University of Illinois at Chicago
Office of Career Services

Strategic Networking: A Resource Guide for International Students Seeking U.S. Employment

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Engaging Students for Success

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Strategic Networking

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Networking involves establishing relationships and connecting with people who can help you advance in your U.S. career in many ways. You may have your own networking contacts in your home country, and perhaps elsewhere, but it is a good idea to expand your U.S. network as you seek for employment in the U.S.

WHERE DO I START?

Networking for international students seeking U.S. employment can be complex, as it requires deeper understanding of local and national U.S. markets and culture. Networking differences are amplified by language and cultural contexts of your country of origin. To begin searching for your "U.S. network," start with your family, friends, roommates, classmates, significant others, UIC faculty, staff, alumni, past and present co-workers, neighbors, club, organization, association members, and people in your religious community. These people are all part of your current professional and personal network. You may even find that your networks back home have networks in the U.S. Once you have established who is in your current network, ask your contacts to introduce you to their contacts so that you can expand your network. Opportunities to network with people arise at any time and any place.
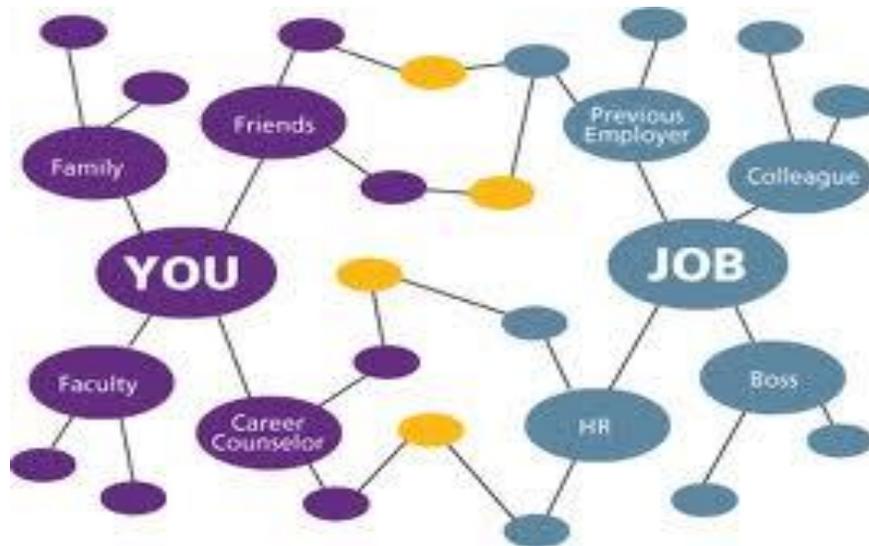
HOW DO I EXPAND MY NETWORK?

There are a number of ways in which you can expand your network.

- Use social media sites. Social media sites can be a great source for networking and to increase your online presence for job opportunities.
- Using social media to network can help you understanding different type of job openings and trends in your field, and find others like you.
- In-person networking, such as at job fairs or conducting informational interviews to increase your network.
- Please note that social media networking is NOT a replacement for networking in-person or via telephone. Utilizing social media to network is a way to INCREASE your network.

PLAN YOUR NETWORKING ACTIVITY

Effective networking takes time to plan and organize. Start your networking plan early by listing and organizing your contacts.

- Start networking within your inner circle (i.e., alumni, former colleagues, professors). Talking with your inner circle first is a great first step before talking to people with whom you are less comfortable. Below is a sample chart to help you get organized.

Group	Contact Name	Contact Info	Date	Relationship	Follow Up Action	Notes
Family						
Friends						
Co-workers (past and present)						
Professional Organization						
Personal (Church)						
Other…						

- Do not rule out your inner circle in your home country. You may have someone in your inner circle in your home country that can help you connect or arrange a meeting for you in the U.S.
- Prioritize your contacts according to their ability to hire you. You can start by connect with hiring managers and companies who have historically hired international students.
- Become knowledgeable about the immigration laws and regulations that affect your employment eligibility when seeking employment in the U.S. The more you are familiar with these regulations, the better able you will be to discuss your options with your network or prospective employer.
- When you connect with these contacts, make sure to articulate what you are looking for in a job, which target companies you are aiming for, advice, and informational interview contacts.

