

Career Development Assignment

Career Networking

What is Networking?

Networking is an effective, proven strategy for identifying and pursuing a fulfilling career. This age-old tradition can be defined as the art of building and sustaining mutually beneficial relationships. In the simplest terms, networking refers to the act of gathering or exchanging career-related information with others who share a mutual interest in a given industry or occupation. While networking is often associated with job searching, it can serve many other uses: career exploration, gaining insight of possible career paths, continuing one's education, and many others. Regardless of where you are in the career development process, networking can and should play a starring role.

Assignment

This assignment will introduce you to the concept of networking and provide some practical exercises that you can apply throughout your professional career.

Part 1: Develop Your 30-Second Commercial. (See instructions below.)

Part 2: Deliver your 30-Second Commercial at an on-campus recruitment or networking event.

- Deliver your 30-Second Commercial to at least three company representatives at the Fall/Spring Job Fair (or other pre-approved on-campus networking event). Request a business card from every representative you speak with during the event.
- Write a one-page summary of your experience. What did you learn about the organizations? How was your "commercial" received? Did you receive feedback from any representatives? In what ways could you improve your performance next time?
- Submit your summary, 30-second commercial, and copies of the three business cards.

Components of your 30-Second Commercial

Your 30-second commercial should include some combination of the following elements: education/training, experience, a key accomplishment, skills, and a key goal. It should be relevant to your audience, concise, and polished.

Education

Your education includes any formal instruction and/or training that relates to your overall goal.

Experience

Your experience includes work experience, internships, special projects, volunteer work, accomplishments, or personal experiences. Mention only experience that relates to your current goal.

Skills

Skills, the source of your strengths, come in two flavors: hard and soft. Hard skills are acquired through education and experience. Soft skills are positive character traits and behaviors that enhance your ability to contribute to an organization. Mention only those skills that relate to your goal.

Goal

A goal summarizes your intentions for the future and can include the steps you need to follow to achieve it. Example: *"I want to pursue a career in finance that will provide me with a flexible schedule and opportunities to travel. I am interested in joining a professional organization and connect with others via chapter-sponsored events."*

Constructing your Commercial

Use the following template to construct your commercial.

First sentence (Current students and recent graduates only.)

Include your name, school, degree (pursuing or completed), and major.

"My name is Sandra Smith and I expect to graduate with an Associate degree in Nursing from Bristol Community College next June."

Second Sentence

Summarize the work experience that is most relevant to your goal, a sample achievement or accomplishment.

"I've worked as a CNA for two years and I've volunteered at a Senior Center for the past year where I assist with health education activities. Last week, I delivered a presentation on the benefits of walking 20 minutes per day."

Third Sentence

List no more than three skills that you have developed. Select those that are well developed. Consider your audience.

“Through my experience, I’ve developed strong assessment skills and a passion for advocating for elders. (Hard skill: assessment skills; Soft skill: passion for advocacy).

Forth Sentence

Share one or two of your immediate goals.

“I’ve love to talk with someone who works in emergency medicine. Would you be willing to introduce me to someone at your organization?”

Do’s and Don’ts

DO THIS:

- DO practice your commercial until you can deliver it naturally and sincerely. Let your personality shine through.
- DO state your commercial with energy and confidence. Smile and be friendly.
- DO mention the type of industry and, if applicable, the job function that interests you.
- DO keep your goal in focus. Mention only the strengths and skills that you would like to use in your career.
- DO prepare to back your claims. If you claim strong skills in a particular area, be prepared to provide concrete examples, or evidence, later in the conversation.
- DO revise your commercial so that it is always relevant to your audience. Different events, situations and people will likely require you to discuss different topics.
- DO stop and listen after you have finished delivering your commercial. Let the other person react, ask a follow up question, or share his/her experience. Take a breath and go with the flow.

DON’T DO THIS:

- DON’T wing-it. Construct your commercial in advance, so you are prepared to deliver it at any time, to anyone.
- DON’T use industry jargon and acronyms. It is always best to assume your audience is not aware of this language.
- DON’T rush. Deliver your commercial naturally, as you normally speak.
- DON’T ramble and feel like you need to say everything, all at once. Your commercial is simply a conversation-starter.