

# Five Steps to Successful Networking

Networking. Even reading the word can cause some students to recoil. But, when done right, networking is nothing more than good conversation. There are five steps you can take to make networking not only effective, but informative and even fun.

**Step 1.** Understand that networking is really just a process of meeting people and having conversations. It's not a sales call and it's not a job interview.

**Step 2.** Be directive, but not forceful. Since you are typically the one who generated this interaction, you need to be ready to help steer the conversation. Have some questions in mind beforehand - about the person's career path, about their organization, about advice they may have for you, and so forth. Let the dialog flow from there.

**Step 3.** Be appreciative. You should always respect the time and efforts of the people you interact with. That means be brief if you call without scheduling a meeting, be on time if you do have a scheduled meeting and be attentive at all times.

**Step 4.** Follow up. You should always send a follow-up after meeting someone, and this can be in the form of an email, a mailed letter or even a connection requests on linkedin. If the meeting was in a formal setting, the follow up should have the tone of a "thank you" letter.

**Step 5.** Maintain the relationship. The follow up doesn't stop with an email or linkedin connection. Look for opportunities to reconnect on an occasional-but-ongoing basis in the months and years that follow.

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