

## NETWORKING- Tip Sheet

### Purpose/Importance

Networking is the process of building relationships with others for mutual benefit. From a career perspective, networking involves meeting and connecting with people who can assist you with your career development and job search. It is an effective and informative way to obtain relevant career information and allows others to get to know you. In addition:

- Networking with professionals in your field(s) of interest can assist with career decision-making and clarifying your goals.
- Networking contacts can also provide industry-specific information to help you create an effective cover letter, resume and LinkedIn profile.
- More than 70% of job seekers secure employment by using networking-generated references to uncover the “hidden job market.” These opportunities include many unadvertised positions and positions created to support a particular candidate’s strengths.
- Networking contacts can help you evaluate job offers and provide support throughout your search.

### Building Your Network

Your network should include people who are willing to give you information about their field as well as feedback on your career development. Your network should also include people who may be in a position to tell you about job opportunities that are open either within their organization or elsewhere. Examples of potential networking contacts and sites to develop contacts include the following:

<b>Places</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Experiences</b>
Career/Job Fairs	Alumni Mentors	Co-ops
Community Groups/Teams	Coworkers/Formal Supervisors	Externships/Shadowing
Networking Groups & Events	Fellow Students	Informational Interviews
Professional Associations	Neighbors	Internships
Religious Organizations	Professors	Volunteer Activities
Student Organizations	Relatives/Friends	Work-study Jobs

Additional ways of increasing your networking opportunities are listed below.

- Volunteering can be a great place to meet influential people and demonstrate your indispensability.
- Searching the internet can turn up an abundance of career-related information. Many companies post general information as well as employee directories.
- Conducting an informational interview can help you learn about new developments in your field.
- Knowing someone in the employing organization can lead to internal referrals. Many employees are even compensated for suggesting successful candidates.
- Joining a networking group can provide an outlet for people to get together and exchange their leads and ideas. There are a number of Pittsburgh-area groups in addition to student organizations. (Some organizations may have a membership fee.)

### Finding Contacts

- Internet sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook offer other creative ways to network and can be used to bolster your professional relationships in a positive way.
- Alumni are a great resource while building your network. Visit <https://www.rmu.edu/alumni-giving/news> for the latest RMU alumni news and stories. The [alumni tab on Robert Morris University’s LinkedIn page](#) is also an excellent resource to get connected with professionals in your field.

## Networking Strategies

Networking can seem overwhelming, but it gets easier with time and practice. Remember that many of your networking contacts and referrals have been in the same situation at some point in their lives, and understand your need to network.

1. Talk with your contacts about what kind of information or job you are looking for and why you thought they might be helpful. Describe a job function even if you do not feel comfortable naming a title (i.e. type of work, industry or setting, and level of responsibility). Give your contact a brief outline of your skills.
2. Write or call any people your contact refers you to, and mention who referred you. Explain that while a position may not currently be available, the opportunity to talk with them is just as valuable and that you would need only a brief meeting. If you write, follow up with a phone call within a week. (See sample at the end of this tip sheet.)
3. In your meeting, let the new contact know what you are looking for (concisely in a few sentences) and ask for suggestions on what avenues you might pursue. This meeting is also a good opportunity to get an opinion from someone on whether or not your resume will accomplish your objective in that industry. At the conclusion of the meeting, ask if the new contact can refer you to an additional contact.
4. Always follow up any referral or meeting with a thank you note or email. A person likes to know that their time is well spent and appreciated. Be personal, professional and specific. Keep your contact informed of any new decisions, leads or job offers that result from their suggestions. (See sample at the end of this tip sheet.)
5. Keep a personal log of your contacts, who they were referred by, and who they referred you to. It is important to keep this information organized.

## Maintaining Your Network

You must maintain your network, even once you have secured a job. You could lose your job or decide to leave at any point. You will be in a much better position to begin a new job search if you have kept in contact with the members of your network than if you need to track down and re-connect with those who helped you in the past. In addition, you should continue to add new contacts to your network throughout your career.

## Networking at an Event

You should attend a networking event with a purpose. Knowing your objectives will help determine your actions at the event. Some things to consider include the following:

- Place your nametag on the right side, so it forms a line from your handshake to your name.
- When introducing yourself, say your name clearly. “Hello, my name is Amy Smith. It is a pleasure to meet you.”
- Have your elevator pitch rehearsed. You should be able to describe who you are and what you do in about 30 seconds or less.
- Always ask the other person for a business card. When you follow up with a new contact, mention the event you met them at.

If you are in a “mingle” situation, here are some tips to “work the room” efficiently:

- Start with small talk.
- Continually move around the room, excusing yourself after eight to ten minutes with a polite “It was nice meeting you...” Don’t stay in one place too long.

If the event includes a meal, remember to:

- Use proper table etiquette. Begin conversations by asking others their reasons for attending.
- Avoid dominating the conversation, as listening can lead to learning.

## Sample Networking Email

From: Jill Jones <jajst1111@mail.rmu.edu>  
To: Jan King <kingj@eastinhotels.com>  
Date: Sept 17, 2022, 9:20 AM  
Subject: Request for Informational Meeting- Jill Jones

Dear Ms. King:

I am a junior at Robert Morris University and am currently exploring career options in public relations. I saw your profile under the alumni tab on Robert Morris University's LinkedIn page and was really interested in your career path.

