

Networking for Employment

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Why Network?

Introduction

What can networking do for you?

- *Lead to information on job openings not yet advertised*
- *Lead to an inside connection at a company*
- *Provide you with insights into an industry or profession*
- *Help you get advice on your job search methods*

Networking is an important part of your job-search. Approximately 75 to 95 percent of job openings are not advertised in sources such as the newspaper or Internet. You can find out about these "hidden" jobs only by talking to other people or networking.

Networking includes everything from a casual conversation with a friend to an informational interview with a potential employer.

Networking doesn't mean asking everyone you run into for a job. It means building relationships so that you can comfortably ask for ideas, advice, and referrals to those with hiring power.

This guide takes you through the steps of building a network and how to make your network help you with your job search.

More information on networking:

- ***8 Reasons Why Networking is Essential for your Career in Canada. Arrive***
<https://arrivein.com/career-ca/8-reasons-why-networking-is-essential-for-your-career-in-canada/>
- ***The Value of Networking. Settlement.org***
<https://settlement.org/ontario/employment/working-in-canada/workplace-culture/the-value-of-networking/>

2. Who is in Your Network?

Start with people you know

Your network is probably already bigger than you think. It includes your family, friends, and even casual acquaintances.

Make a list of people you know including:

- family members
- friends
- neighbours
- former employers and co-workers
- members of clubs or community organizations you belong to
- classmates
- teachers and coaches

Also think about people you've met through your close connections: your sister's co-worker; your best friend's boss. Don't forget to include people like your doctor, accountant, or yoga instructor.

The following tools can help you identify your network:

- ***Who is in Your Network? Alberta Work Search Online***
<https://alis.alberta.ca/look-for-work/networking/who-is-in-your-network/>

- **Land a Job by Mind Mapping Your Network. Freeman Leonard**
<https://www.freemanleonard.com/career-advice-land-a-job-by-mind-mapping-your-network/>

Growing your network

You can expand your network in a number of ways. Some useful approaches include:

Professional Associations

Joining a professional association is a great way to meet people in your field of interest. You can attend professional development seminars, tradeshow and information events.

Information on local professional associations can be found at:

- **Associations Canada**
Available at VPL Central Branch, 060 A84

Volunteering

Volunteering for a charity, community organization or professional group is a good way to meet potential business and employment contacts. Volunteering is also often recognized as valuable work-related experience by employers.

Volunteer opportunities can be found at:

- **Go Volunteer**
<https://govolunteer.ca/>
- **Volunteer BC**
<https://volunteerbc.bc.ca/>
- **Charity Village**
<https://charityvillage.com/app/volunteer-listings>

Job Search Programs

Job clubs can bring together people who are going through the same experiences you are when looking for work. Job clubs are a great way to network and can be very effective in your job search.

Job search programs in Metro Vancouver can be found at:

- **WorkBC Employment Programs**
<https://www.workbc.ca/Employment-Services.aspx>
- **Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants**
<https://www.welcomebc.ca/Work-in-B-C/Career-Paths-for-Skilled-Immigrants>
Provides referrals to employers and mentors, opportunities for Canadian work experience through work-study programs, and other supports.
- **Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia (IECB) Programs**
<https://iecbc.ca/our-work/programs/>
The IECBC offers a selection of programs that assist newcomers gain entrance into the local workforce.

More information on growing your network:

- **Build and Expand your Career Network: 10 Proven Techniques**
<https://www.livecareer.com/resources/jobs/networking/expanding-career-network>
- **Career Cruising**
Look under "Employment": Work Search – Networking Strategies
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>
Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

NOTE: You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database.

3. Preparing your Networking “Toolkit”

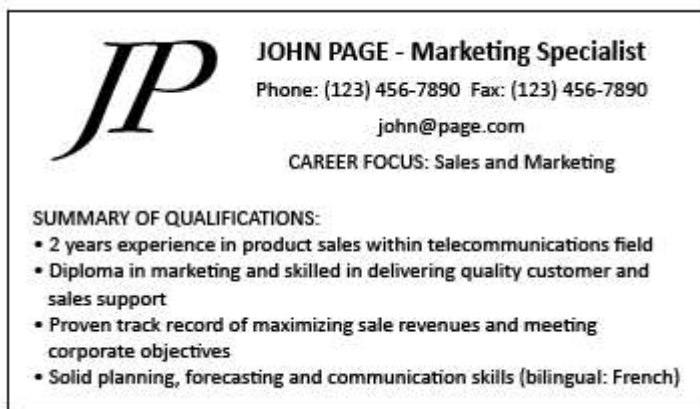
Networking Business Cards

Networking business cards have the look of a traditional business card. They provide your career and contact information to people you meet in social and professional situations.

Your networking business card can include:

- Name
- Credentials
- Career focus
- Contact information: telephone number, email, website
- Summary of skills, qualifications, experience and background (on either the front or reverse of the card)

Sample networking card:



From: Career Cruising database

More information on creating business cards available at:

- **6 Tips for Networking Business Cards. Indeed**
<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/networking-business-cards>
- **What to Include on a Career Networking Business Card**
<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-to-include-on-a-business-card-for-job-seekers-2062582>
- **Career Cruising**
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>
Look under "Employment" - Work Search: Creating a Calling Card.

