

YOUR NETWORKING GUIDE

NETWORKING GOALS: DETERMINING YOUR WHY

Types of Networking Goals

 Relationship Building	 Career Development	 Learning & Insight	 Business Opportunities
Build relationships across departments Expand your network Deepen existing professional relationships Reconnect with former colleagues or mentors Stay in touch with peers in the field	Explore job opportunities or career shifts Get insider insights into a target industry or company Get referrals for job openings Identify potential mentors or sponsors Receive feedback on your resume, portfolio, or interview approach	Gain knowledge of trends in your field Get advice on certifications, education, or upskilling Learn about new tools, platforms, or methodologies Understand challenges others are facing in similar roles Understand how others navigated their career path	Collaborate on grants, research, or interdisciplinary projects Connect with campus leaders who shape priorities, policy, or strategy within the university Contribute to institutional publications, or share expertise with internal or external audiences Identify speaking, writing, or media opportunities

CRAFTING YOUR NETWORKING GOALS

 Write 1-3 networking goals you want to set using the template below:

	A specific action step <i>I would like to...</i>	Your desired outcome <i>In order to...</i>	Your personal/professional reason <i>because...</i>
Goal #1			
Goal #2			
Goal #3			

Example Goals

Goal #1	I would like to meet with colleagues in similar roles across campus	in order to share and gain ideas and best practices	because I want to improve how my team approaches student engagement.
Goal #2	I would like to contact via email or LinkedIn alumni in my field	in order to learn about trends and opportunities	because I'm exploring a potential career transition.
Goal #3	I would like to spend 15 minutes each day on LinkedIn	in order to stay informed about industry news and connect with peers	because I want to remain relevant and well-informed in my profession.

KEY CONTACTS: IDENTIFYING YOUR WHO

 **Create a list below of 3-5 potential contacts that align with your goals in column 1.**
If you're not sure of specific individuals, think of organizations you can reach out to first.

	1 Name	2 Mode of Communication	3 Meeting Modality / Location
Contact #1:			
Contact #2:			
Contact #3:			
Contact #4:			
Contact #5:			

OUTREACH STRATEGIES: PLANNING YOUR HOW

 In columns 2 and 3, note how you'll reach out to each prospective contact (e.g., email, LinkedIn, etc.), and indicate the meeting format and location you'll suggest (e.g., virtual via Zoom, in-person at a coffee shop, etc.). Be as specific as possible.

CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE: COMMUNICATING WITH CLARITY

Review on the next page essential elements to include in your outreach message.

 **Select 1 person from your contact list. Cross check your calendar for your availability. In the box below, draft a message to introduce yourself and to schedule a time to meet with your contact.**

MAKING CONTACT: CRAFTING A POLITE MESSAGE

When crafting your invitation to connect, messages should include:

1. A personalized greeting (feels less like spam)
2. A brief statement of who you are
3. A reason for reaching out
4. A specific, reasonable ask (short meeting for insight or discuss ideas for a presentation)
5. Why you're interested in getting to know this person
6. A clear time estimate (e.g., "Brief 20-minute virtual meeting" or "an hour coffee chat")
7. Gratitude for their time

Show that you value this person and their time by:

- Providing a Zoom link
- Offering meeting locations that are practical, convenient, and accessible
- Recognizing time zone differences
- Sharing specific windows of available time if your schedule is busy

SAMPLE MESSAGE

Hi [Recipient's First Name],

I hope this message finds you well! My name is [Your Name], and I'm currently a [Your Role/Position] at the University of Iowa. I've been following your work on [area of expertise], and I'm inspired by your approach to [brief detail about their work].

I'm reaching out because I'd love to connect for a brief 20-minute virtual meeting to gain insight into your experience and possibly discuss some ideas I'm developing for an upcoming presentation on [topic]. Your perspective would be incredibly valuable as I shape my approach.

Would you be open to a quick Zoom chat sometime next week? I'm available:

- Tuesday, July 29, between 10:00–11:30 AM CST
- Thursday, July 31, between 2:00–4:00 PM CST

If those times don't work for you, I'd be happy to coordinate around your schedule. I'll make sure to send a Zoom link once we confirm a time that works for you.

Thank you so much for considering this—I truly appreciate your time and the work you do.

Warm regards,
[Your Full Name]
[Your Contact Info]

PREPARATION MATTERS: MAXIMIZING YOUR MEETING

Prior to meeting, you'll need to think about how you will introduce yourself so that the person knows more about who you are and why you've scheduled time to meet with them.

In the space below, draft a brief introduction that:



1. Gives a brief summary of your professional background and
2. Explains why you are interested in meeting this person (no more than 3-5 minutes).

ONGOING NETWORKING: TURNING INTENTION INTO ACTION

Here are tips on how to integrate networking into your professional practice:

- ✓ For recurring contacts, make it a habit to confirm your next meeting before you leave.
- ✓ Add networking goals into your performance plan. Ask your supervisor to help with accountability.
- ✓ Schedule time on your calendar to refine and revise your networking goals.



What networking action-steps will you integrate into your professional practice?