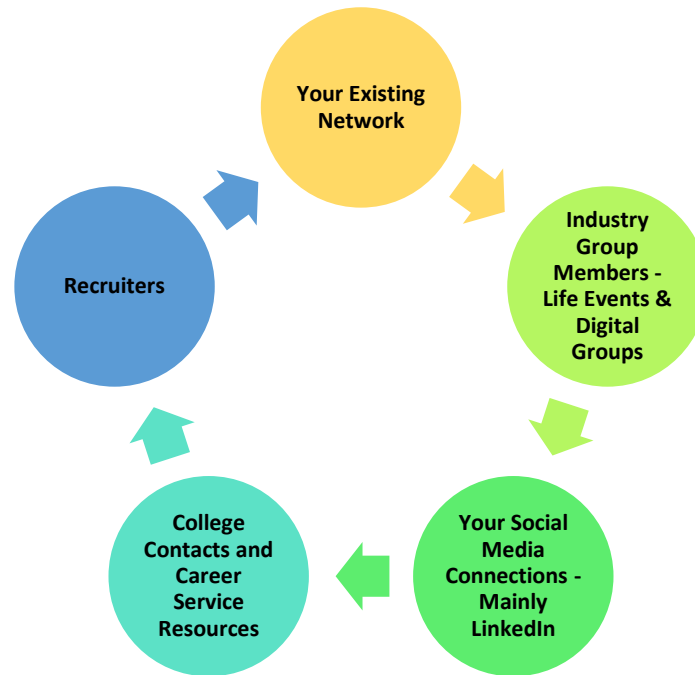
- **Connections & Relationships:** Connections are soft touch points based on mutual interests or outcomes. Relationships usually start off as connections and transform into long-term connections that are focused on mutual interests, projects, etc. These individuals and groups become your “network”.
- **Gaining Insights:** What better way to gain insight into industries, companies, and career paths than to use your network to ask questions? Through networking, you learn about trends, company/industry culture, projects or initiatives being worked on, mergers, etc. By staying closely connected and using networking as a space to gain insight, you learn about events and potential leads on internship and job openings.
- **Collaboration:** Many alumni use networking as a space to find individuals or groups to collaborate with on a project. These projects can be completely freelance or more structured and they often become a resume builder or a way for you to meet others in an industry you are seeking. If a freelance photographer needs a stylist, models, graphic designer, or someone with experience in media, they could use networking as a space to collaborate and find others who want to work with them. This is usually how start-ups launch!
- **Mentorship:** A great way to find a mentor and develop a relationship that could lead to mentorship is through networking! Ways to kick-start is to conduct informational interviews (see pages preceding this), ask about job shadowing/observation, volunteer your time supporting projects in industries/for companies you are interested in. You can also use UCR Alumni Association's in-person and online events to network with fellow Highlanders. Join the [UCR Career Network](#), a new, free online networking platform to begin building your Highlander network!

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## NETWORKS THAT LEAD TO OPPORTUNITIES

Successful networking needs a multi-pronged approach. Some will even overlap.

*Be consistent. Be authentic. Be personable. Be strategic.*



### In-person networking gone “right”

- You chose an event relevant for your interests and then dress accordingly to your style – feel comfortable in your presentation.
- You studied – who attends these events, what’s going on in the industry relevant to that event, who runs the events and what is your goal?
- You start. The hardest part is starting. Don’t wait –get in there. Use the student & young professional card to break the ice.
- You communicate in a way that focuses on the ‘other’ –if you don’t have insightful comments for a conversation, that is ok. Ask questions. People like to talk about themselves –make them feel valued.
- Successfully deliver your elevator pitch, or portions of it based on relevancy to at least three people.
- Leave with three people to send a thoughtful follow-up note to and establish a relationship with.