Elevator Speech

An elevator speech is a brief introduction you can state in the time it takes to share an elevator ride with someone new. It's a very short summary of who you are, what you do, and even what you're looking for.

While there is no exact formula, the point is to be memorable in a positive way.

Further details on how to create and deliver an elevator speech available at:

- **Craft a 30-second Elevator Speech to Impress Potential and Current Employers and Associations**
<https://canadianimmigrant.ca/careers-and-education/craft-a-30-second-elevator-speech-to-impress-potential-and-current-employers-and-associates>
- **Elevator Pitch. Western University Career Education**
http://career.uwo.ca/take_action/elevator_pitch.html

4. Types of Networking

Informal

Informal Networking uses your existing network of friends, family, neighbours and other acquaintances to help develop employment opportunities. It may involve a casual conversation at a social event or an everyday encounter with a friend.

During your job search, you may want to direct your conversations by asking questions and listening for useful information about potential employment opportunities.

Keep your conversations casual and don't feel pressured to turn everything into a job pitch. If someone looks like they might be a good contact to pursue further, ask how you can keep in touch.

Informational Interviews

An informational interview is a brief meeting with someone who is employed in your field, position or organization of interest. Informational interviews may help you:

- Get a personal perspective on occupations and organizations of interest
- Obtain advice and information that may help you target your job search efforts
- Practise interviewing and networking skills
- Hear about opportunities before they are posted
- Broaden your network

An informational interview is about information and advice. It is **not** about calling someone up and asking them for a job.

Although not all requests for information interviews are successful, many people respond very positively to the initiative and courage it takes to ask for an information interview.

More advice on getting and preparing for informational interviews:

- ***Tapping into the Hidden Job Market: Informational Interviewing.***
York University Career Centre

<https://careers.yorku.ca/students-and-new-grads/handouts>

Under the “Job Search & Networking Strategies” heading

- ***The Ultimate Guide to an Informational Interview***

<https://www.livecareer.com/career/advice/interview/informational-interviewing>

Cold Calling

Cold calling involves contacting organizations of interest and attempting to meet with the person who has the decision-making power to hire you. A cold call is a telephone call to someone you do not know, even though the employer has not advertised a job opening.

Cold-calling prospective employers can seem scary, but career experts say it can be a powerful tool.

Some people prefer to make initial contact by sending a letter of introduction first (also known as broadcast letter), followed by a telephone call.

How to Prepare for and Make a Cold Call

- Prepare a list of companies to contact through company research.
(Tip: Central Branch of the Vancouver Public Library has a great collection of Company Directories which are a good source of company information)
- Find out the name of the hiring manager by making a preliminary phone call to the company to obtain this information
- Have an outline of key points you want to discuss with an employer before you make your call
- Have a copy of your resume and any information about the company that you are contacting in front of you
- Always state your name and the purpose of your call
- Keep the calls brief - less than 3 minutes is best
- Tell the potential employer about your qualifications first, this way you are giving them something that they can value
- If the manager seems interested, ask if you can meet to discuss possibilities in more detail.
- If the manager can't meet with you, ask if you can send in your resume.
- Whatever happens, thank your contact. Send a thank-you note and re-state your interest in working for his/her organization.
- Keep the information on your contact and his/her organization. You never know when you might need it again.
- If you get turned down, do not take it as a personal rejection

Further advice on cold calling:

- **Cold Calling: a time-tested method of job hunting. LiveCareer**
<https://www.livecareer.com/resources/jobs/search/cold-calling>
- **What is Cold Calling for Jobs? (With Steps and Tips). Indeed**
<https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/cold-calling-for-jobs>

Online Social Networking

Social networking websites are valuable tools that can help you increase the number of professionals you meet and connect with. Some of these tools include:

- *LinkedIn*
- *Facebook*
- *Twitter*
- *MeetUp*

For more information on social networking see the separate guide:

- *Online Social Networks for Employment. A guide for newcomers to British Columbia*

<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guides>

[Search "Online Social Networks"]

5. Additional Resources

Still looking for more information? Try looking at the following resources:

- ***Networking for People who Hate Networking: a Field Guide for Introverts, the Overwhelmed, and the Underconnected*** / Devora Zack. 2012. Vancouver Public Library Downloadable Audiobook
- ***Friend of a Friend: Understanding the Hidden Networks That Can Transform your Life and your Career*** / David Burkus. 2018. Central Library, 650.13 B959f
- ***Confident Introvert: a Practical Guide to Connecting With Others at Networking Events and Beyond*** / Stephanie Thoma. 2020. Central Library, 650.13 T45
- ***Knock 'em Dead Social Networking*** / Martin John Yate. 2014. Central Library, 650.13 Y31k

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in Central Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic>

