Networking
conducting the Networking Interview
first, ...a 60-second primer on Networking
What & Why
What

Networking is **not** …

- Asking for a job
- Manipulating
- Using People
- Knocking on Doors
Networking is ...

Contacting people with whom you already have some connection (either directly or indirectly) ...

or

Creating a new connection through introduction and conversation at a social or business gathering ...

and

Sharing your career goals and interests, and using the connection for mutual benefit.
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  and

- Sharing your career goals and interests, and using the connection for mutual benefit.
2 Types of Networking

Informal Conversation:
at a business or social event, or in a casual social setting; using your *Elevator Speech*

Planned Process:
target specific individuals to contact; request and conduct the *Networking Interview*
## Why

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Most job hunters don’t know enough about the jobs they’re pursuing</td>
<td>Networking informs you and gives you ‘insider information’</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Hiring is risky and expensive for employers</td>
<td>You’re a ‘safer bet’ if you are referred by someone the employer knows</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Most jobs are not advertised or publicized</td>
<td>Networking uncovers that ‘hidden job market’</td>
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Really???
Is it true that most jobs aren’t advertised?

 Seriously…
70-80% of job opportunities are never advertised!
more ‘Why’

What works? Personal referral and networking above all else. Meet someone, ask to get in the door; then flourish and be outrageously prepared to take advantage of that moment.

~ Midd parent ’05, ’08.5 managing partner, advertising
even more ‘Why’

Must, must, must do your *networking* homework in advance so that when a position opens up, you can have your network contacts proactively vouch for you. Anyone who comes in through a contact associated with our office will get a solid look; but those who do not may get only a 3-second review!

~ Midd alum ’03.5
Deputy Chief of Staff,
U.S. Congressional office
Types of Networking

1. Planned Process
   The ‘Networking Interview’

2. Informal Conversation
   At a business or social event
   or in a casual social setting.
   The ‘Elevator Speech’

see workshop

Networking
whenever...wherever
Your Elevator Speech
The Networking Interview

aka the ‘Informational Interview’

Defined:

✓ a planned process of…

✓ contacting a targeted list of specific people,

✓ with a prepared introduction and set of questions,

✓ and a ‘script’ about yourself …

✓ for two purposes:
  - gathering information and advice
  - getting referrals to other contacts who can also share information and advice
Planning to Network
Things You Need To Know First

1. What You Offer (Know Yourself)
2. Who to Talk To
3. What to Ask For
4. How to Ask
5. How to Follow-up
1 Know Yourself

Before beginning to network or conduct a job search, take time for self-reflection. Your networking will be more productive, you will make a stronger impression …and later, when interviewing for a job, you will make a stronger presentation.

- What Am I Interested In ?
  Which career field or job type is a good ‘fit’ with my…
  - Values
  - General Career Goals and Life Goals
  - Personality or Temperament

- What Are My Key Strengths ?
  What do I offer in terms of…
  - Experience
  - Competencies and Skills (direct and transferable)
Know Who To Talk To

- Set your Targets
  - Which specific career fields or industries?
  - Which specific companies?
  - Which people within those industries or companies?

- Create your networking list. Think of all the social and professional circles of your life and list the people you think will be helpful with information and advice for you. Remember, networking is an essential part of your job search strategy, but networking is not asking for a job. It is asking for advice and information + referral to other people who also have advice and information to share.

- Be organized! As you add names/referrals and grow your network, you will want to track who referred whom, so that you can cycle back to some of your key contacts. Keep a list, chart, spreadsheet – whichever method will help you keep track of who you’ve talked to.

- Absolutely use MiddNet!
Not Everyone Starts Networking on the Same ‘Ring’

Gather information about several industries or career fields of interest to learn more about which are a good ‘fit’

Narrow down career fields or industries to 1 or 2 that you wish to target

Gather information about companies in those industries

Narrow down companies to the ones which interest you

Identify people within those companies with whom to network for information
Use MiddNet …

it’s your Middlebury alumni career connection!

