

GUIDE TO NETWORKING

A stylized bird logo with a green wing, a pink and red body, and a black eye. The bird is positioned behind the large 'CaPS' text.

CaPS

Making connections to find opportunities



McGill CaPS

Career Planning Service
Service de planification de carrière



INTRODUCTION

Depending on the sector, at least 75%, and as high as 95% of all available jobs are never publicly advertised. These jobs are located in what is called the “hidden job market” and are primarily accessed through networking.

This guide explains the importance of networking and how to effectively integrate networking techniques into your job search in order to access this hidden job market. It is divided into three steps:

1. Understand the Hidden Job Market
2. Get Comfortable with Networking: Concrete Steps to Expand Your Network
3. Find Job Opportunities Through Information Interviews

It also includes additional information and tips on:

1. Cold Calling and Telephone Etiquette
2. Preparing Your Networking Tools

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

TIP

The CaPS Resource Centre contains many directories and guides to help you access the hidden job market and research potential employers, including *The Canadian Hidden Job Market Directory*.

Scenario: Imagine that you have recently moved to a new city/neighbourhood and you are in desperate need of a haircut. Or maybe you are just unhappy with your current hairdresser and are looking for a change. How would you go about finding a good salon and stylist?

You *could* reach for the nearest Yellow Pages and scan the ads, or maybe you *could* stop in at a few of the salons in your neighbourhood. But most of us will likely turn first to friends, family, coworkers and acquaintances to ask if they can recommend anyone good. Despite, or maybe because of, the proliferation of advertising, there is something very reassuring about a personal recommendation or referral. And it does not even seem to matter if the person giving the information is not a very close friend. If your best friend’s aunt’s neighbour just got a great haircut, you will likely happily call up that same salon when you need a comparable service, even if you have never actually met the neighbour in question.

This same scenario plays itself out over and over again in other areas of daily life: when you are wondering where to go for dinner or what movie to watch this weekend, or when you need the services of a dentist, financial planner, plumber, counsellor, or piano teacher. But for some reason, when looking for a job, we often forget this principle and instead of reaching out to our network we hole ourselves up at our computers, endlessly (and often fruitlessly) searching the online job listings and classified ads - a strategy which pays off for only a very small percentage of job seekers.

HOW DO EMPLOYERS FIND AND CONNECT WITH POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES?

For most employers, publicly advertising a job is a strategy of last resort, used only when other, more informal methods of hiring, have failed to pay off. Put yourself in the shoes of a typical employer and imagine you are the manager of a small communications company. One of your team of four technical writers has just told you they are moving to Toronto next month. As manager this is not positive news: you are a busy person and you do not have a lot of time and energy to spend finding someone new, but you also cannot afford to leave the position unfilled. What then would be the cheapest, most efficient, painless and ultimately most successful way for you to fill this vacant position?

You could post an ad online, but this will cost you valuable time and money and you will have to expend a great deal of energy writing and gaining consensus on the job description and then sifting through hundreds of C.V.'s, many from blatantly unqualified applicants. Conversely, it will cost you only a few seconds to send an email to your team asking them to spread the word and recommend any prospective candidates they know of. The other members of your technical writing team are perfectly positioned to do this as they know what the job requires and they almost certainly know other technical writers from previous jobs or school or professional development events. Members of your team will also be sure to recommend people they think would fit in with the company. In the meantime you will also mention the open position to friends, family, acquaintances, and others in your network. Additionally, you may take a brief look at the pile of C.V.'s you have received from job seekers over the past few months, people who have sought out the company proactively, and maybe give a few of them a call. You will likely only post the position publicly several weeks or even months later if you have been unable to find someone suitable through your network.

So, if the above scenario is indicative of how the majority of employers prefer to operate, what does this mean for you as a job seeker? Read on to find out...

STEP 2: GET COMFORTABLE WITH NETWORKING

Networking is about people helping people; about actively creating and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with others, particularly those in your fields of interest. As a general rule, the larger your network, the more effective your job search is likely to be. By expanding your network you increase your chances of hearing about job openings like the technical writing position described above *before* the manager decides to use a more formal, public method of recruitment.