One of my recent activities at Robert Morris included serving as the Chair of the Public Relations Committee for a student fundraising event. This experience really increased my interest in public relations. I want to continue learning about the field and plan to seek a summer internship in order to gain additional experience.

I would like to speak with you regarding your advice about the profession and summer opportunities that might be beneficial for a student with my career interests. Please let me know if we can arrange a 30-minute meeting at your convenience. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Jill Jones

## Introductory Networking Phone Call

Secretary: "Eastin Hotel, Mr. Jackson speaking. May I help you?"  
Jill: "Good morning, Mr. Jackson. My name is Jill Jones. May I speak with Ms. King, please?"  
Secretary: "Yes. May I say what this call is in reference to?"  
Jill: "I would like to speak with Ms. King to discuss her role as the Senior Public Relations Manager at the Eastin Hotel and to set up an informational interview."  
Ms. King: "This is Jan King."  
Jill: "Ms. King, my name is Jill Jones. I am a student at Robert Morris University. I saw your profile on the Robert Morris University LinkedIn page under the alumni tab and was interested in speaking to you regarding careers in public relations. At your convenience, I would like to schedule a time when we could talk about your career path and your advice regarding internships, either in person or over the phone."  
Ms. King: "Well, Jill, we are not hiring at this time."  
Jill: "Ms. King, currently my intentions are to learn more about public relations and what types of experience are most beneficial in internships. I would really appreciate 30 minutes of your time to discuss the field and seek your advice."  
Ms. King: "That sounds fine. How about a virtual meeting on Tuesday, September 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m.?"  
Jill: "Perfect. Thank you, Ms. King."  
Ms. King: "I will send you a meeting invitation. Please email me a copy of your current resume, so I may review your background before our meeting. What is your email address?"  
Jill: "My email address is [jajst1111@mail.rmu.edu](mailto:jajst1111@mail.rmu.edu). I will email you my resume this afternoon. I appreciate your time today, and look forward to speaking with you on the 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m."

## Sample Thank You Letter

1006 Pleasant Place  
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

September 28, 2022

Ms. Jan King  
Senior Public Relations Manager  
Eastin Hotel  
1000 Greentree Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Dear Ms. King:

Thank you for the time you spent with me yesterday discussing careers in public relations. I found the information you shared to be very helpful in targeting my career goals.

I have contacted Mr. Smith at ABC Firm as you suggested. He is sending me information about their internship program for which I intend to apply. I will let you know the outcome. I am enclosing a copy of my resume with the changes you suggested. I am pleased with the final product and believe it markets my skills more effectively.

I appreciate your assistance and look forward to staying in touch with you. Again, thank you for all of your help.

Sincerely,

Jill Jones

Enclosure

## Elevator Pitches / Conversation Starters- Seeking Information about Majors and Careers

An elevator pitch is a quick, compelling summary of yourself. It's called an elevator pitch because it is meant to be short enough to deliver during an elevator ride (approximately 30 seconds). Your elevator pitch can be utilized during informational interviews, career fairs, and during interviews (answering the "Tell me about yourself" question). Your elevator pitch content can also be incorporated into job search documents including cover letters, the professional summary section in a resume, and your LinkedIn profile. When crafting your elevator pitch, consider the following:

**PRESENT:** Who are you?

Share information about your education (academic year, major, etc.) or current job/field.

**PAST:** What have you done?

Highlight a few relevant skills, experiences or accomplishments.

**FUTURE:** What is your goal?

Explain what opportunity you are seeking and why.

## Samples:

My name is Daniel Williams, and I am a first-year student at Robert Morris University. Some of my skills are working with computers, planning and organizing. For example, in my senior year of high school, I planned, organized, and advertised a fundraising event. In addition, based on my part-time job experience, I know I enjoy working with people and helping customers. At Robert Morris University, I earned a 3.5 GPA my first semester and work part-time at the Disney Store. As I explore college majors, I am looking for career information and advice. Can you tell me more about your career and what majors typically prepare students the best from your perspective?

My name is Daniel Williams, and I am a sophomore marketing major at Robert Morris University. I work for the Disney Store in Pittsburgh and really enjoy helping customers and assisting with marketing projects. In addition, I have taken some marketing courses, including Principles of Marketing and Sales Strategies. I really like marketing because it lets me to use my competitive nature, sales experience, coursework, and work ethic. I am interested in marketing internship opportunities with your company. Can you provide me with information about those opportunities or connect me with someone in human resources?

## Sample 'Connect' Message on LinkedIn

Dear Mr. Jones,

We have never met, but I saw your LinkedIn profile on Robert Morris University's LinkedIn page under the alumni tab. I read in your profile that you have worked as an accountant in both public and corporate accounting. I am an accounting major at Robert Morris University and plan to complete an internship this summer. Before I apply for internships, I would like to learn more about the differences between working in public and private accounting. Can we connect?

Respectfully,  
Robert Roy

## Pittsburgh Networking Organizations

<b>Pennsylvania Professional Employment Network (PAPEN)</b>	<a href="http://www.papen-pgh.org">http://www.papen-pgh.org</a>	\$10.00 Donation
<b>Pittsburgh Young Professionals (PYP)</b>	<a href="http://www.pyp.org">www.pyp.org</a>	\$70.00

**Professional Associations/Organizations:** Students are also encouraged to join professional organizations related to their major. These organizations provide opportunities to network with professionals in your career field and many have student chapters or student membership options. For suggestions on professional organizations, consult the [career resource guide for your major](#) on the CSS website and ask your faculty for suggestions.