NETWORKING
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking Principles</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing Yourself To Be Remembered Positively</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tips For Your 30-second Pitch</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where To Network</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational Interviews</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Expos, Fairs, &amp; Social Networking Events</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Networking</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Networking Opportunities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying Organized</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following Up &amp; Maintaining Your Network</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix: Log sheets</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking Contact Log sheets</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS NETWORKING?
Networking is the systematic process of developing and cultivating a pool of professional contacts.

WHAT NETWORKING IS NOT
Networking is not just telling a few friends, relatives, faculty, or Wagner's OCS, “I’m looking for a job, so let me know if you hear of anything.” Rather, it is a strategic approach to building professional relationships through which you can share information about career opportunities, important industry trends, and even practice methods.

THE POWER OF NETWORKING
While responding to online postings is an important part of the job search process, networking significantly increases your chances of landing an interview and/or job opportunity. Depending on which figures you read, 60—80 percent of jobs are obtained through networking. Referred to as the “hidden job market,” many of these positions are never even advertised to the general public.

Mark Granovetter, a Sociology Professor at Stanford, illustrates the power of networking in his research and analysis on the “strong link of weak ties.” According to Granovetter’s study, big networks (including the acquaintances of friends) can help you connect to people you would not otherwise meet. These indirect connections often provide a direct link to the hidden job market. In fact, over 50% of people who get their jobs through networking report that their opportunities came from people they occasionally (or even rarely) see.*

The following strategies will help you to become an effective networker and open doors to professional opportunities that will help shape your career.

NETWORKING PRINCIPLES

In addition to gathering information, the goal of every networking encounter is to leave a lasting positive impression. This will help you to establish and cultivate ongoing relationships with professionals in your field. It will also help ensure that the people you meet (referred to as “contacts”) will want to tell others about you, keep you updated on job leads, and provide you with valuable information about your field of interest.

FRAMING YOURSELF TO BE REMEMBERED POSITIVELY

Some networking encounters are very brief. Thus, you must always be prepared to tell a contact the most important information that she/he should know about you in a few short sentences. This conversation is also known as your 30-second pitch or the answer to the question “Tell me about yourself.”

A 30-second pitch is a brief introduction that tells a contact who you are and offers a few interesting and relevant details about your professional background and interests. It is most useful at public events, such as career expos and mixers, where networking encounters tend to be brief. An extended version of this conversation (your one-minute pitch) can also be used as an introduction in an interview.

Your 30-second pitch should include the following elements:

- An introduction (give your name and current school/job if appropriate)
- The reason that are you interested in speaking with the contact
- Your relevant professional interests and the relevant aspects of your professional background
- Your interest in having a follow-up conversation (inquire about the best way to get in touch with the contact in the future)
TIPS FOR YOUR 30-SECOND PITCH

Ask Questions. Your pitch should feel like a natural—albeit succinct—conversation. Do not rattle off a list of your professional experience for 30 consecutive seconds. Instead, allow room for the contact to join the discussion. Feel free to ask a few strategic questions and listen carefully to her/his comments and respond accordingly.

Be Direct. Do not assume that a contact will make the right inferences about you. If you want her/him to know that you are passionate about health care reform, say, “I am passionate about health care reform.”

Practice. While your pitch should never sound rehearsed or robotic, practicing in front of a mirror and with another person will help you remember important information when you encounter an unexpected networking opportunity.
**WHERE TO NETWORK**

Networking can occur at any time and in any place. Common networking settings include:

- Informational Interviews
- Career Expos, Fairs, and Social Networking Events
- Online Networking Sites

**INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS**

An Informational Interview is a meeting that you initiate with a contact whose job, organization, industry or career path interest you. The goal of the informational interview is to gather important information about your field of interest while establishing and cultivating a professional relationship with your contact.

Informational interviewing is one of the most effective networking strategies. When managed correctly, your conversation and follow-up correspondence will make it very easy for your contact to keep you in mind when opportunities arise within her/his organization or in a peer institution.

The following strategies will help you to conduct a successful informational interview:

- Conduct background research on the person, organization, and industry
- Be prepared to discuss your goals and expectations for the meeting
- Do not ask for a job or internship opportunity!!!
- Ask informed questions about the contact’s professional background and current work; listen intently to the contact’s responses
- Ask for referrals to other contacts and resources that may be helpful
- Follow-up on tips and suggestions; update the contact on your progress
- Dress in formal interview attire
- Make sure that all of your correspondence is flawless and professional


**CAREER EXPOS, FAIRS, & SOCIAL NETWORKING EVENTS**

Career Expos, Fairs, and Social Networking Events offer excellent opportunities to meet with several professionals at one time and in one place. Because most people who attend these events already have the primary intention of networking, it can be much easier to engage in conversations about your professional interests and goals. Keep in mind that networking encounters in these
settings are often very brief. As such, they require even more effort on your behalf (background research and preparing a 30-second pitch) to communicate important information about yourself within a short period of time.