- MiddNet is a searchable online database of over 8,000 Middlebury alumni who have volunteered to offer career advice to Midd students and fellow alums. Typically, this advice involves: information about the industry or career field in which they work; advice on how to break into that career or industry; feedback on resumes or job-search strategies; information about their particular company; etc.

- Middnet volunteer career advisors are not professional career counselors, but they are experienced professionals in their field and can give you important ‘insider information’ and perspectives about the career field, industry or company in which they work.

- Use MiddNet to gather information, get advice and make connections; but don’t directly solicit MiddNet volunteer for employment or job openings, sales or business opportunities.

access Middnet through the Career Services webpage:
http://www.middlebury.edu/administration/cso/alumni/

please contact Career Services, if you need guidance in how to access or use MiddNet
Your Network Potential

- **Family Friends Neighbors**
- **Place of Worship Religious orgs**
- **Hobbies/ Social Activities**
  - Gym; cycling club; country club; book group; social hangouts; etc
- **College & Grad School classmates and alumni**
- **Online Network sites LinkedIn, etc**
- **Professional Business Associations/Orgs**
  - Orgs for your profession/industry; Rotary; etc
- **Co-workers, former Co-workers; Business associates**
- **Community Involvement**
  - Civic groups; local volunteer groups, coaching sports in your town, etc
Your Network Potential

- **MiddNet!**
- **You**

**Family Friends Neighbors**

**Place of Worship Religious orgs**

**Hobbies/ Social Activities**
- Gym; cycling club; country club; book group; social hangouts; etc

**College & Grad School classmates and alumni**

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**Co-workers, former Co-workers; Business associates**

**Professional Business Associations/Orgs**
- Orgs for your profession/industry; Rotary; etc

**Online Network sites LinkedIn, etc**
Conducting the Networking Interview
How to Request a Networking Interview

10 Things To Know

1. Send an introductory email (or hard copy letter)

2. Be brief!
   - email: less than a computer screen's worth of text
   - hardcopy letter: 2-3 short paragraphs, maximum

3. If someone has referred you, use their name in the e-mail subject line:
   Subject: Referred by Mary Jones for career information

4. And use their name in the very first sentence:
   “Mary Jones suggested you as a great resource for information about X ”

5. *IMPORTANT:* If this is a MiddNet contact, definitely include the word ‘MiddNet’
   or ‘Middlebury’ in the subject line.
   Subject: MiddNet contact for advice
   or
   Subject: Middlebury alum seeks career advice

more
How to Request an Informational Interview

10 Things To Know

6. Introduce yourself / Request the interview.
   Make your introduction brief. Make your request right up-front.
   Ask if you can arrange a brief conversation to learn more about a particular industry, career field or company.

7. Explain that you are gathering information and advice about a career field or about an industry or company. Do not ask outright for a job!

8. Very briefly describe your educational and/or work background (give only 2-3 highlights) and which career area you are exploring.

9. For interviews via phone … appropriate to request 15-20 minutes.
   For interviews in-person … appropriate to request 20-30 minutes.
   (Note: most of your informational interviews will likely be via phone)

10. Do not send your resume with this introductory email / letter.
    When the person replies and suggests a date and time for your conversation, you then reply to confirm the meeting date/time - and then you can attach your resume, with the explanation…

    “I am attaching my resume in advance of our conversation to give you a sense of my background; and look forward to any advice you might offer…”
Know What To Ask For

1. **Information**
   Know the questions you wish to ask:

   Examples …
   - “How does my experience in $X$ translate into this career area?”
   - “How does someone with my background break into this field?”
   - “How could I make myself more competitive as a candidate for a job in this field?”
   - “What is the best approach for making contacts within your company?”

