

► Commerce Career Services

Rouss & Robertson Halls, Suite 407 ♦ 434.924.7986 ♦ www.commerce.virginia.edu/career_services

Networking!

The Art of the Follow-Up

Networking will be an integral component of your career, starting right now and throughout the entire span of your career. Networking will always be an important tool for success!

What Is Networking?

- ✓ Networking, at the core, is the exchange of information, ideas, and support.
- ✓ Networking is about building relationships and is most effective when it's *mutually beneficial*.
The networks you build now will help you *now and in the future*.

Approach networking with the purpose of being an information seeker, NOT a job seeker. Job opportunities ARISE out of networking; they are NOT the reason to do it. Use networking to learn about different careers, industries, and organizations so that you are better prepared in your job search; in the process, build relationships that will help you throughout your career.

Networking can occur in many settings, but it is essential to always follow up. Initial contact is great, but you aren't really networking if the relationship does not continue. The follow-up is vital to achieving success in your networking efforts.

Below are several networking settings you may find yourself in and sample emails to serve as guides. For further assistance, please visit CCS!

Networking Opportunities and Sample Follow-Up Ideas

Networking Events/Receptions

These events occur throughout the school year and can be a great opportunity for you to network. Before the event, prepare questions to ask. Being able to have a meaningful conversation is the first step to building a relationship with company representatives. Ask them about their experiences, how they got started, and why they chose that firm, and let the conversation naturally progress from there. Time is typically limited at these events, so be respectful of their time and of others around. Ask company representatives if you can contact them later or if they would be willing to grab coffee sometime. Be sure to ask for a business card so that you can follow up. Within 24-48 hours, send a thank-you note and

include something specific you discussed (see below). You can also then ask about the possibility of meeting up sometime.

Allow the conversations to guide you on how to best follow up, and be sure to maintain the relationship.

SAMPLE: Thank-you email (send 24-48 hours after event)

Hi Angelina –

It was such a pleasure having the chance to meet you at the Company Networking Event yesterday. Thank you so much for your time and for sharing your story about some of your struggles breaking into the advertising industry. I certainly feel as though I gained some valuable insight that will help me on my own job search. As I start my own journey, would be alright to stay in contact with you if I have any questions? Again, thank you so much for your time.

*Thank you,
Brad Pitt*

After the thank-you has been sent, the follow-up is essential (and unfortunately too often is forgotten).

SAMPLE: Follow-up to request informational interview

Hi Michael–

Thank you so much again for taking to time to speak with me at the Company Networking Event in November. It was great to have a chance to hear a little bit about your background in investment banking, and hearing about some of the deals you worked on has certainly heightened my interest in this unique field.

When we spoke, you mentioned that if I was ever in New York to let you know and we could possibly grab some coffee. If that offer is still open, I would like to take you up on that, as I will be in New York in early January and would love to have an opportunity chat with you more about your background and how you got started in your field. I will be in the city Jan. 7-11, so if you have any availability during that time, please let me know!

*Thank you,
Catherine Zeta-Jones*

SAMPLE: Follow-up to update on advice given

Hi Jennifer –

Thank you so much again for taking the time to speak with me at the Consulting Company Networking Event in October. You provided such great advice on preparing for case interviews and recommended that I speak with Matt Damon.

I wanted to let you know that last week I had the opportunity to speak with him, and he provided some great insight into how to prepare for interviewing. He even offered to do a practice case interview with me!

After my conversations with both you and Matt, my case interviewing skills have improved greatly. I cannot thank you enough for encouraging me to speak with him as well as for all of your helpful advice!

*Thank You,
Ben Affleck*

SAMPLE: Follow-up with alum

Hi Justin –

Thanks again for spending some time speaking with me at the Alumni Networking Event. It was great to meet someone also representing Block 5 and hearing about your time at McIntire. I wanted to let you know that as we get closer to the end of the semester Block 5 is now back on top in the cup standings! We have two more events to go, so hopefully, we can stay there. I will keep you posted.

*Thank you,
Jessica Biel*

Several other follow-up samples can be found in the informational interviewing section of this handout.

Information Sessions

Information sessions are very similar to networking events/receptions, with employers visiting Grounds to provide information on their organization and job opportunities. To find these sessions, go to the UCS Calendar at <http://www.career.virginia.edu/calendar/> and click on employer presentations at the top right corner.

SAMPLE: Thank-you to recruiter

Hi Beyoncé –

Thank you so much for taking the time to present at the Company Information Session and for speaking with me for a few minutes afterward. It was great to have the opportunity to hear more about Big Company and its internship program. I am very excited about this internship opportunity and am grateful for your advice on how to highlight my background in engineering and McIntire experience on my application.

