Networking

Networking is about connecting with people. It is about building and maintaining trusting relationships throughout your life. It is an essential skill all students need to learn as part of their lifelong career management.

Demystifying networking

Networking is about helping others. What goes around comes around. If networking is done with the intention of mutual generosity it creates genuine lifelong relationships based on trust and respect, fuelled by the desire to help one another. Even if you do not think you have anything to offer the other person, being an active listener who is genuinely attentive and interested in others is also an act of generosity.

Why networking is essential

It is estimated the majority of job openings are filled through word-of-mouth or networking, known as the 'hidden job market'.

Networking provides opportunities to:

- Learn from others' experiences in your industry
- Understand and apply different approaches
- Discover professional development opportunities
- Find and share new resources
- Form a relationship with a mentor or mentee
- Identify new career pathways
- Help others.

It is therefore important to let people know who you are, and what you are looking for. You never know who might know someone, who knows someone, who can link you to an opportunity, a mentor, or a new direction!

10 key networking steps

1. Identify the people in your inner and outer circles.
2. Be friendly. Get to know them. Be curious. What are their roles, values, interests?
3. How do these relate to your interests and career aspirations?
4. Contact them in person, via email or by telephone for an informal chat (or ask for an information interview).
5. Start a dialogue about their job, the industry, or something related. See tips on next page.
6. Understand their needs, and what's important to them, before considering your own priorities.
7. After establishing a relationship, ask if they would like to see your resume for feedback, or to keep on file if an opportunity becomes available.
8. Ask them if they would mind facilitating further introductions.
9. Thank them for their time and let them know how helpful they were, and keep in contact.
10. Most importantly, ask how you can help them.

Careers and Employability
scu.edu.au/careers | careers@scu.edu.au

Careers & Employability

Identify and expand your network circle

Create a useful, ongoing, lifelong list of contacts and information. You can start by mind mapping or brainstorming to identify all the people you know. Then keep a database of all these contacts with their details, background, knowledge and any other relevant information. Keep this list current and active.

Build communities through social networking: tweets, blogs, posts, photo and video sharing, e-networking, and most importantly LinkedIn. Join professional associations, student associations and the Southern Cross University Alumni LinkedIn group. Participate in resume workshops. Begin volunteering. Attend professional development conferences and workshops. Consider conducting information interviews.

Play to your strengths and interests and identify where you may meet a diverse range of people — join teams, extracurricular classes or groups that you are going to enjoy or learn from, for example, university social clubs, craft circles, gyms or self-development groups.

Networking tips

A relationship is a two-way street. Don't just think how this person may help you, but also how you may help them. Gratitude is an important quality and without it networking will not be successful.

Follow the 80/20 rule. In order to build relationships, the other person needs to feel heard. To do this, listen about 80 per cent of the time and only talk about 20 per cent, if possible.

- Practise with people you feel most comfortable with, and then push yourself outside your comfort zone.
- Be visible and be seen. Networks will not come to you. You need to start the ball rolling.
- Google yourself to ensure your online presence is professional.
- Use contacts' names in conversations and remember them.
- Share and be open and generous with your information.
- Receive feedback gracefully and gratefully.
- Ask them for their advice. Dig deeper. Learn.
- Be genuine, honest and patient, without expectations.
- Ask lots of open-ended questions: Who? What? How? When?
- Focus on the quality of relationships not the quantity.
- Follow up with your contacts every two to three months in order to maintain relationships.
- Document the process reflectively and consolidate what you have learnt.

Networking checklist

- ☐ I am networking with a spirit of generosity, giving not just taking.
- ☐ I have identified all the people in my inner and outer circles.
- ☐ I have joined other professional or personal associations, clubs or groups.

- ☐ I have an online presence, such as on LinkedIn.
- ☐ I am proactively attending events.
- ☐ I am building new diverse networks, and maintaining current ones.
- ☐ I am enjoying the process and having fun. If I'm not, what do I need to do differently?

Careers and Employability
scu.edu.au/careers | careers@scu.edu.au

Career fact sheets
View and download our fact sheets