2. **Referrals / Other Contacts**
   - “Would you know of 2 or 3 other people whom I might also contact as I continue to gather information about $X$?”
Know What to Ask For

More examples of questions to ask in the Networking Interview:

- What do you do? What are the functions/responsibilities of your job?
- What kinds of decisions and issues do you deal with?
- How did this type of work interest you and how did you get started?
- Does your work relate to any experiences or studies you had in college?
- What skills or talents are most essential to be effective in your job? How did you learn these skills?
- What kinds of experience, paid/unpaid, would you suggest for someone pursuing a career in this field?
- What are the various types of jobs in this field or in your organization?

Do Your Homework:
If you are interested in or have questions about a specific company, some degree of research about the company will greatly enhance the quality of your informational interview. If you inform yourself about the company beforehand, you’ll be able to ask more intelligent and relevant questions. You’ll respond thoughtfully to information and questions from the interviewee. You will demonstrate your initiative, and you won’t ask questions that could easily have been answered by doing your homework (thus, demonstrating your initiative and professionalism). *

* Adapted from: www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html
The best advice I can offer is to be prepared before you contact someone for a networking interview. I love to talk with Midd students and alumni about career information, but don’t have much time for an unfocused ‘chat’. Know what you want to ask and what kind of information you would like from me. It will be a much more productive interview for you if you know what you want to get out of it!

~ Midd alum ’98
client manager, consulting firm
4 Know How To Ask

Anatomy of the Networking Interview:

1. **Door Opener:** *who referred you / what’s your connection*

2. **Purpose:** *explain your process*

3. **Clarify:** “I am hoping to get some advice and information about …”

4. **Your Highlights:** 3 or 4 key strengths / competencies

5. **The Questions:** 1-Information 2-Referrals
Sample ‘Script’ – Networking Interview:

Hello Ms. Smith. Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today.

- Mary Jones has told me about her work with you at ABC company (fill in the blank with appropriate connection info), and suggested that you’d be a great source of information about XX (fill in blank)

OR

- And thank you for being a MiddNet volunteer! The information and advice that MiddNet volunteers provide is such valuable support!

I am in the process of speaking to a variety of people to identify options for my next career move. I’m especially interested in gathering information about the business consulting field (fill in the blank) and Mary thought that you would be an excellent source of information and advice in that area.

I certainly am not expecting you to have a position for me, or even to know of one. Today, I’m hoping to learn more about this field, and your advice and expertise will be greatly appreciated.

Let me take a minute to tell you about myself. Since graduating from Middlebury College, I’ve worked for a law firm as a paralegal for the last two years, dealing with intellectual property and copyright cases. This has been a great experience for honing my analytical and research skills. I develop financial models to project economic damages in cases of copyright infringement; and I analyze and value patent portfolios in connection with merger and acquisition transactions. This has also been an excellent opportunity to use my communication skills in writing and presenting detailed reports. I found that majoring in economics and history at Middlebury, gave me a solid foundation for the skills I use in this position. Now I’m hoping to make a change from the legal arena into the business consulting field.

I’d like to get your thoughts on how one makes this kind of change, since you have such extensive experience in the consulting field. What advice would you have for someone with my skills and experience, for moving into an entry level consulting job?

Other sample questions to ask in the course of this conversation:
• What would you see a person with my skills and interests successfully doing in your field (or company)?
• What skills do you use most often in your job?
• What do you find most satisfying about this work? What do you find most frustrating?
• What would you advise I do to make myself an attractive candidate for a position with a consulting firm?