The following strategies will help you to successfully network at career expos, fairs, and social networking events:

▪ Conduct background research on the employers who will be attending
▪ Use your 30-second pitch to help frame your conversations with new contacts
▪ Use your time wisely; connect with the individuals on your priority list first
▪ If you are apprehensive about approaching a large group of people, try approaching someone who is standing alone or in a small group
▪ Bring several business cards; when you take a card from someone, offer your card in return
▪ Dress professionally and conservatively
▪ Write your first and last name and the name of your organization/school clearly on your name tag; place it on your upper shoulder
▪ Make eye contact, speak clearly, and listen intently without interrupting

For more information on career expos, fairs, and social networking events, visit the OCS How to Make the Most of Career Fairs Guide at http://wagner.nyu.edu/careers/resources/howto.php.

ONLINE NETWORKING

Online Networking, through websites like LinkedIn, has become one of the most effective ways to build your pool of professional contacts. They can provide you with access to people who you would not otherwise encounter, and they are great venues for sharing information about your professional interests and qualifications.

The following strategies will help you to successfully use online networking sites:

▪ Restrict networking activities to professionally oriented websites, such as LinkedIn, Idealist.org, and WAGNET
▪ Remember that employers and potential employers often use these websites (including socially oriented sites like MySpace and Facebook) to investigate candidates
▪ Make sure that the information and pictures posted on your profile are not professionally damaging. Use privacy settings to manage the visibility of your content
▪ Uphold normal standards of networking professionalism (send thank you notes, use professional language and grammar, follow up on referrals, etc)
The NYU Wagner Office of Career Services created WAGNET, our online networking resource, to leverage the career expertise and resources of Wagner’s experienced students and alumni. Students and alumni can use WAGNET to connect with working professionals who have volunteered for informational interviews and advice. For more information about WAGNET, visit http://wagner.nyu.edu/careers/network/index.php.

**OTHER NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES**

For a listing of Wagner sponsored events visit the following websites:
- General Wagner Events—http://wagner.nyu.edu/events
- Wagner OCS Events—http://wagner.nyu.edu/careers/events/index.php
- Helpful Networking Websites—http://wagner.nyu.edu/careers/resources/

For a listing of NYU sponsored events visit the following websites:
- General NYU Events—http://events.nyu.edu/
- NYU Wasserman Events—www.nyu.edu/careerdevelopment/

For a listing of professional associations visit:
- http://wagner.nyu.edu/careers/resources/associations.php

For a listing of events at outside organizations in NYC visit:
- NYC Community Calendar—http://citylimits.org/

**STAYING ORGANIZED**

As you begin networking, you will find that staying organized is an essential aspect of cultivating your pool of professional contacts. Be sure to gather as much relevant information as you can about the people you meet. Collect business cards, and (on the back of each card) write notes about where you met the contact, what you spoke about, and next steps for follow-up. Keep your business cards organized. If you are not able to get a business card, keep a list of contacts that contains all of the aforementioned information. Use the Networking Contact Log on p. 11 as a guide.

Always store your information in an accessible location and in a user-friendly format. This will make it easier for you to review and update key information about your professional contacts on a regular (and at least semi-annual) basis.
FOLLOWING UP & MAINTAINING YOUR NETWORK

For the savvy professional, following up on networking encounters is not an option—it is a necessity. Follow up on your networking interactions with a thank you note, and always let people know when and how they have been helpful. This positive feedback will encourage your contacts to do more on your behalf.

Once you find a job, stay connected by updating your professional contacts on your progress, attending industry events, and sharing relevant articles and announcements whenever appropriate. This is extremely important for individuals who network in fields where turnover is high, as contacts can easily move to other organizations, positions, and even geographic regions without your knowledge.

Remember, networking involves reciprocity. As you utilize your network’s resources, be willing to also act as a resource to your contacts.
NETWORKING CONTACT LOG SHEET

Date: _____________

Name & Title: ____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Organization: __________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Telephone/Email: _______________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

How We Met: ___________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Details of Conversation: _________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Further Action: _______________________________________________________ 
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Referrals: _____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Follow-Up Action & Date: _______________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
NETWORKING CONTACT LOG SHEET

Date: ______________

Name & Title: _____________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

Organization: _____________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

Telephone/Email: _________________________________________________________

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How We Met: _____________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

Details of Conversation: _________________________________________________

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Further Action: ___________________________________________________________

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Referrals: _______________________________________________________________

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Follow-Up Action & Date: _________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________
NETWORKING CONTACT LOG SHEET

Date: ________________

Name & Title: ____________________________________________________________
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_____________________________________________________________________

Organization: ____________________________________________________________
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Telephone/Email: _________________________________________________________
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How We Met: _____________________________________________________________
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Details of Conversation: ___________________________________________________
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_____________________________________________________________________

Further Action: ___________________________________________________________
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_____________________________________________________________________

Referrals: _______________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Follow-Up Action & Date: _________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

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