



connections count

Kelly Services® guide to career networking

At Kelly®, we're dedicated to providing the resources and tools necessary for success. We've spent more than 60 years working closely with employers *and* employees, and during that time we've seen how important networking can be for career planning and advancement, and we've witnessed how networking methods have changed.

It's essential to have a strong professional network at every stage of your career. This guide will help you confidently develop and maintain a network that works for you. After all, the contacts you make in your career can connect you to options, opportunities, and ultimately success.





Make contact

What is networking? Different people have different answers. Some argue that networking involves joining every professional association in the area. Others say it is nothing more than an occasional cup of coffee with a friend or something you build during a job change. Many more believe that it must be built over the life span of your entire career.

Common among these answers is establishing contact with people who can help you develop your career. Whether chatting face-to-face, online, or over the phone, networking begins with the people closest to you and expands from there. In fact, many people don't realize just how simple—and effective—networking can be.

Building your network

The best way to start building your network is to think about the people you know now or knew in the past. Remember, your network consists of your professional and personal contacts. Think of current and past acquaintances, such as:

Professional

Bosses	Competitors	Co-workers
Customers	Subordinates	Recruiters
Associations	Vendors	
Peers	Peers in other companies	
Consultants		

Personal

Teachers/professors	Classmates	Neighbours
Attorneys	Relatives	Physical Trainers
Clubs/Associations	Friends	Financial Advisors
Bankers	Realtors	
	Dentists/Doctors	

Consider this

An important question you should ask yourself about networking is, "Which style of networking will achieve my career objectives?" The answer depends on many factors, including the stage of your career and your comfort level. For example, if you had the choice to be actively involved in a few major industry associations or to have one lunch with the president of a *Fortune* 500[®] company, which would you choose?



Follow the rules

Remember that networking isn't all about finding a job. Rather, its purpose is to connect with others in your profession or industry to share ideas, expertise, and information. With this in mind, there are a few rules to follow that will make your networking efforts more effective.

Always be prepared | The opportunity to establish a new contact can arise any time or any place. Always carry business or contact cards and learn important names. You may be casually speaking to someone who mentions the name of a significant business friend. Recognizing the name of the friend and what it could mean to your career creates the possibility to ask for an introduction.

Have a plan of action | Don't waste your contact's valuable time. For example, if you are serious about a career change, make your intentions known. Telling a contact that you are *thinking* about a change might not give them the motivation to introduce you to a friend if they don't feel you are serious enough.

..... **Tip:** *Don't limit your contacts. Once you are comfortable speaking with those closer to you, be bold and speak to contacts you don't yet know. For every person you contact, ask for a minimum of two additional referrals.*



Be genuine | Beginning every conversation by mentioning the name of who referred you will put your contacts at ease. Take interest in their backgrounds and what they have to tell you. Rushing through the conversation to get what you're looking for will be easily identifiable and lessen their willingness to help you.

Ask for information—not a job | When conversing with a contact, it should be obvious that you are seeking information and guidance. Be sure to explain what you are attempting to do and ask for their best advice on who to talk to and how. If your contact brings up any job opportunities then that's great, but the purpose of your conversation should not be to ask for a job.

Focus your conversations on career goals | Have a 30-second sound bite prepared on your career objectives, your major strengths, and accomplishments. End your sound bite by asking for input and advice.

What can you offer? | Remember to practice give-and-take with your contacts. Is there something of value (e.g., information, expertise) that you can offer your contacts? If you help them, they will be more likely to help you when the time comes.

Follow-up | The responsibility is always on you to follow up on leads. Should you follow up on a lead that turns into a new job, remember to send your contact a thank you note. One of the biggest mistakes people make is neglecting to send an acknowledgement to the person who helped. Sending a brief note is a professional courtesy that may help you even more down the road.

Get social

Networking via the Internet has become a major force and focus among professionals. It's an ideal way to promote yourself and maintain quality contact with the members of your network. Getting started need not be overwhelming. The goal is to establish and maintain contact with people who share your same interests. Keep these tips in mind.

Personal brand | Creating your own personal brand is a great way to package yourself for success. To develop your brand, you'll need to find unique ways to differentiate yourself and convey who you are and your key characteristics—whether in person, on the phone, or online. This involves everything about you, including your clothes, attitude, knowledge, and behaviour. The idea is to make people want to associate with you.

Research first | You probably know that there are a variety of networking sites available. Some are purely social; some strictly professional; others are a combination of the two. Getting involved in all of them is not a wise choice. Instead, join networks that are most relevant to you. This will require taking a serious look at your objectives and researching networks available. Take time to research your options. It will be well worth it when you ultimately connect with the right people for the right purpose.

Profile power | Once you join, spend the time to thoroughly complete your profile. Include keywords, areas of interest, special skills, education, certifications, or any other pertinent information that will give your contacts a better idea of who you are and your purpose for being in the network.

It's also a good idea to upload a picture of yourself with a smile, as opposed to a cartoon character or other image. It is much more personal—and professional—to have your online contacts see a picture of you.

Stay involved | Once you begin adding contacts to your network, remember to be professional yet sociable, putting real effort into staying in touch. Comment on their wall posts. Share links they might be interested in. Inquire about their current projects.

Internet sites are available 24/7, so be sure to check in regularly. It's also important to be courteous. Respond when someone sends you a message. If you promise information to someone, follow through. This will send a powerful message about your character as well as your work habits.

The more you converse with people, the more they will get to know you, and the more likely they will be to refer others to you. But be careful not to go overboard and become a nuisance with an overabundance of comments or messages. Stick to relevant, useful comments and content.

OMG! Don't 4get 2 B professional!

Avoid using text lingo, slang, symbols, and abbreviations in your online communication with contacts. Write as if you are speaking to that person face-to-face. This is a simple and effective way to convey professionalism.



Sharpen your phone skills

If your professional networking begins with a phone call, your phone skills will often determine whether a face-to-face meeting will be arranged. Remember that you are making an impression with every conversation. How you are perceived verbally can make a difference and jumpstart your career.

To prepare for a networking conversation:

- Establish the call objective before dialing.
- Develop a script of what you want to say.
- Role-play your call with a friend.
- Research, research, research—know your contact's background and that of the company he or she works for.
- Be prepared to answer career questions.
- Be persistent. You may not connect on the first few calls so keep trying.

During your conversation:

- Always mention the name of the person who referred you.
- Always make sure your contact has time to talk.
- Use a conversational, professional tone.
- Be enthusiastic and positive.
- Follow up. If your contact asks you for something, always follow through.

Closing thoughts

Building your network is an ongoing process, and the contacts you establish will be valuable resources throughout your career. Have fun building your network. And remember, you will also be a contact who can give guidance and share information in return. As your network grows, so will your knowledge, expertise, and confidence.

Temporary
Temporary to Hire
Direct Hire

Areas of Expertise*

Automotive
Contact Centre
Creative Services
Education
Electronic Assembly
Engineering
Finance and Accounting
Government
Healthcare
Industrial
Information Technology
Law
Marketing
Office
Science

Project Services

Project Teams
Project Management
PMO Integration
SOW-based Services

Outsourcing & Consulting Solutions

Recruitment Process Outsourcing
Business Process Outsourcing
Contingent Workforce Outsourcing
Human Resources Consulting
Career Transition & Organizational Effectiveness
Executive Search

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