



# PRO NETWORKING TOOLKIT

Networking is a valuable practice for building your professional community and developing lasting connections to colleagues both inside and outside of your industry. Simple: People know people! There is **no better strategy** to expedite your job search, explore a new field or grow new partnerships than networking with authenticity.

## How to Use this Tool

Networking is more than a conversation. It's an *exchange*. The more well-planned, the more valuable your interactions are likely to be--for everyone. This step-by-step tool will guide you through research and preparation stages and post-networking actions to ensure you make the most of these conversations and create lasting professional connections.

### Define your purpose for meeting

Why this contact? Why now?

What interests, experiences, priorities do you share?

### What's noteworthy about your contact?

What highlights from their history stand out?

### Define your desired outcomes

What do you want to walk away with? Be specific and define it here.

### What could you offer?



# Networking Preparation Checklist

Ensure the time you share with your contact is time well-spent *for both of you*. This checklist will enable you to ask more targeted and valuable questions, which reflects well on you and makes the most of your contact's experience and perspective. Use the steps below to uncover important information on industry or organizational changes, opportunities and challenges.

## Research contact on LinkedIn

- Review their experience
- Note title, duration in role, duration at company
- Review Highlights & Featured sections of their profile
- Read their Activity section for recent posts and priority topics
- Note any other current activities or consulting work

## Research contact's company on LinkedIn

- Visit the Company Page
- Check if any existing contacts have a connection to the company
- Review the company page for high level info or news
- Posts, People or Events tabs: Review for insight into organization news, opportunities and other intel

## Google your contact

- What other details, news pieces or activities come up?
- Outside of work, where are they active? Investing time?

## Visit the company's website

- Look for news, recent business updates or changes in focus, growth, or org priorities
- Review their About page to learn org structure, leadership, mission
- Consider reviewing leadership bios & background
- Who else would you like to meet here?

## Research the industry

- Research industry news online using key terms and organization names; identify conferences or key meetings, pertinent news or policy updates
- Use Google Scholar: Search industry and key terms to identify important new research or thought leadership
- What questions do you have? What else do you want to know?

## Google contact's company

- What other news pieces or events come up?
- Scan for awards, other wins or negative exposure



# 101 Networking Questions

## Personal/Professional

- What initially drew you to this career, role or industry?
- What most rewards you today?
- What frustrates you?
- Where would you spend more time, energy, or effort if you had it to do again?
- What are you looking forward to?
- What's been the biggest surprise?
- How do you want to have impact?
- What's your proudest achievement?
- What's been your biggest regret?
- If you could go back in time, what would you do differently?

## Industry

- Where do you see the greatest disruption or change occurring?
- What's the #1 challenge facing the industry today?
- What do you wish you had known before entering this field?
- Where do gaps in productivity, efficiency or effectiveness persist?
- Where's the greatest opportunity for innovation or evolution?
- What leaders do you admire? Why?
- What competitors do you admire? Why?

## Current Role

- What challenges excite you the most?
- What's the toughest decision you're currently working through?
- What's been a persistent challenge facing you in this role?
- What personal attributes or skills have helped you excel?
- What unexpected benefits or rewards have you realized?
- Where do you want to go from here? Why?
- If you weren't in this role, where would you most wish to be?
- What did you value most in your last role?

## Organization/Culture

- Where is your organization currently increasing its investment?
- Where is it divesting?
- What departments are growing? Shrinking?
- What are the organization's key values? How are these reflected?
- What's the biggest obstacle to work-life balance?
- What events or resources are sponsored to foster healthy teams? Healthy morale?
- How often do people leave? Why?
- How are colleagues acknowledged for a great performance or achievement?

## Final Questions

- What other advice do you have for someone in my position?
- What haven't we discussed that I should know?
- Who do you recommend I speak with? Mind making an introduction?



# Logistics

Traffic! Technical snafus! Parking headaches! Don't wait until the morning or day-of to plan or test your logistics. Instead, follow these steps to think through possible snags *before* they complicate your meeting (or impact your contact's first impression!).

## Zoom:

- Do you have a link?
- How's your lighting?
- How's your backdrop?
- Audio and microphone working?
- Are you in a quiet space and won't be interrupted?

## In-person:

- What logistics are a concern (parking, distance, route)?
- What steps can you take to ensure a smooth arrival?
- What can you do to arrive early?

## Introverts:

- Is the setting conducive to a comfortable conversation?
- If not, what's a good alternative?
- What steps can you take to shield your energy before/after the meeting?

## Strengthen your mindset

- Be rested
- Exercise and/or meditate early in the day
- Introverts: Schedule solo time before and after to refresh
- Remind yourself of your intention, purpose, and outcomes for the meeting
- Be open & grateful! Good things are coming!



# Post-Meeting Debrief

## Key Takeaways

## Next Steps

## Surprises

**What didn't work?**  
**What would you do differently next time?**

# Organizational Tips & Follow-Up

## What's Pending

New contacts shared   Introductions made   Thank you message sent

## Organizational Tips for Managing Your Network

- Use networking tracking table to organize leads & contacts
- Group contacts by company/organization
- Use preferred app to set up reminders for follow-ups, important dates, events, etc.
- Keep your contacts updated as needed

## Follow up checklist:

Date in calendar for follow up

Date set for 6 month check-in

Added to holiday card list

**For more tips & suggestions, visit**  
**[www.bloominglotuslab.com](http://www.bloominglotuslab.com)**