COMMONLY CITED BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

- **Sheer Terror! I am much too shy/introverted to do this!**

If you are not a naturally extroverted person, the concept of networking can seem massively intimidating. It helps to remember that networking is not primarily about you, it is about the other person. Skills like listening attentively, asking good questions and showing an interest in others are key. And if the idea of making cold calls day after day or attending self-proclaimed “networking events” ranks among your worst nightmares, there is no rule that says you have to network this way. Focus on creating and fostering relationships in ways that work for you, be that community involvement, referrals from friends, or talking with professors.

- **I don't like schmoozing/using people – networking seems rude/aggressive to me.**

Done poorly and with the wrong attitude, networking can indeed come across as aggressive and inconsiderate. Good networking, however, is about seeking out mutually beneficial relationships - it's a two-way street. Never assume that you can “use” someone and then just move on: reputations spread quickly within organizations and fields and you want to build a reputation as a “giver” not a “taker.” Show respect for your contacts' time by doing your homework prior to any meeting. Do not try and push someone to do more for you than they are willing and make sure to show your appreciation by following up with a simple thank you note or email.

- **I don't like asking for help or imposing on people – won't that seem desperate?!**

The idea of the truly independent individual, the “self-made” man/woman is often held up as an ideal in North America culture, but whether this exists in reality is doubtful. People influence and help us out in our lives and careers in a myriad of different ways. When you are just starting out in your career there is no way that you could have all of the answers and information that

TIP

For networking tips for introverts, consult the following article at: <http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/publications/scoop/grads/2008-2009/articles/#art2>.

TIP

Attitude is everything here. Neediness, selfishness and desperation repel others; kindness, generosity and genuine interest in people attract.

TIP

As a job seeker it is natural to feel somewhat vulnerable and powerless at times – consciously remind yourself that you have a lot to offer others, be it your time, enthusiasm, knowledge, contacts, advice, skills or a listening ear.

TIP

Remember that good networking is NOT only about you. It is about the relationships you build and what you can do for others.

TIP

Instead of focusing on what you need from an interaction, relax and start really listening to the other person. Find out what makes them tick, where their passions lie. Pay attention to what their needs are and figure out how you might be able to help them. Give first, and give often, the rest will tend to take care of itself.

you need to make fully informed choices. Rest assured that anyone you talk to will have received help from someone somewhere along their career path and they will likely be quite pleased to give back a little. By asking for help you are giving others the opportunity to give and share their knowledge, wisdom and passion for their field. It can be a genuine pleasure to talk about your career path and interests with an eager listener.

- **If I get a position through networking, will I be qualified enough to do well in the position?**
Only in the rarest of cases does networking get you the job in and of itself – that is your responsibility. In an interview or when you meet with someone from an organization, you will still have to earn the job yourself and be judged on your own merit. Even if you come highly recommended by a dear friend of the Human Resources Manager, you are going to have to prove that you have the skills, background and attitude to fit in with the company and do the job well. The advantage of networking is that it opens up many more opportunities to do just that.
- **Getting a job through networking is somehow not as valid as getting it myself.**
Networking is sometimes viewed as taking the easy way out. Remember that it is hard work to network well. Building and maintaining meaningful relationships takes time and energy and investment on your part and requires much more of a proactive approach to the job search than simply scanning online postings day after day.
- **I don't know anyone in my field or know very few people.**
Perhaps counter-intuitively, research indicates that more often than not, it is not your family or close friends who provide you with job leads, but rather acquaintances and more distant referrals. The power of “friends of friends of friends” lies in the fact that these people likely move in quite different circles from you. They tend to know different people and have more range than those closer to you. If your primary contact list does not yield anyone in the field(s) you are interested in, ask them for referrals to secondary (and then tertiary) contacts. Also focus more on becoming active in your field through professional associations and volunteering.
- **This will take so much time, and I need a job NOW!**
This could be a problem because building and maintaining meaningful relationships takes time and commitment and you never know when a meeting or a contact may lead to a potential job opportunity. Networking is thus a career-long, life-long skill. Ideally you will employ a combination of strategies in your search, including networking, researching and approaching employers directly and using job listings. Any one of these strategies could be the one that ultimately leads to a job, but in terms of priorities, networking should take precedence over the others as statistics consistently show that the majority of job seekers hear about employment opportunities from family, friends and acquaintances. Networking is simply the most effective way to search for a job.
- **I am terrible at selling myself and that's what networking is all about right?**
The metaphor of the job search as a sales campaign is a highly pervasive one, but also very problematic for many job seekers who struggle to “sell” themselves to potential employers. However, as Cathy Keates points out in her book *Not for Sale! Why We Need a New Job Search Mindset* (2009), “...the process of finding work isn't about selling and buying, but it is about people and organizations connecting and finding a fit.” Employers do not necessarily require job seekers to sell themselves, but they do desire clarity from an applicant. As a job seeker, it is imperative that you are able to clearly communicate your skills, the fit between you and the organization and what you would contribute if hired. Networking is all about communication, forging connections and building relationships - NOT about selling.