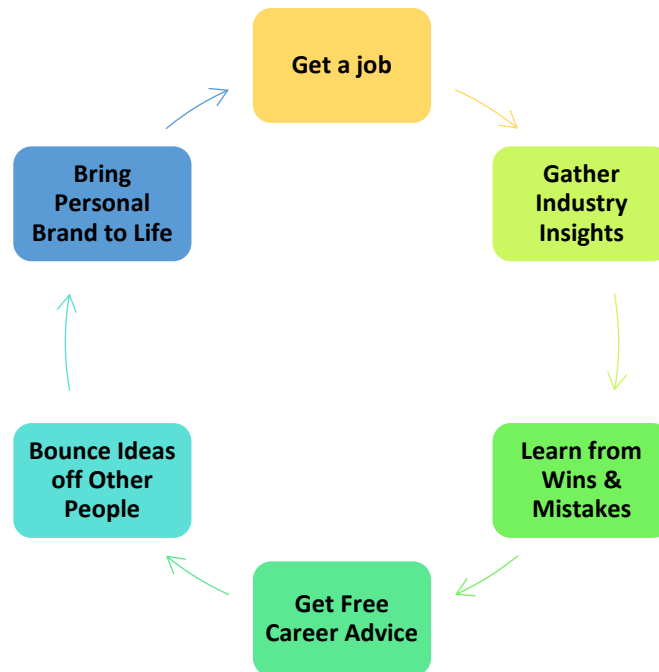
### Digital Networking Tips

- Use LinkedIn to Navigate Your Professional Landscape Digitally
- Select 3 Groups to Join & Participate Actively
- Follow Companies You Want to Work For
- Consistently Grow Your Network –Aim for 500+ Connections
- Recommend Others, Have Others Recommend You
- Connect with HR Professionals or Recruiters In Your Space
- Connect with Industry Pros in Your Space
- Post Industry Articles & Comment on Posts Made By Others

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## NURTURING YOUR NETWORK PAYS OFF

Networking is not about instant gratification, it is about a long-lasting impact which effects all aspects of your professional development.



Nurturing your network is strengthening your relationships more meaningful for yourself and the other person. At the core of nurturing you network are your efforts to keep in touch through thoughtful communications with intent.

### 10 Ways to Communicate with Intent

1. Congratulate Them
2. Provide Professional Leads
3. Email Links to Resources or Articles They Might Find Interesting
4. Mail Something
5. Ask Their Opinion
6. Meet in Person
7. Make Introductions to Others
8. Check-In
9. Re-introduce Yourself if Appropriate (i.e. a LinkedIn connection without engagement)
10. Let Them Breathe –balance your outreach so you are nurturing but not overdoing your outreach.

Think about your conversation – what did you talk about? What did you learn from them? Find connections then find something tangible that speaks to that connection. This is how you stay relevant in your outreach. Relevancy is key for nurturing your network!

## Examples:

*CONTEXT: Pete met Jay at a networking event. Joe is the Chief Technology Officer for a large bank and spoke with Josh a but careers in finance and technology.*

Hello Jay,

Hope all is well on your end. Since our initial discussion, I've invested a lot of time researching companies that deliver a technology solution for financial institutions. Your guidance really helped me identify what research I should be doing to build the foundation for my job search efforts.

There was an article on the '6 Tech Trends Shaping Financial Services' that I found particularly interesting and wanted to pass it along to you. I have a lot of energy for the way financial institutions can leverage big-data and cross-platform support for user engagement.

My next step in the job search will be to land some informational interviews within these niche sections to learn first-hand what types of companies and roles exist there. Thanks again for speaking with me at the Digital LA meet up last month. Are you attending next month's event on July 11? If so, I will see you there!

Best,

Pete.Doe@gmail.com | 333.222.1111 | linkedin

*CONTEXT: Pete met Jay at a networking event. Jay is the Chief Technology Officer for a large bank but didn't speak much about his career and Josh didn't ask. He did give Pete some insights on his career options and Pete wants to keep in touch.*

Jay,

I know you were talking about a trip to Thailand with your family this year. While I don't have any professional insights to give back to you in the way you did for me, I do have some Thailand knowledge!

Enclosed is a great article on the Thai villages that are must-sees for you and your family. Safe yet off the beaten path – perhaps the imagery will be some motivation for the well-deserved break.

Hope all is well,

[Pete.Doe@gmail.com](mailto:Pete.Doe@gmail.com)

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## TIMING YOUR NETWORK COMMUNICATIONS

### **Audience: Someone you met via networking event or a shared connection**

- Timing: 24-48 Hours After Meeting
- Method: Email and LinkedIn Request to Connect
- Additional Methods: Engage on Social Media –Follow the individual on Twitter, for example

### **Audience: Someone who is involved with recruiting or evaluating candidates for a Job Opportunity**

- Timing: Once a Week
- Method: Direct Outreach via phone or email \*call direct if emails are going unresponsive
- Additional Methods: Engage on Social Media –Follow the individual or hiring company on Twitter, for example