*Thanks,
Jay-Z*

SAMPLE: Follow-up to someone you met at information session (not recruiter)

Hi Stacy –

I hope all is well! I wanted to let you know that I got the internship with Your Company! I just accepted the offer and will be in the New York Office this summer. I cannot thank you enough for your advice when we spoke at the information session and, of course, your help preparing for the interview. I felt much more confident going into the interview and am very excited about this opportunity!

*Thank you,
George Clooney*

SAMPLE: Follow-up to ask questions

Hi Kyra –

I hope things are going well! After speaking with you at the information session, I have had the opportunity to speak with a few other McIntire alums who work at Your Company. This has been so helpful, and when we spoke before, you mentioned that if I had other questions to feel free to contact you. Hopefully, that offer still stands, as I have a few questions I am hoping you can help me with.

In my conversations, the Capital Markets and Leveraged Finance groups within Investment Banking have been mentioned, and from looking at the website, they certainly look interesting. Could you provide more information about these groups, and do you know of anyone I could contact to learn more? Again, thank you for all the information. I really appreciate it!

*Thank you,
Kevin Bacon*

Employer-in-Residence Program

This program is a great way to not only receive great advice, but also to meet and network with employers. Every fall and spring, employers visit the McIntire School and offer resume reviews, coffee networking, and mock interviews. Check the McIntire calendar for Employer-in-Residence events, and watch for emails from CCS, as the mock interview timeslots fill up fast!

SAMPLE: Thank-you follow-up

Hi Ozzy –

Thank you so much for all of the helpful advice you provided when we did the mock interview last Tuesday. Your advice on how to approach an interview really resonated with me. I feel so much more confident in my ability to craft meaningful answers in an interview after working on that with you and am much more prepared for the recruiting season!

*Thank you,
Sharon Osbourne*

Job Fairs

Job fairs provide an opportunity to meet employers to learn more about different organizations and positions there. Navigating a career fair requires planning, and advance preparation is essential in order to make the most out of the experience. The [Career Search and Resources](#) page provides valuable resources, and you can always visit a CCS counselor for help!

SAMPLE: Thank-you

Hi Keith –

Thank you so much for speaking with me at the Big Career Fair yesterday. Hearing about the different groups you have worked in at Large Company really painted a great picture of the culture and opportunities there. I will be sending in an application for the position you encouraged me to apply for. Again, thank you; I hope to speak with you again in the future!

*Thank you,
Nicole Kidman*

SAMPLE: Follow-up with update and a request for more help

Hi Will –

Thanks again for all your help answering my questions about the application process! You have been so helpful, and I truly appreciate all of the feedback you have provided. I wanted to let you know that I recently had an interview and have been invited back for a second-round interview at the Boston office! I am very excited about this opportunity, and if you have any advice on how to prepare for this, I would really appreciate it. I hope to hear from you soon.

*Thanks,
Jada Pinkett Smith*

Informational Interviewing

Informational interviewing gives you a great opportunity to gather career information from people who are working in an industry, with an organization, in a particular role, or in a certain location you would like to target. These “insiders” can provide essential wisdom, insight, and advice about what their career and industry are like, what it’s like to live and work in a certain location, and what the culture is like at their organization. This information can help you as you begin your job search, craft that perfect cover letter, and prepare for an interview. This is how you start to build great relationships and expand your network!

As mentioned previously, you can ask for informational interviews with people you meet at a networking event, job fair, or information session.

SAMPLE: Asking for an informational interview after meeting at an information session

Hi Tracy –

I hope things are going well up in DC! I thoroughly enjoyed speaking to you at the Information Session you presented at UVa last month. Your story of not doing so well in your first interview but then learning how to better prepare and then receiving your dream offer was so inspiring!

As I am in my third year at McIntire and just starting my search and exploring options, I would love the opportunity to speak with you further about your role and the industry. If it would be alright, would you mind scheduling a time when we could talk over the phone?

So that you can have a little more information about me, I have provided my resume. I would greatly appreciate your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

*Sincerely,
Michael J. Fox*

Also, reach out to people already in your network and to your peers in the different organizations you're part of to find out if there is someone you should connect with. You can also find people to connect with through LinkedIn and through the University's alumni database, HoosOnline.

SAMPLE: Asking for an informational interview from an alum you find on HoosOnline

Hi Robert –

I hope all is well. My name is Kristen Stewart, and currently I am an M.S. in Commerce student at the McIntire School of Commerce. I found your name on HoosOnline in the UCAN section and am very interested in learning more about the marketing field.

I would love to learn more about your role in Your Company and how you got started in such an exciting and competitive industry. Would you be willing to spend some time speaking with me about your experience and background?