1. **Create a list of primary contacts.** Start with the people you already know, from family and close friends, to former coworkers, classmates, professors and community acquaintances. Make a list of all these primary or “warm” contacts, regardless of whether or not you think they may be knowledgeable about your field of interest. If it has been a while since you spoke, get back in contact with these people, find out how they are, let them know what you have been doing lately, and ask if they know of anyone working in your target area who you could talk to. If they give you names, the people they refer you to are known as your secondary contacts. If you have recently finished your degree, many people will ask you: “What are you going to do now that you have graduated?” Take the opportunity to have a conversation with them about the areas you are interested in and the questions you still have about your career path.
2. **Meet your secondary contacts.** Actively seek out new relationships within your chosen field(s). Start by getting in touch with the secondary contacts referred to you by family and friends. Be prepared to talk about your career goals, skills and experiences. You may want to ask your secondary contacts whether they would be willing to have an information interview (see #5) with you.
3. **Create new contacts.** You can also create your own contacts by joining professional associations and organizations (many have discounted rates for students/new grads), attending career-related conferences and events and by volunteering or doing an internship in your area of interest. Making cold calls (see below) is another good way of expanding your contact base.
4. **Make cold calls to target organizations.** Calling companies and organizations of interest and attempting to meet with the person who has the decision-making power to hire you, or with someone who is knowledgeable about the field, is a great way to expand your network. If you are extremely uncomfortable making cold calls, you can also write to the organization or company. However, networking by email is often much less effective than networking in person or over the phone. Additional tips on cold calling can be found later in this guide.
5. **Arrange information interviews.** Information interviewing involves meeting someone currently working in a field, for an organization, or in an occupation of interest, in order to increase your knowledge of your target career. It also helps grow your contact base in the field. You can have an information interview with a primary contact, secondary contact or someone you met through a cold call. More information about this simple, and extremely effective tool, can be found later in this guide.
6. **Follow up!** The importance of nourishing and maintaining relationships cannot be overstated, as many people neglect this step. It can be very awkward or difficult to get back into contact with someone you have not talked to in years and ask a favour of them when you have done nothing to maintain the relationship in the meantime. Keep in touch regularly and follow up with those who have been helpful to you. Let people know if you followed their advice, met with someone they referred you to, or found a resource they recommended useful. Keep them informed of your progress in your job hunt, share your successes and remember to give back when you can.

TIP

Be proactive in seeking out information which would be helpful in your job search and would increase your knowledge about your field. The more people who know about you and the kinds of positions you would be interested in, the better your chances.

STEP 3: FIND JOB OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH INFORMATION INTERVIEWS

Researching and reading about your field is a great way to start your job search, but at some point you will likely find it useful to get information and advice directly from someone with concrete experience in the area. Information interviews can help you fine tune your career objective(s), to discover additional possibilities or areas of interest, and to develop contacts and potential mentors in your field.

An information interview is a meeting between two people: someone (you) who wishes to learn more about a particular career and someone who works in that field. An information interview is NOT primarily about getting a job from your interviewee; it is about getting to know people in, and increasing your knowledge of, the career you are researching and targeting. You can interview anyone who knows about the work you would like to do, ideally someone employed in your field of interest or in an organization or sector where you would like to work.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT FOR AN INFORMATION INTERVIEW?

TIP

Remember that most people are willing to help and enjoy talking about themselves and their work.

Interview people whose perspectives will help you make decisions about the career path you wish to take. There are several ways to go about finding interviewees, including:

- **Approaching primary and secondary contacts:** Start by connecting with those people already in your network. These include your family, friends, peers, professors, co-workers, previous employers, alumni and anyone else you can think of. You might find potential interviewees among your primary contacts; but what is more likely is that your extended network will know of a potential interviewee (i.e. secondary contact).
- **Approaching organizations of interest (cold calling):** Choose a relevant company/organization and contact a person in a position that interests you. Sometimes you can find names easily on the company's website. However, if that does not work, call the main line of the organization and ask for the name and extension number of the head of the department you would like to target.
- **Approaching new contacts:** These could include speakers from on-campus career panels and events, those you meet at career fairs, or even inspiring individuals you read about in the news and would like to talk to.

