Effective Networking

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Agenda

• What is networking?
• How do I network effectively...
  o to discover options that fit my interests?
  o to improve my search strategy?
• What resources are available to me?
Did you know?

• 70-85% of open positions are never posted and instead filled through networking
• Employee referral programs are on the rise
• Social sleuthing by recruiters is standard in recruiting; 78% of recruiters have made a hire through social media
Networking is...

Cultivating relationships over time to learn about a field of work, employer, or place.

There are two main purposes for networking: information and strategy.

How, with whom, when, and for what goal all depend on your purpose.
Networking for Information

Goals:
• Identify and confirm industries and career fields that fit your interests
• Identify specific roles and employers
• Gain advocates within employer organizations
Networking for Information

Start Here: “I’m unsure of my path and am exploring possibilities”

Choose people who can give you a general idea of their work: professors, alumni, professionals in your field of interest (entry-level employees tend to have more time to talk), friends and family, colleagues/peers

CLARIFY GOAL: Gain a clear idea of whether this path is interesting to you and a good fit

Politely reach out to your contacts

Research your contacts: use Handshake, MiddNet, MiddConnect, LinkedIn, Glassdoor, employer websites

Practice your pitch

Middlebury College
Center for Careers and Internships
Questions (networking for information)

Open with a 60-second “elevator pitch” which highlights:
• Your name, class year, major, key activities, and why you chose Middlebury
• What you’re hoping to gain from the conversation (e.g. greater insight into whether or not you’re a good fit)

Prep questions designed to understand:
• The individual’s personal experience
• A typical workday
• How the industry and its constituents function

Samples
• Can you walk me through a typical day?
• How would you describe your firm’s work culture?
• What aspects of your job do you like/dislike most?
• What skills must one bring to the job? What can you learn on the job?
• Why did you choose your field, role, firm?
• What differentiates your firm from others?
• What is the typical career progression for someone in your role?
• What trends may affect future opportunities in your field?
Networking to Improve Search Strategy

Goals:

• Become a stronger, more informed, and confident candidate
• Develop knowledge of the application process within the field and specific employer organizations
• Gain advocates within employer organizations
Networking for Strategy

Start Here: “I’m ready to apply”

Research your contacts
(Handshake, MiddNet, MiddConnect, LinkedIn, Glassdoor, employer websites) to inform the questions you ask and help steer the conversation

Higher-level employees
(5+ years)/people involved in recruiting/those who influence hiring

Now you should be able to speak confidently about the employer and industry, and articulate why you’re interested and a good fit

Entry-level employees
(0-3 years)

Reach out to contacts

Middlebury College
Center for Careers and Internships
Questions (networking for strategy)

Open with a 60-second “elevator pitch” which highlights:
- Your name, class year, major, key activities, and why you chose Middlebury
- Briefly walk through your resume highlighting your keen interest in the industry, role, and firm.

Prep questions designed to understand:
- How to improve your prospects and position yourself correctly
- How the hiring process works within the industry or firm
- Your strengths (and how to highlight them) and weaknesses (and how to minimize their negative impact on your candidacy)

Samples
- Do you have advice for how I can best position myself to get an offer? Is there anything I should be doing that I’m not?
- What differentiates your firm from the others? Why did you choose your firm/group?
- Would you be willing to review my resume and provide constructive criticism?
- Can you describe the interview process at your firm?
- As I’m starting to prep for interviews, were there any questions you were asked that stumped you or you wish you had been better prepped for?
- What trends may affect future opportunities in your field?
- Is there anyone else you suggest I reach out to at this point in the process?
Sample outreach email:

Hello Ms. _____,

Greetings from Middlebury! As a sophomore economics major at Middlebury, I am interested in learning more about your work for the Global Finance Solutions department at Deutsche Bank.

More specifically, I am interested in hearing about the nature of your work, how your work is driven by financial analysis, and how much is driven by international political and cultural developments. I hope that our discussion will help me make some decisions about internship options for next summer.

I’m sure your schedule is incredibly demanding, but I hope we might be able to arrange a time to talk. Would you be able to spare 20 minutes in the next couple weeks to speak either by phone or Skype?

Thank you for your time and hope to hear from you soon.

Your Name

Dear Contact Name,

Thank you for attending the information session at Middlebury yesterday. It was very nice to meet you and hear about your experience in banking. I learned a great deal from our conversation and appreciated your input into my internship search. Would you be willing to join my LinkedIn network and possibly offer advice by email or phone in the coming weeks? I would greatly value your time.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Networking is not a “one and done” interaction. Having consistent contact is crucial to maintain and build your network.

- Keep your connections up-to-date with your professional and academic accomplishments.
- Circle back to your contacts with additional questions or thoughts that demonstrate your expanding knowledge or focus.
- Don’t wait until you have a question or personal update before you get back in touch: reach out to share interesting articles, Middlebury news, or holiday wishes.

Our PCAs and career advisors can strategize with you to draft emails and questions.
Resources for Networking

Online
- **MiddNet**: Middlebury’s Alumni Advisory Network
- **MiddConnect**: Improved search features, more robust profiles, and new user interface
- Facebook: Join the Middlebury Careers group
- LinkedIn: The world’s largest professional networking platform and a great resource for job searching
  - Create a complete LinkedIn profile
  - Find and connect with Middlebury alumni ([linkedin/alumni](https://linkedin/alumni)) and other contacts
  - Join the Middlebury College Community group

In-person
- Networking receptions and information sessions
- Events through [Alumni and Parent Programs](https://www.middlebury.edu/alumni) or [professional organizations](https://www.middlebury.edu/alumni)
- At the airport, waiting for coffee, etc.
Career Advising Appointments

GO/Handshake > Career Center > Appointments
1. **Network now.** Cultivate your network before you need it.

2. **Be patient.** Meaningful connections and genuine relationships will get you much further in the long run...but it takes time.

3. **Build relationships.** Demonstrate emotional intelligence by and good manners. Focus on building the relationship by asking questions and showing genuine interest. Do not ask for leads during your first conversation.

4. **Thank your contacts.** End any conversation with a genuine thank you and follow up again with a note.

5. **Update your contacts frequently and stay in touch.** Circle back with monthly updates about the status of your and show genuine interest in what they’re doing.

6. **Return the favor.** Always be prepared to give back to your professional networking connections.
References


