# Networking: Launching Your Career

## 1 What is networking?
Connecting with people (professionals, family, friends, acquaintances) in your field of interest, to assist you in learning about, connecting with and landing career and job opportunities.

## 2 Why should I network?
It will assist you in clearly defining your job and career interests, and help you uncover the “hidden job market” that will lead to more and better job opportunities. *If you do not network you are limiting your job prospects to about 20% of what is actually available to you.* No kidding.

## 3 Where do I find contacts?
- Professional associations
- University career offices
- Friends/family
- Career fairs
- LinkedIn/facebook etc.
- Greek Association/clubs
- Classrooms
- Student groups
- Grocery store
- Clubs
- Industry directories
- Alumni association
- Previous jobs

## 4 How do I make contact?
- Phone calls – Contacting someone you were referred to or found in a listing
- “Cold” calling – Contacting someone you don’t know to begin establishing a professional relationship
- E-mails/social networking – Contacting someone you were referred to or found in a search
- Direct contact – walking up to a professional and beginning a conversation at a job fair, social occasion, conference, etc.
- Chance meeting – Striking up a conversation with someone in a social or informal setting

## 5 How do I prepare myself?
1. Determine what you want to know. Are you networking for career exploration or job prospects or both?
2. Career exploration: Develop a list of questions for career exploration or “information interviewing.” (See handout.)
3. Determine how you want to introduce yourself.
4. Determine what about your background you want to emphasize in the conversation.
5. Determine what might be next steps after the conversation.

## 6 How do I know what to say?
Prepare a script for yourself—which includes an introductory statement and a list of questions.

**Examples:**

**Cold Call:**
“Hello, my name is Pat, I am doing career research and found your name on LinkedIn. I am exploring careers in (X). Would you have a moment to answer some questions?”

**Referral:**
“Hello, my name is Pat, I was referred to you by Teri Smith regarding the LMX position. Would you have a moment to answer some questions?”

**Career conference or professional association (face to face):**
“Hello, very nice to meet you Ms. Smith my name is XXX and am a completing my degree in XXX. I am particularly interested in the type of work your company does because it seems like a good fit with my interests and askills. I would love to talk with you more about this now, if you have time or set up another opportunity to talk.”

**Chance meeting/during a discussion—remember to remain open to always networking:**
“...Wow, that is interesting. It just so happens that what you do matches my career interest, would you mind if I asked you some questions or gave you a call some time to talk about your experience?”

## 7 After the contact, what do I do?
Begin a contact information sheet organized in a contact binder or folder:
- Record key points of the conversation—What did you learn, what were the answers to your questions?
- Write down any additional lead provided to you by the contact—such as new ideas you learned and additional people he or she suggested you contact.
- Write down your next steps following this contact. e.g., Do you plan to follow-up again? If so, when? Do you need to send materials to this contact—a resume or sample of your work? etc.
- Write a thank you note and send it.