BUT WHY WOULD THEY WANT TO TALK TO ME?

It is important to remember that an information interview is about information and advice. It is not about calling someone up and asking them for a job. This approach is both more intriguing and less intimidating for both the interviewer and the interviewee. Many people and organizations respond very positively to the initiative and courage it takes to ask for an information interview. It is a compliment to be asked for your advice and opinions by someone who respects what you do, and if you enjoy your career, it is actually quite pleasant to talk about it to an eager listener. Many people also enjoy the opportunity to help out a student or recent graduate, to do some informal mentoring and give back a little. Yes, some of the people you ask may say no, often for reasons (such as an overly full schedule) that have nothing to do with you. But you have nothing to lose. If even one person says yes, you will be farther ahead than where you are now.

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT AN INFORMATION INTERVIEW

The key to a successful information interview is your enthusiasm, preparation and ability to communicate clearly. Before you go to an interview, think about the type of information that would be helpful to you. Revisit your self-assessment exercises and come up with some questions that will help you determine if this type of career is a good fit with your interests and your personal and professional values.

The following questions are meant to help you get started at an information interview. Others will naturally flow from your conversation once you get going. Focus on the areas and concerns of most relevance to you and respect anything your interviewee does not want or is not able to talk about. Always remember to thank them for their time and ask if there is anyone else they would recommend you speak with.

Questions about their career path/training:

- How did you get into this field?
- What has your career path been like to date? Is it representative of most people in this kind of position?
- What kind of education/training do you have?
- Are you a member of any professional orders or associations? Which ones do you feel are the most important to belong to?
- What are the future prospects in this field? What trends do you see developing over the next few years?
- If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself?

Questions about their current position and responsibilities:

- What does a typical day/week in your job look like?
- What do you enjoy the most about your job? The least?
- What skills have you found essential for success in this occupation?
- Could you tell me about one of the main challenges you face in this position?

Questions about working conditions:

- How many hours do you work in a typical week?
- How much autonomy do you have in terms of what you focus on at work?
- What kind of supervision did you have when you were starting out? Now?
- How is your performance evaluated?
- What kind of professional development opportunities are available?

Additional questions:

- What advice would you have liked to have heard when you were starting out?
- How would you recommend I “try out” this line of work (i.e. through a summer job, internship, volunteering...)?
- What other fields or jobs would you suggest I research before making a final decision?
- Is there anyone you would recommend I talk to next? When I call them, may I mention that you referred me?

FOLLOWING UP

TIP

Ask for your interviewee's business card so you can follow up with them in the future.

You may want to take some notes during the information interview, but do so sparingly, so as not to interrupt the flow of conversation. Then, after the interview, expand your notes and write down all of the main points and pertinent details covered. You might also want to note down your impressions of the organization – the general vibe, dress norms, etc.

Send a thank-you note or email within 24 hours of the interview. This does not have to be long, but should express your appreciation and reflect the content of the meeting.

Nurture and maintain your relationships with the people you have interviewed. Keep them informed of your progress and any action you have taken based on their advice. If they referred you to someone who was also helpful or recommended a book, website or professional organization which you subsequently followed up on, let them know that. Once you make a decision about your career path or land the position you were hoping for, inform them of this as well and thank them for their role in your journey. And remember, good relationship building is reciprocal: if you read an interesting article they might enjoy, forward it on; if you hear about a success they have achieved or an award they have received, send a congratulatory note.

SAMPLE: THANK YOU EMAIL

Re: Information Interview Last Week

Dear Mrs. Newman,

Thank you so much for agreeing to have an information interview with me last week. I really appreciated you taking the time out of your busy schedule to tell me about your fascinating and varied career path and to bring me up to speed on the latest developments in the field of Speech-Pathology.

I learned a great deal from our discussion, and it has left me more excited than ever about entering the profession. I also greatly appreciated your referral to your colleague in private practice, Mr. Johnson. I spoke with him yesterday and we will sit down for an information interview later this week.

I will be sure to keep in touch and let you know how my career plans develop. Thank you again for your time, your enthusiasm and your suggestions.

Sincerely,

Linda Green

APPENDIX 1: COLD CALLING AND TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

Cold calling refers to making direct contact with potential employers who do not know you. Used in conjunction with information interviewing, it can be an excellent way to make inroads at a particular organization or industry.

