

employABILITY



Networking

In the business world, networking involves contacting and sharing information with professional contacts. This involves not only contacts related to your job, but anyone who you could build a mutually beneficial relationship with.

Networking can be formal at work and scheduled events, or informal in leisure and social environments. Exchanging business cards and email addresses used to be the main method of exchanging details, LinkedIn and other social media platforms are more commonly used today.

No matter what industry you're in, having the right contacts is very important. Networking can lead to job opportunities, exposure for your business and having a bank of contacts for possible future scenarios. Particularly when you are younger and looking for a job or apprenticeship, networking can be a very useful tool.



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TOP TIPS

- 1 It's a two way street**
Remember, networking has to be mutually beneficial for it to work long term. Speak as much as you listen and offer as much as you take
- 2 Don't be embarrassed**
Everyone has to start somewhere, so don't be embarrassed to ask for help. Remember, there's no such thing as a stupid question!
- 3 Don't force it**
Networking doesn't come easily to everyone and it can be difficult, but the more you do it, the easier it will become. Even if it's a failed attempt, it's a lesson learned
- 4 Network with your network**
Meeting new contacts is a great way to expand your network, but why stop there? If appropriate, ask your contacts to introduce you to their networks. E.g. for specific career advice or guidance
- 5 Leverage social media**
Social media is a fantastic way to expand your network, make contacts more accessible and find opportunities that you otherwise might not have. Employers can also use social media to find out about you as an individual, so be careful what you post!

FAQs

- 1 Who should I be networking with?**
Anyone and everyone. You never know when someone will be able to help you professionally or personally. You may even be able to help them
- 2 How do I start networking?**
Start with your existing network. Friends, family and teachers may be able to offer advice and introduce you to some of their contacts. Be sure to keep details of anyone you meet at events and careers fairs. Set up a LinkedIn account to keep a record of networks and make new contacts. Here you can also upload your CV and find jobs
- 3 How do I leave an impression?**
Be enthusiastic, interested and thank people for their time. Finding a reason to follow up with your contacts is a good way to leave a lasting impression
- 4 What do I do after I network?**
Keep a record of everyone you meet, through an address book or LinkedIn. You never know who may be able to help you find your next job opportunity or help with a specific piece of work. Remember to keep in touch with your networks to maintain strong relationships