

How to Network with Employers...

Networking is...

- Building relationships with others**
- Done in order to help them and be helped by them**
- One way to work on achieving career/life goals**

Giving and obtaining information is central to networking. As a job seeker at Interview Practice Day, for example, you might **ask for career and job hunting information**, such as jobs or internships related to your qualifications and interests. At this point, the help you offer employers might be primarily **your expression of appreciation** for their coming to campus to help Mason students.

Networking at Structured Events (e.g., Interview Practice Day, & OCI Information Sessions)

Before the event:

- Prepare a brief **personal pitch (30 seconds)** that:
 1. tells about information you seek such as **type of internship or position**.
 2. describes your major and **strongest qualifications** that you wish to use in an internship or permanent position.
 3. **asks the employer for information** (such as hiring plans for entry-level positions at their companies; internships or part-time jobs).
- Attend to **appropriate dress and grooming**.
- If you wear a **nametag**, wear it on your right side just below your shoulder.
- Consider preparing **business or networking cards**. Keep them in an easy-to-reach place. For **job hunting at fairs, bring resumes** targeted to particular types of jobs.
- When possible, **research** who is coming and learn some information about them. (especially for fairs)

At the networking event:

- **Make eye contact, smile, and shake hands firmly.**
- **Introduce yourself** clearly and slowly saying your first and last name.
- Focus carefully on the **employer's name**. Repeat the name so that you can remember. If uncertain about the pronunciation, ask if you have pronounced it correctly. Use Mr., Ms., and last name unless invited to use first name.
- **Be genuine and express appreciation** for the employer coming to campus.
- Give your **personal pitch** and ask for the information you need.
- Ask if you may have a **business card**, if appropriate. Offer the employer your card (if you have one).
- **Avoid monopolizing one employer's time**. Spend a few minutes connecting and thank the employer.

After the event:

- **Write on the back of the employer's business card** a note to remind you of what you discussed and any action you committed to take.
- **Follow up** with selected employers. Send a well-written letter or e-mail that mentions something you discussed. After fairs, send your resume with the letter. If there is mutual interest, you might even call the recruiter that evening and leave a voicemail thank you message.

Additional Networking Resources

- **Mason's Career Network** – an on-line network of Mason alumni and friends with whom you can meet for career and job hunting information: <http://careers.gmu.edu/cn> username: student password: jack\$\$pot
- **Books** in the Career Library in 348 SUB1, such as *Nonstop Networking* by Andrea R. Nierenberg or *A Foot in the Door: Networking Your Way into the Hidden Job Market* by Katherine Hansen

Networking Examples

Introduction:

- **Joan:** Hello, I'm Joan Wilkins.
Employer: Hi, I am Rhonda Lee with Brite, Inc. I'm pleased to meet you.
Joan: I am pleased to meet you too, **Ms. Lee.**
Repeat employer's name. Use first name if the employer suggests that you do so

Opening Line (3 examples):

- I really appreciate your coming out to help us prepare for our job searches.
- This event is truly helpful. Thanks for coming on campus to help out.
- I was pleased to see that your company would be participating in this event.

Personal Pitch (2 examples):

- **Junior seeking summer job:** I am a Computer Science junior seeking a summer position in a company such as yours. In particular, I am interested in networking, software development, and database applications. Academically, I am doing well and have a solid foundation in several computer languages, applications, and databases. In addition, I work at Patriot Computers where I sell a wide range of computers and supplies. I've been selected as Employee of the Month on two occasions, and my supervisor describes me as taking initiative and being a good team player. It's been a great place to work, but in the summer I'm looking for a more substantive experience. Do you have any summer positions appropriate for someone with my qualifications?
- **Senior seeking permanent position:** I am graduating this year with a degree in public administration. I focused my coursework and two internship experiences on issues concerning the environment, and I am looking for a position in a nonprofit organization with opportunities to use my good research, writing, analytical, and computer skills. Could you tell me about your organization's hiring plans that may be appropriate for a person with my skills and interests?

Follow-up Questions:

- I'd be very interested in applying for the internship position you mentioned. What would you suggest as a next step?
- Since your organization is not hiring persons (or interns) with my skills and interests, do you have suggestions of other employers who might be?
- May I contact you if I have further questions? How do you prefer to be contacted?
- Of course, I am trying to improve my networking skills. Would you please give me feedback on what I've done well and what needs improvement? (appropriate for *Interview Practice Day with Employers*)

Closing: (Shake hands as you thank them)

- Thank you, Ms._____, for your suggestions and feedback. I may see you later today.
- Thank you for the helpful information. It's been a pleasure to meet you, Mr._____.
- I appreciate your answering my questions, and I will follow up as you suggested. Thank you, Ms._____.

What Next: Write your own personal pitch. See your career counselor with questions and to practice.