Cold calling can be used to gather information about jobs and organizations, schedule information interviews and develop a network of contacts. Using the telephone successfully in your job search requires gumption, planning and practice.

DEALING WITH POTENTIAL BARRIERS

You may encounter barriers or difficulties when trying to get through to the person you wish to reach. The first person you speak with at a company will most likely be an administrative assistant or receptionist whose job includes screening and filtering calls and answering general information questions. These people are not your enemies; they can be important facilitators and sources of information about the person you are calling.

You should be prepared to respond to questions/statements like those below:

- ***What is your call regarding?***
In responding to this question, be honest and positive. State the type of information you are looking for and mention if someone has referred you.
- ***The person is unavailable.***
Instead of leaving a message, ask for the best time to call back. Try to avoid being put in the situation where you are waiting for a call that may never come.
- ***Human Resources will be able to help you. I will transfer you now. or We are not hiring right now.***
The receptionist thinks that you are looking for a job opening. Emphasize that you are calling to obtain information, not employment.

Ultimately, the key to getting through to the person with whom you wish to speak, is persistence. If you are able to reply intelligently, logically and confidently to the receptionist's screening questions, you will eventually get through. In order that you come off as polished and professional, practice what you would like to say before you try the real thing.

WHEN YOU GET THROUGH

Once you successfully get through to the person you wish to reach, you will want to:

- Greet the person by name and address them professionally (i.e. Mr., Ms., Dr., Professor)
- Identify yourself and let them know if you were referred
- State why you are calling (otherwise you risk the person getting restless)
- Identify where you are in your career and say something that is likely to arouse your listener's interest (see Mini Introductions)
- Get to the point quickly and do not monopolize their time

TIP

Remember to thank the receptionist or administrative assistant at the end of every call, regardless of whether or not you get through.

TIP

When speaking on the telephone, remember to:

- Smile
- Listen attentively
- Show enthusiasm and ask questions
- Be positive
- Be polite
- Thank the person at the end of the call

- Keep your objective in mind: obtain a face-to-face meeting with your contact, gather information, etc.

If you are successful in arranging an information interview, suggest a specific time to meet, preferably before the business day begins, and let them know that the meeting will only take 20-30 minutes. If the person cannot meet you for whatever reason, do not give up. Ask for other referrals or request permission to call again at a later date.

SAMPLE SCENARIOS/SCRIPTS

Below are a few sample scripts illustrating scenarios/responses you are likely to encounter when making cold calls. Use them to practice possible responses and generate other ideas of possible scenarios. In general, the more confident you feel and sound and the clearer you are about the purpose of your call, the easier it will be for you to get through.

SAMPLE A

Front Desk: Good morning, Widgets Inc. How can I help you?

You: Hello, I would like to speak to the Director of the Marketing department. Could you tell me his or her name please?

Front Desk: Certainly, it's Bob Smith.

You: Thank you. Would you be able to connect my call to his/her office?*

*You could also call back the next day and ask to speak to this individual then.

Bob Smith: Bob Smith speaking.

You: Good morning Mr. Smith. My name is Sally Green and I recently graduated from McGill. I am looking to pursue a career in marketing and am trying to find out as much as possible about the field before making any definite decisions. I have heard very positive things about you and your work from my neighbour, Jim Philips, and am very interested in finding out more about what you do. Would it be possible to arrange a short appointment to talk about your career path to date?

Bob Smith: That's an interesting idea. Certainly. How is Monday at 3pm?

SAMPLE B

Secretary: Good morning, Bob Smith's office, how can I help you?

You: Good morning. My name is Sally Green. May I please speak with Mr. Smith?

Secretary: What is your call regarding?

SAMPLE B (CONTINUED)

You: I am a recently graduated student from McGill currently researching the field of bioresource engineering, and I understand that Mr. Smith might be able to offer me some information and advice.

Bob Smith: Bob Smith speaking.

You: Good morning Mr. Smith. My name is Sally Green and I recently graduated from McGill's Engineering program. I am looking to pursue a career in bioresource engineering and am trying to find out as much as possible about the field before making any definite decisions. I understand you are the Director of Research and Development and I am interested in speaking with you about the work you do. Would it be possible to arrange a short appointment to talk about your career path to date?

Bob Smith: I'm sorry but we don't actually have any openings right now, but perhaps if you send me your C.V. I can keep you in mind for future positions.

