



5 Keys to Effective Networking

Networking is vital to job growth and success. The term “networking” tends to come with a connotation of stale interactions with people who are out to gain something. But take heart, that doesn’t have to be (and typically is not) the case! Effective networking means building real relationships with people who share common ground. Take a look at five keys to shaking the outdated notion of self-centered networking and exchanging it for growing, lasting connections.

Have Fun

Start meeting people by going to events and activities you’re truly interested in. You can uncover industry events, clubs, athletic teams, causes, volunteer opportunities, and meet-ups that allow you to interact with others who share a common interest. Don’t get trapped going only to job events, but instead open yourself up to new people with whom you share authentic connections. Try searching these resources to find a good fit for you:

- [Meetup.com](#) | Interest-based groups to create thriving communities
- [The Seattle Networking Guide](#) | Community-building groups and networking events
- [Social Justice List](#) | List of local social justice organizations organized by issue
- [VolunteerMatch](#) | Local causes with volunteer opportunities
- [Underdog Sports](#) | Laid back sports leagues for everyday players

Research

If you do find yourself attending a job or industry-oriented networking event, conference, or convention, research who will be there. Create a plan of action by outlining who you would like to meet and what you hope to accomplish. Think through not only what you would like to learn and gain, but also what you can offer to those you meet with, which leads to our next tip...

Be Willing to Give

Many people enter a networking event wondering, "What can I get out of this?" Instead, each time you meet someone new, ask yourself, "How can I help this individual?" People want to feel a genuine connection, and assessing ways you can get to know and help someone will go a long way to creating a lasting relationship.

Listen

Gain trust and grow connections by listening intently. Don't focus on what you are going to say next, but instead practice active listening, and respond with questions or comments that will build on the current conversation. The person you're talking to will feel more engaged and appreciated if they know you're interested in and responsive to what they have to say.

Keep Showing Up

Building relationships takes time. One introduction or meeting will rarely create a lasting connection, so find a group that feels right, and keep attending events. Each time, rekindle conversations, and build stronger ties to others involved. These rich relationships will yield potential opportunities as well as budding friendships.

You're always welcome to come connect with us in the Career Action Center! We can also help direct you to groups and resources on campus, so please drop in.

Career Action Center

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