AMERICAN ETTIQUETTE AND ENGAGING PEOPLE WITH SMALL TALK

Networking in a new culture may be an unfamiliar or uncomfortable experience, but it will get easier with time and practice. First, start getting comfortable with small talk, which is a light and friendly conversation in casual environments.

- If someone says "hi" or "hello" to you, then you are expected to return the greeting.
- Say nice things. Avoid being critical or blunt.
- If someone is courteous and kind, say "thank you".
- If you bump into someone or when moving into someone's personal space say "excuse me".
- You can start small talk with Americans that you meet in the course of your average day (i.e., waiting at the bus stop, chatting with people you meet at the coffeeshop). You might start with, "Thanks for the coffee, I definitely need this before I start class." Or, "I wish the bus would get here, I don't want to be late for my internship."
- If this is uncomfortable for you, practice small talk with an American friend or classmate each day. This will not only help you feel more comfortable with U.S. culture, but also a valuable way to increase your network and get job leads.

- As you engage in small talk, or even longer conversations, keep in mind to speak when it is your turn. It is considered rude in the U.S. to interrupt a conversation. If you must interject, you can do it nicely. For example, "I'm sorry to interrupt, but I just realized the time and I have to attend a meeting shortly. It was very nice meeting you. May I have your business card so that I can follow-up with you in the future?"

SEEK AND ATTEND NETWORKING EVENTS

Once you are a little more comfortable with small talk, try and use this skill at networking events. Networking events (e.g., professional conferences, job fairs) are a great way to engage in small talk and make connections with people in your field.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR CURRENT WORK PROFESSIONALS

If you are currently working as an intern, employee, or volunteer, try and connect with your co-workers during your lunch break or at the end of the day. Socializing in this way builds relationships to work effectively as a team. It also offers an opportunity for you and your co-workers to share ideas on how to improve the work place and business.

Engaging with your co-workers or classmates also gives you an opportunity to learn what other (domestic) employees do. As an international student, it is important to challenge yourself and build these relationships in your current work environment. It will help you build your professional network and increase your comfort level working in the U.S. language and culture.

FOLLOW THROUGH WITH GRATITUTE AND RECIPROCATION

It is important to follow up after a networking experience. If someone does something for you (i.e., connecting you to a job opportunity), then make sure to convey that you are grateful. There are many different ways you can show gratitude, such as sending a short email thank you note or sending a thank you card.

If you are at a networking event, make sure to get his or her business card so that you can follow-through with your gratitude. It is also helpful to have your own business card to help others follow-up with you. You can obtain your own business cards at a local print shop, or online at www.vistaprint.com . You may want to leave one side of your business card blank so

that others may write notes if they need a reminder to follow-up with you. Each business card will look different, and it is solely your choice on how to design it. Typical business cards will include your full name, your job title or role, institution, phone number, fax number (if applicable), your email address, your physical mailing address, and LinkedIn link or electronic e-portfolio/professional website (if applicable). Below is a sample business card.

Your Name
Job Title or affiliation
(e.g., Research Fellow/BS Candidate)

Address
Phone Number
Email
Website, LinkedIn

NETWORKING TIPS

- Remember that strategic networking requires relationship building, which requires <u>time and effort</u>. Whether you are networking online or in-person, there is almost no such thing as a bad network contact. Of all the contacts you make, concentrate on building relationships with people who have a strong professional network base in your field.
- Build references starting with your professors, advisors, and classmates at your school. It does not matter if you get straight A's (marks) in class. Focus on articulating your work ethic and commitment in your field of study. This is far more impressive when you connect with others.
- Are there organizations or clubs on campus that relate to your major? If so, then become involved to build networking contacts and references. This is also a great way to make friends, and even practice English.
- Take advantage of ALL networking opportunities – professional organizations, social networking, and your college/university.
- Embrace your bi-lingualism or multi-lingualism. It is a great skill to speak more than one language so do not worry if you make a mistake in English grammar or vocabulary.