You: I'm afraid I may not have made myself clear as I am not actually looking for a position right now. I am researching career options and would like to find out more about the field of bioresource engineering in general. I would be interested in speaking with you for about 20 minutes if you have some time to discuss your career path and answer a few questions. I'd be happy to come by whenever is convenient for you.

Bob Smith: While I'm flattered you would like to speak to me, I'm afraid this time of year is extremely busy and I won't be able to meet with you at present.

You: I understand and thank you for your time nonetheless. Would it be alright if I called you back next month? Or perhaps there is someone else you could recommend I speak to?

SAMPLE C

Secretary: Bob Smith's office, good morning!

You: Good morning. My name is Sally Green. May I please speak with Mr. Smith?

Secretary: I'm sorry but Mr. Smith is not currently available. Would you like to leave a message?

You: No thank-you, I can call back another time. Could you let me know some generally good times to reach Mr. Smith?

PRACTICE GOOD TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

Be prepared before making a call. Be sure to verify the name of the person you wish to speak with and ensure that any relevant documents (i.e. C.V., recent correspondence) are organized and close at hand.

Practice, practice, practice. Ask a friend to play the role of the potential employer. Practice what you would like to say until it sounds and feels natural.

Remember the person you are talking with will pick up on both verbal and non-verbal cues – your tone, attitude and voice projection are all important.

APPENDIX 2: PREPARING YOUR NETWORKING TOOLS

TIP

The sample scripts outlined here are by no means designed to be memorized and blurted out without pause at any opportunity. Rather, they are designed to get you thinking about what you want to communicate in any given situation - use them as a place to start and a way to help structure your thoughts.

MINI INTRODUCTIONS

Communication and conversation skills are critical to successful networking. Employers naturally prefer candidates who know themselves and what they have to offer and who can express this clearly and compellingly. As you develop relationships within your target field you will need to introduce yourself to many people and be able to make the most of these opportunities.

In such situations a little preparation goes a long way, especially if talking about yourself and your achievements does not come naturally to you. Start by identifying your strengths as a potential employee: your relevant skills, experiences, achievements, interests and goals. Then think about the organization or industry or individual you are targeting and consider which factors directly contribute to a good fit between you and them. Thirdly, be clear on what your goals are for the interaction. What are you hoping to learn?

Finally you want to try to put all of this together into a mini introduction that might take several possible forms.

a) Sound Bite: An abbreviated introduction best used when time is short, as a lead-in to a telephone conversation for instance. Mention your name, educational background, and the purpose of making the contact.

Sample: Sound Bite

“Hello. My name is Danielle Ferguson and I am in my final year in McGill’s English program. I am currently researching potential career options after graduation and the publishing sector is an area of particular interest to me. I understand you have held many different positions in this field, I am interested in finding out more about your career path. Would I be able to conduct an information interview with you sometime this month?”

b) Infomercial: A longer version of a sound bite, more along the lines of a verbal business card. In addition to your name and educational background, mention relevant experience and skills, knowledge of the organization and the information or position you are seeking.

Sample: Infomercial

Continue with: “Last summer I completed an editing internship at H & R Publishing in Toronto where I especially enjoyed collaborating closely with writers. I would like to continue to gain editing experience, but am also interested in finding out more about the marketing side of the publishing business. I know that your company, NewBooks Plus, has recently expanded its marketing operations. Could you tell me more about these developments?”

c) **Commercial:** The longest version describes your background, qualifications, skills and achievements in more detail and would be used in situations where you are able to have a more extensive conversation with someone.

Sample: Commercial

Continue with: “Over the course of my degree I have taken numerous business and marketing electives along with my core English and literature courses. I have a thorough understanding of Canadian literature and writers and would enjoy collaborating with local authors to promote their new works. I have several questions regarding the qualifications and experience necessary to break into the field, and am very interested to hear what you have to say about this.”

Tips:

- Your conversation partner will almost certainly have questions and responses to various aspects of your introduction. Prepare for this by thinking about what you might be asked and considering relevant points you would like to bring up in your answers.
- You are the ultimate expert on yourself. No one can be more informative than you in describing your skills, expertise and experience. A passionate, confident introduction is what tends to impress.

