

Career and Employability Essentials

Networking



Networking is about connecting and building relationships with people or organisations who can help with your job search or advance your career. It can help you find opportunities related to your studies, as well as help you learn more about the profession and industry trends. It involves telling people you are looking for work and the types of roles that interest you. It is an important part of your overall job search.

How will networking help me?

Many jobs are not advertised, so being connected to a network can help you find opportunities in this 'hidden job market'. Being well informed about roles and industry can help with interviews and talking to new people can also build your overall confidence.

Potential networks consist of **everyone** you already know and others you've yet to meet! They can:

- Give advice
- Provide information about the industry
- Tell you about job leads or openings
- Introduce you to hiring managers
- Hire you now or in the future
- Mentor or coach you

Getting started: steps to networking!

If you feel shy about asking for help or talking to people you don't know, that's quite natural. The more you do this the more comfortable you will feel. Most people are happy to assist and enjoy talking about their work. The most important thing is to just get started! Be brave, bold, and curious!

- Make a list of all your contacts, including:
 - Friends and family
 - People you study with (e.g., lecturers, teachers, students, other people from Unitec, Te Pūkenga)
 - Work colleagues (paid or volunteer)
 - People you know through community, church, sports and other activities.
 - People you meet through professional organisations or meetings
 - People you meet through chance
 - Attending lectures, conventions, meetings in your field
 - LinkedIn

Remember all these people in turn have their own contacts that you can potentially tap into!

- You can email first to introduce yourself (and what you are looking for) and break the ice. If someone has referred you, mention their name.
- Follow up with a phone call. Practice what you want to say **before** calling! Be to the point about your purpose, include a brief introduction about yourself and the information you need. E.g.
"Hi, my name is.... (I'm following up on my email from last week), do you have time to talk? I will be graduating from Unitec, Te Pūkenga with a degree in and want to get into the field of..... I'm wondering if I could meet with you for 20 minutes to get some advice and insights into the best approach to get into the job market in this industry"
- Note! You are not asking for a job, but seeking advice, leads, information, referrals. Be mindful of not taking up too much of their time.
- If they cannot help you, it is ok to politely ask if they can suggest someone who can. Smile and thank them for their time.

Get organised, be prepared!

- Research the organisation. Think about what you want to know and write a list of questions.
- Update your CV! You can ask for advice on your CV (a great way to get them to read it!)
- Listen during your meeting for ways to add value e.g. a project you could complete, or volunteer your time.
- If appropriate ask for recommendations of other people you could talk to.
- Keep a record of all contacts and conversations.
- ALWAYS send a thank you email to everyone who is helpful in your job search.