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

What & Why
Networking is **not** …

- Asking for a job
- Manipulating
- Using People
- Knocking on Doors
What

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.
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.
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

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most job hunters don’t know enough about the jobs they’re pursuing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Hiring is risky and expensive for employers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Most jobs are not advertised or publicized</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking informs you and gives you ‘insider information’</td>
<td>You’re a ‘safer bet’ if you are referred by someone the employer knows</td>
<td>Networking uncovers that ‘hidden job market’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
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)
2. 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!
Zero In On Your Target Contacts

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 7,500 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.
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 classmates and alumni**
- **Online Network sites LinkedIn, etc**
- **Professional Business Associations/Orgs**
  - Orgs for your profession/industry; Rotary; etc
- **Co-workers, former Co-workers at your Internship(s)**
- **Community Involvement**
  - Civic groups; local volunteer groups, coaching sports in your town, etc

*MiddNet!*
Your Network Potential

MiddNet!

Family Friends Neighbors

Place of Worship Religious orgs

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

College classmates and alumni

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

Co-workers, former Co-workers at your Internship(s)

Community Involvement
  Civic groups; local volunteer groups, coaching sports in your town, etc

You

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

10 Things To Know

1. Send an introductory email

2. Be brief!
   - Email: less than a Smartphone screen's worth of text

3. If someone has referred you, use their name in the e-mail Subject Line:* (MiddNet exception see #5 below)
   
   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 an email sent through MiddNet, do not change the Subject Line that is already included in the MiddNet email message box “Middlebury: MiddNet Inquiry”

6. Make your introduction brief:
   Introduce yourself / Request the networking interview (the opportunity to talk briefly).
   Make your request clear:
   Ask if you can arrange a brief conversation to learn more about a particular industry, career field or company.
How to Request an Informational Interview

10 Things To Know

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. Say a few words about yourself (1-2 lines) and which career area you are exploring. Example: “I am a Middlebury senior - English major, Psychology minor - interested in breaking into the marketing field after graduation. I have had two internships with nonprofit organizations and am very interested in working in that sector.”

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…”
3. 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 are the functions/responsibilities of your job?
- What kinds of decisions and issues do you deal with?
- 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
Know What to Ask For

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
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’m in the process of speaking to a variety of people in the Business Consulting field in order to gather more information and insights about that career area. I really appreciate your sharing your professional insights and advice. As I mentioned in my email to you, I’m a senior at Middlebury College, Political Science major and Econ minor. I’ve had two great internship experiences as a student – one with XYZ Company in their marketing department, and one last summer with ABC Consulting in their healthcare client group. The ABC internship really got me interested in a career in consulting.

I’d appreciate you thoughts on a few things:

• Because Econ is my minor – not a major – do you think that this is a disadvantage when applying for consulting jobs? Do you have advice about what types of experiences or classes I should be highlighting in order to be a more competitive candidate for jobs?

• What are the types of entry level positions that new graduates are typically hired into?

• What other 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 are the most important skill sets for a new employee to succeed in this field?

• What skills do you use most often in your job?

• What do you find most satisfying about this work? What do 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.
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’m in the process of speaking to a variety of people in the Business Consulting field in order to gather more information and insights about that career area. I really appreciate your sharing your professional insights and advice. As I mentioned in my email to you, I’m a senior at Middlebury College, Political Science major and Econ minor. I’ve had two great internship experiences as a student – one with XYZ Company in their marketing department, and one last summer with ABC Consulting in their healthcare client group. The ABC internship really got me interested in a career in consulting.

I’d appreciate you thoughts on a few things:

- Because Econ is my minor – not a major – do you think that this is a disadvantage when applying for consulting jobs? Do you have advice about what types of experiences or classes I should be highlighting in order to be a more competitive candidate for jobs?

- What are the types of entry level positions that new graduates are typically hired into?

- What other 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 are the most important skill sets for a new employee to succeed in this field?

- What skills do you use most often in your job?

- What do you find most satisfying about this work? What do 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 1 or 2 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.
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

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
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

career tips & information for Midd students
Networking
conducting the Networking Interview