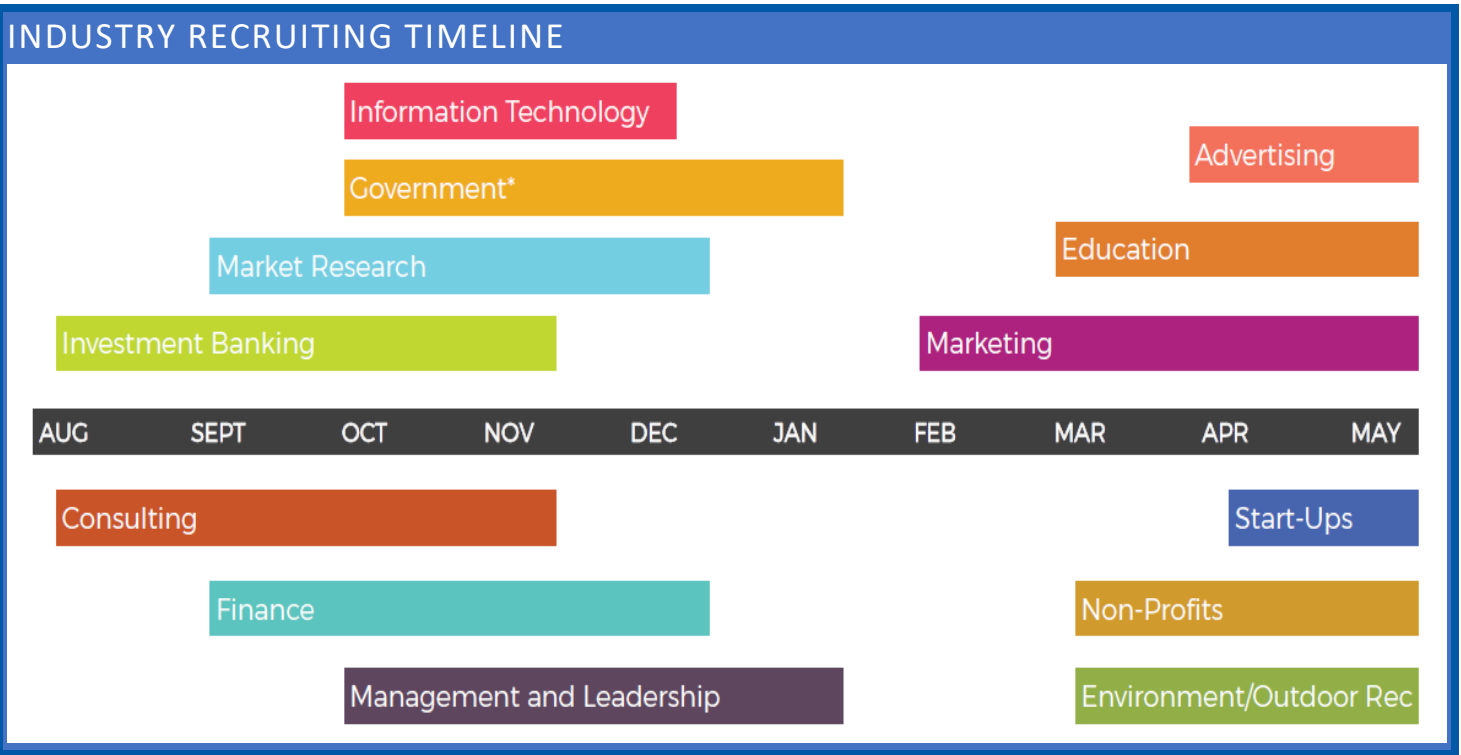
**Audience: People you've established a relationship with and you want to stay engaged with these individuals**

- Timing: Once Every 4-8 Weeks
- Method: Email, Phone or Direct Mail
- Additional Methods: Engage on Social Media –Follow the individual or hiring company on Twitter, for example

**Audience: People you want to know but don't know yet**

- Timing: Once Every Week for 3 Weeks \*Attempt to contact someone three times and if one method isn't successful, try another.
- Method: Email, Phone, Direct Mail, LinkedIn
- Additional Methods: Engage on Social Media –Follow the individual or hiring company on Twitter, for example

**TIP:** Use Excel or another Content Relationship Management System to manage your network efforts.



\*NOTE: This is a snapshot of recruiting periods throughout the year by industry. This list is not exhaustive and there may be exceptions depending on the specific organization. Stay on top of the trends of WHEN the companies you are most interested in recruit.