



**COLORADO
COLLEGE**

Career Center



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Using Your Network

A good job search involves responding to posted advertisements, contacting organizations directly, and reaching out to personal contacts. All of these strategies are, in a word, **networking**.



Developing a Network

Anyone that you've ever met is a potential contact, so incorporate networking into your everyday life. Your network might include:

- Friends, roommates, classmates
- Members of organizations you belong to (sororities, fraternities, campus activities, etc.)
- Family and relatives
- Faculty
- Administrators
- Colorado College Alumni and alumni of your high school or previous colleges
- Former or current work, internship, and volunteer supervisors or co-workers

Tiger Link

Tiger Link is an online platform for students to connect with alumni who can assist in exploring careers and industries, learning about companies/organizations, and other career-related questions. The platform facilitates alumni and student mentoring relationships by allowing students to search the alumni directory for people who are willing to help.

To access Tiger Link, visit **cctigerlink.com**. If you have a LinkedIn account, we recommend you connect to Tiger Link via LinkedIn. This will save you the extra steps of filling out information. *Note that Tiger Link will never post to LinkedIn or Facebook without asking to do so, nor will it display your contacts to other Tiger Link users.*

Your first time logging in:

1. Provide up-to-date information for your profile.
2. You may need to wait to be approved by our staff; this could take up to one business day.

After the initial set up:

1. Explore Tiger Link's features! You can view photos, learn about events, read CC news, and more.
2. **To find alumni, click on the Directory tab in the site's upper navigation bar.**
3. You can use the search bar at the top of the Directory to search for specific alumni, companies, or by keyword; use the Refine your search tool on the right side of the page to filter alumni by location, degree, class year, place of work, and/or ways in which they're willing to help.

Approaching Your Network

People are more likely to assist you after they meet and get to know you personally; face-to-face meetings are the most productive and informative. Phone calls, emails, and letters are other ways of making contact. For people you don't know yet, send a letter of introduction and state when you will make contact to arrange a time to talk with them.

Informational Interviews

An informational interview is an arranged meeting with a person working in your career field of interest. These are an excellent way to meet with people and gather information face-to-face; speaking with people currently working in targeted field(s) can give you a realistic, practical, and “up close” sense of the profession.

Setting Up an Informational Interview

1. Introduce yourself. **2.** Tell them how you learned about them/who referred you. **3.** Briefly explain why you want to talk with them; make it clear you are **not** asking for a job. **4.** Ask to meet in person or by phone at their convenience.

Example Informational Interview Request: “Hello Ms. Smith, my name is Georgia Read and I am a junior at Colorado College. I am exploring possible careers in marketing and I found your profile in the Colorado College Alumni LinkedIn group. I wonder if I might set up a 20 minute meeting at your convenience to learn about your experience and see what suggestions you might have for someone interested in the field. Do you have a few minutes to talk with me?”

Before the Interview

1. Research the individual's organization. **2.** Write down and prioritize questions you want to ask them. **3.** Check out Google or LinkedIn to see if you can learn more about them. **4.** Prepare a copy of your resume.

Go Time

1. Dress professionally if you're meeting in person. **2.** Bring your resume, your questions, paper, and a pen. **3.** Arrive 10-15 minutes before your scheduled meeting time. **4. You called this meeting; be prepared to direct the conversation.** In answering your questions, they should be talking about 80% of the time.

Tips

- Clearly define your career objectives.
- Be specific about what you want.
- Ask if you can write what they say down before you take any notes.
- Keep track of the time.
- Have your resume on hand, but don't assume they want to see it.
- Don't ask for too much at one time. Think about it this way: ask for advice, not favors.
- Grow your network by asking for people they know you could talk to; ask if you can say they referred you.

After the Interview

1. Send a thank-you note within 24 hours of your meeting. **2.** Keep them informed on your progress. **3.** If they referred you to someone else, get in touch with their referral. Plan on letting them know how that conversation goes. **4.** Think about how you did—were your questions formulated well? How can you improve in the future?

Questions You Might Ask

Think about asking if you can email your questions ahead of time to use your time together more effectively. At the very least, have questions prepared—again, you must be ready to direct the conversation.

- How did you get started in this field?
- What does a typical day/week look like for you?
- What are characteristics of successful people at your organization/in your field?
- What skills and education are required to enter the field?
- What entry-level positions are available in this field?
- What kinds of problems do you deal with at work?
- What do you enjoy most about your work? What are some of the frustrations with your work?
- What do you anticipate will be hot issues in the field in the next few years?
- If you had to do it over, would you have done anything differently on your career path?
- What advice do you have for someone looking to break into this field?
- Are internships important for making one competitive in this field?
- Are there other people that you would suggest I talk with to learn more about this organization/field? May I tell them you referred me to them?

Networking Events

Academic departments and the Career Center often sponsor programs to interact with alumni or professionals in a variety of industries. Take advantage of these opportunities to meet people who can become part of your network.

Tips

Ask for the **list of participants** ahead of time. If not available, ask for it when you arrive. Review the list and decide who you need to meet.

Wear your nametag complete with your **first and last name** written clearly. Always introduce yourself with your full name.

Make a point to collect a **business card** and ask if you can follow-up the conversation with a phone call or a more in-depth meeting.

Circulate. It's okay to thank someone for chatting with you, then politely excuse yourself to meet someone new. Open up discussions that give you opportunities to follow up on as many leads as possible.

People love to talk about themselves; ask open-ended, well thought out questions, and show genuine interest in people's responses.

Be assertive. Introduce yourself; it helps to be able to name some of your areas of interest so that people can learn how they might be helpful to you.

Following Up



Following up is the single most important part of networking. You build your network by arranging informational interviews and attending networking events; you **maintain** your network by following up. People across industries express frustration over never hearing back from an individual they have helped. Don't be that person! Stay in contact with people that have helped you.

These suggestions apply to all forms of professional networking, including **networking events**.

- Make notes as soon as possible to remind you who you talked with, on what platform (e.g. LinkedIn, Tiger Link, email, etc.), the date of the meeting or communication, what transpired, and additional contact names gained at the meeting. Keep copies of all correspondence.
- Initiate conversations in the future. Call or email your new contact and remind them who you are, where you met, and what you spoke about (refer to your notes; see the suggestion above). Ask questions based on new information you have learned and to update them on your progress.
- If your contact referred you to someone else, get in touch with their referral. Let your contact know how that conversation went.
- Stay in touch even if you're not interested in that person's industry or work. You might at some point want them to refer you to someone they know or for an internship or job.
- Check in with your contacts on a regular basis. Personalize your communications—**don't sent mass emails**.
- Be respectful and remember that your contacts are *people*; treat them how you would like them to treat you!

"It's not about who you know, it's about who knows you."

It's often said that a good networker never has to look for a job; *the good jobs find them*. Take the opportunities you are presented with, both formal and informal, and build relationships to your advantage. Soon enough, others will be coming to you for your advice and expertise, and you, in turn, will be able to provide the mentorship which was so vital for your own career.