



What is networking?

Professional networking is not about walking into a room full of strangers and convincing them to be your friend. Nor is it about identifying the most senior person in the room. Networking is about gradually building up a list of contacts who might help you progress in your career.



Learning how to network

Networking is an important professional skill that can help you get ahead. It is normal to feel uncomfortable and awkward. If you are nervous, team up with a friend who can help with introductions to get you started.

To start any conversation, you will need the answers to these four questions – and make sure you have a good handshake!

My name is....	I am currently studying
In the future I would like to...	An interesting fact about myself is...

The good news is that networking does get easier. Try to start attending events you feel comfortable with, perhaps where you will know a few people. Over time, you will get to know more people and find it easier to walk through the door.

Virtual networking

Whilst there is no replacement to the benefits of meeting people in the real world, there are lots of networking events that take place online. There are lots of professional group pages on Facebook, and LinkedIn and is a great way to connect with people across the globe.

Checkout [Eventbrite](#) for some ideas.

The advantages of networking

- **Career advice.** Networking is your chance to hear and meet with experts from different sectors.
- **Information.** Need advice with a specific project? Networking events can be a great chance to get some advice.
- **Vacancies.** Let your network know when you are on the lookout for a job. They might be able to point you in the right direction or you perhaps even offer you a job.
- **Speculative applications.** Want to work for a specific company? Having a contact in the company will make sure your application reaches the right hands, along with their seal of approval.

Tips for networking

- Dress professionally
- Have your elevator pitch ready!
- Make sure you listen, as well as talk
- Prepare some questions to ask
- Take a few notes
- Follow-up with people you liked, either by email or over social media, after the event