Thanks again for your time, Ms. Smith. This has been great, and your advice and information has been so helpful! Would you know of 2 or 3 other people who might also be willing to share information with me about this field? -- Thank you! I’ll be sure to contact them, and I’ll let them know that you and I have spoken.
Middlebury Career Services
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5 Know How To Follow-up

- ‘Thank You’ email within 24 hours
- Update your notes / chart
- Contact your next five referrals
- Cycle back to stay in touch with earlier contacts
Types of Networking

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2. Informal Conversation
   At a business or social event
   or in a casual social setting.
   The ‘Elevator Speech’

see workshop

Networking
whenever... wherever
Your Elevator Speech
More Middlebury Resources re: Networking

- **Individual Career Counseling**
  - practice your Elevator Speech or your Networking Interview
  - help with optimizing MiddNet, and with planning your networking campaign
  - review your Resume and Cover Letters
  - practice Job Interviews
  - career counseling and help with career direction

  Contact Career Services to schedule a phone counseling appt:: 802-443-5100; careerservices@middlebury.edu

- **5-Minute Career Clips** (online workshops) [www.middlebury.edu/studentlife/eia/alumni/services](http://www.middlebury.edu/studentlife/eia/alumni/services)
  series of brief online workshops with ‘How To’ tips on Networking, Resumes, Cover Letters, and Interviewing

- **Online Tips / Information for Conducting a Job Search** [www.middlebury.edu/studentlife/eia/alumni/services](http://www.middlebury.edu/studentlife/eia/alumni/services)
  articles, videos, online workshops, website links - including subscription websites free to Midd alumni with ID#

  post your resume on password-protected site; searchable by other Midd alumni

- **Search Job Listings on Career Services website**
    jobs posted by fellow Midd alumni (Middlebury Online Community); searchable by alumni & students
  - LinkedIn Middlebury Group - [www.middlebury.edu/studentlife/eia/alumni/joblistings](http://www.middlebury.edu/studentlife/eia/alumni/joblistings)
    all jobs listed with Career Services by Midd-friendly employers – we then post on this Midd LinkedIn page.
  - LACN (Liberal Arts Career Network) - [www.middlebury.edu/studentlife/eia/alumni/joblistings](http://www.middlebury.edu/studentlife/eia/alumni/joblistings)
    Middlebury Career Services is a member of this consortium of 29 top small liberal arts colleges, which pools and shares job listings from all 29 schools.

- **MiddNet** [www.alumniconnections.com/olc/membersonly/MDR/networking/networking.cgi](http://www.alumniconnections.com/olc/membersonly/MDR/networking/networking.cgi)
  searchable online networking database of over 7,400 Midd alumni who have volunteered to offer career advice and info to fellow alumni and students. Search by industry/career area, location, etc.
## Additional Resources re: Networking

### Books:

*Highly Effective Networking: Meet the Right People and Get a Great Job*
by Orville Pierson; ISBN 978-1-60163-050-6

*How to REALLY use LinkedIn*
by Jan Vermeiren; ISBN 9781439229637

*The Successful Introvert: How to Enhance Your Job Search and Advance Your Career*

*A Foot in the Door: Networking Your Way into the Hidden Job Market*
by Katharine Hansen; ISBN-10: 1580088929

*Make Your Contacts Count (Networking Know-How for Business and Career Success)*
by Ann Barber and Lynne Waymon; ISBN-10: 0-8144-7402-0

### Articles / Online:

*Networking for Introverts*; by Evan Carmichael

*The Art of Career and Job-Search Networking*
[www.quintcareers.com/networking.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/networking.html)

### Web sites:

- *200 Informational Interview Questions*: [www.quintcareers.com/networking.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/networking.html)
- for a range of job search tips and techniques: [www.quintcareers.com/networking.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/networking.html) [www.gottamentor.com](http://www.gottamentor.com)
- for career-changers, or those re-starting their careers: [www.irelaunch.com/index.asp](http://www.irelaunch.com/index.asp)
Check out all the career clips in the ‘Job Search’ series

Networking

- Networking • 1
  - Your Elevator Speech

- Networking • 2
  - The Networking Interview

The Resume

- Resume
  - Make Your Resume Count

- Cover Letter
  - The Right Introduction

Interviewing

- Interviewing • 1
  - Prepare to Ace the Interview

- Interviewing • 2
  - Handle the Tough Questions

- Interviewing • 3
  - Ace the Interview
Networking
conducting the
Networking Interview