I have attached a copy of my resume just for your information so that you can have a little more background about me. I am hopeful that you will be willing to have a phone conversation when your schedule allows. Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Sincerely,
Kristen Stewart
Phone
Email*

Once you've scheduled an informational interview, think about meaningful questions to ask. CCS' handout [Networking and Informational Interviewing](#) can provide help you prepare for an informational interview.

When calling for an initial (or even follow-up) networking call, start with an introduction similar to the following:

Hi, Faith. This is Tim McGraw, a third-year student from McIntire. [Pause to see if they remember you, but continue after 1-2 seconds if they don't recall your name.] We communicated via email and set up a time to speak about your work and how you got started in advertising, as I am interested in a possible career in this field. [Pause] Is this still a good time to speak?

If yes: Thank you so much for taking the time out of your day to spend a little time chatting with me about your career. I really appreciate it! [Begin your questions/conversation.]

If no (e.g., something has come up or they completely forgot): I understand, and that is completely fine. Would it be alright if we set up a different time to speak? I would love to have the opportunity to chat with you at a time that's more convenient, if that's OK.

When closing the conversation, ALWAYS say thank you! If during your conversation you are advised to contact someone in particular or to look at a particular resource, make sure you have all information needed to contact that person or find that resource. It is also highly recommended that you ask if it would be alright for you to contact them again if you have additional questions (or you can simply ask if it would be alright to stay in touch).

SAMPLE: Thank-you

Hi Victoria –

Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy day to talk with me about the advertising industry, your work, and how you got started. Hearing more about all of the different projects you have worked on has inspired me, and I am convinced that it is the perfect industry for me. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing about your experience working on the Starbucks project, and hope someday that I will be able to contribute to similar projects! I now have a much better understanding of the field as well. Again, thank you so much for your time.

*Thank you,
David Beckham*

Hopefully, you had a great conversation and learned a lot. There are several ways you can follow up and continue to build the relationship. Let them know about progress you have made, new applications, or internship and job offers; if you read a book they recommended or connected with a person they told you about; or if there is an interesting article you think they would enjoy. All are great reasons to send a note. There are many different ways to stay in touch—the important thing is that you do stay in touch!

SAMPLE: Follow-up after reading recommended book(s)

Hi Javier –

I hope you are doing well and enjoying the holiday season! I am writing to express my gratitude for your recommendation to read Case Interview Secrets and Case In Point as I prepare for case interviews. I have had the chance to review each, and both are absolutely superb in demystifying the process and helping readers prepare for these interviews.

I truly appreciate your advice and am wondering if you have heard of Crack the Case System by David Ohrvall. I came across this resource as I was looking for the books you suggested. If you are acquainted with this book, do you mind sharing your thoughts about how helpful it is?

I appreciate any insight and am truly grateful for your other recommendations.

*Thank you,
Penelope Cruz*

SAMPLE: Follow-up to inform you are going a different direction

Hi Gisele –

Hope you have had a great summer! It seems to have flown right by! I wanted to let you know that my internship went really well and that I learned a great deal. I am grateful to have had that experience, and I had the opportunity to be exposed to a few other areas in the firm.

It was so great to learn more about some other areas I had not really thought about before, and I am now thinking I may shift my focus a bit more into wealth management. As I turn my attention into this new direction, I would be so grateful for any advice you may have or if you can recommend anyone I should talk to. Thank you so much, and I hope to hear from you soon.

*Thanks,
Tom Brady*

SAMPLE: Follow-up after talking with someone the professional contact has mentioned

Hi Will –

I hope this message finds you well! I cannot thank you enough for speaking with me in January and providing such great advice! Learning about your background and how you got started in the advertising industry has helped me so much, and I have since taken a very different approach in my career search.

When we spoke, you mentioned that I should contact Jane Smith from ABC Agency about various roles in the firm. I had the opportunity to speak with her a few days ago! She provided so much insight and great advice about not only roles, but various career paths in advertising and public relations! I cannot thank you enough for suggesting I speak with her. The advice from both you and Jane will be a tremendous help as I explore this career path further.

*Thank you,
Kate Middleton*

Thoughts and Tips

- ✓ Be respectful of the company representative's/professional contact's time. Understand the different settings, and respect those around you. Follow-up is important, but don't send numerous emails or become an annoyance (e.g., don't send an email every two weeks – this is a professional contact, not a new best friend).
- ✓ Don't ask your professional contact to get you a job. As you network, remember your goals. Yes, you are looking for an internship and/or job, but really you are seeking information about those careers, and how to get into those careers. A job may arise out of networking, but use networking as a tool to gather (and share!) information.
- ✓ Don't burn bridges! Even if you decide a particular career path isn't for you, always thank the person you've connected with. It really is a small world!
- ✓ Be gracious, and NEVER forget to say thank you!