BUSINESS/INFORMATION CARDS

A business card or information card can be an effective and useful tool when used to complement a conversation or relationship. The card makes an appearance *after* you meet someone, not as the introduction or the entire interaction. Attending a networking event and rapidly distributing as many cards as possible to as many people as possible, without actually pausing long enough to learn a little about them, is next to useless. You will come across as abrupt and harried at best.

Give your business card to friends and family to pass on to secondary contacts and to new contacts at the end of a discussion or meeting if they would like to get in touch with you. Bring them to professional events, career fairs and panels and carry a few extra in your wallet just in case.

When you receive or ask for cards from others, take a moment to jot down any points about them you would like to remember. Make a note of anything you have said you will do (i.e. follow up, send your C.V., pass on a referral).

TIP

You may also wish to include the following information on your card:

- Languages you speak
- Key hard and soft skills
- Experience highlights

Your card should contain the following:

- Your name and current contact information, primarily phone and email.
- A professional webpage, MySpace or LinkedIn profile if appropriate.
- Your degree, indicating your major/minor if relevant.
- Any titles or certifications (i.e. Psychologist, Pianist, IT specialist).

As with other career tools, keep it clear, professional and uncluttered.

Sample: Information Cards

Colleen Templeton

Bachelor of Science (Anatomy)
McGill University-2003

Laboratory experience (Molecular biology, Cell biology, Chemistry)

Computer literate (Word, Excel, SPSS, Powerpoint)

Bilingual (English & French)

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FINAL WORD: IT'S ALL ABOUT BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS!

Remember that good networking is really about being friendly and interested in others, being an active and attentive listener and treating people with courtesy, respect and generosity. Smile, make eye contact, approach each interaction with an open mind and a positive attitude and you never know what may happen. Do not be shy to ask for help and be confident that you have a lot to give and offer in return. Actively seek out new contacts, follow up with those you meet, put in the effort to maintain and build upon these initial contacts and you will be well on your way to success.

As Zig Ziglar, motivational speaker and author, noted:

“You can get everything you want in life, by helping enough other people to get what they want.”

Programs and Services



Daily Drop In

Come to our drop-ins at CaPS to have your CV reviewed and to ask quick questions about your job search.



Career Resource Centre

We have a comprehensive collection of both online and print publications which provide information on jobs, careers, graduate schools, and more.



myFuture

Log on to myFuture for an extensive listing of jobs and internships. Register for CaPS events, browse publications and view employer profiles.



Ask a Career Advisor

Ask your career question online and one of our career advisors will get back to you, usually within 24 hours.



Job Search Workshops

Choose from a wide selection of workshops that can help prepare you for your job search, apply to grad school and more.



McGill Mentor Program

Get linked to a McGill alumnus/ae who is working in the industry/job of your dreams.



P.A.C.E

Join other students in this 10 hour/4 week program that helps you explore your personal goals, values, and interests with suggestions for possible career options.



Peer Educator Program

Help other students learn more about CaPS while developing your own leadership skills. Become a Peer Educator and promote CaPS across our campuses.



Job Finding Club

Work intensely for two weeks with other students like you to learn the best ways to get the job you want.



On Campus Recruitment

Attend fairs, information sessions and panel discussions to network with your potential future employer.

Online Resources

CaPS Website - www.mcgill.ca/caps

Our website is your main portal to the services and information offered by CaPS. We also provide links to a variety of other useful career planning websites.

myFuture - caps.myfuture.mcgill.ca

Log on to myFuture for an extensive listing of jobs and internships. You can also register for CaPS workshops and events, browse publications, and view employer profiles.

What can I do with my major? - www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/job-search/explore/

CaPS has compiled targeted career information for your major to give you some ideas of where to go next.

The Big Guide - <http://www.workingoverseas.com/user/issi/6857>

Build global career skills: Get access to the world's best international career guide with 41 Chapters of Expert Advice, 50 Quick Guides, 2,200 Profiles of International Employers, & much more.

General Job Listings - www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/job-search/jobs/

This page contains links to many job listing sites to help you find career and job opportunities.

Vault Guides - <http://www.vault.com/wps/portal/usa>

The popular Vault Guides contain career and employer profiles, industry overviews, advice articles, an internship database, and much more. McGill VPN required.

Going Global - <http://online.goingglobal.com>

Going Global provides over 100,000 worldwide job and internship listings, as well as employer profiles. McGill VPN required.

Career Cruising - www.careercruising.com

This site is an interactive career planning resource designed to help you find the career that fits you best.
Username: mcgill
Password: careers