Americans understand that English is your second language. This is a good way to improve your language proficiency and get comfortable with speaking English in a U.S. cultural context.

- When networking, remember to speak slowly and clearly. It is also important to observe a person's face to make sure that they are able to understand you.

- If there are nametags at an event, write your first name only in big letters.

- Listen carefully when engaging in a conversation. Ask for clarification if you do not understand something.

- As you engage in a conversation, look for things you have in common with the people that you meet – "You love to travel? That's great, I also love to travel!"

- If you are unsure about something, it ok to admit it. You will learn something new and people will appreciate your honesty.

- If you are going to a networking event, do your research beforehand. You can check LinkedIn profiles to get some information that may be helpful in starting small talk.

- Check with your home country's embassy to see if they maintain a list of employment contacts.

- Check with your career center to see if they host any alumni mentor events. If they don't, try to read the alumni newsletter or magazine for networking or career opportunities.

Cultural Considerations in Networking

Understanding American networking behavior, such as handshaking, prevents creating cultural miscommunication and puts you on the fast track to relationship building. Depending on your country of origin, the length, grip, movement, and initiation of your handshake will be different from the American-style handshake. If your culture allows, extend your hand for a handshake. When networking and meeting new people for the first time, avoid kissing people's cheek, touching cheek to cheek, or hugging as this is not a form of acceptable professional networking behavior in the American culture. Do not touch people when you talk to them and only get close to them when you are invited. Maintain reasonable personal space and shake hands only. Imagine 1-1 ½ meter circle drawn around you that follows you wherever you go. In the U.S., a "good" handshake is firm, with an up and down movement for about 2-3 seconds.

In mainstream Western culture, eye contact is interpreted as attentiveness and honesty; we are taught that we should "look people in the eye" when talking. Direct eye contact is seen as a way of showing interest in what the person speaking has to say. It can be seen as rude or perceived as not paying attending if you don't give eye contact to some degree. In many cultures, however, including Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Native American, eye contact is thought to be disrespectful or rude. When you are at a formal or networking event, remember to smile. If you are comfortable, try a firm handshake and make direct eye contact with everyone that you meet.

Common Cultural Differences to the Job Search

American cultural attitudes and behaviors related to job hunting and work may be more or less alien to those of your own culture. If you have not thoroughly absorbed American work-related cultural values and expectations, you may want to read this section, which addresses some possible cultural barriers to an effective job search.

Self-Promotion

You must be confident in discussing your goals and accomplishments, and assertive in making your case, initiating calls and following up with all contacts.

Directness in Communication

In business, people expect open and direct questions and answers, and a firm handshake, eye contact and a confident, but relaxed posture. If these are uncomfortable for you, practice with American friends.

Self-Disclosure

Many cultures consider personal questions about likes and dislikes or strengths and weaknesses as an invasion of privacy by all except family and close friends. However, you will probably be asked to disclose along these lines in an interview. Preparation should enable you to do this more comfortably.

Career Self-Awareness

In the U.S. you are expected to demonstrate knowledge of yourself, your career goals and how they relate to the job. Informational interviewing will help you prepare.

Individual Responsibility in Finding Employment

Although personal and professional networks are very important in finding jobs in the U.S., in general, you must create them, rather than - as may be in the case in your culture - identifying already established family or government or educational connections that lead to jobs. So as you already know, you have to put great effort into generating a wide variety of resources in order to identify multiple job possibilities. If it's any consolation, this comes as a surprise to most Americans, too.

Language Barriers

It is important to practice interviewing people. If you do not speak English well, you need to practice seriously and regularly with English-speaking friends, with tapes, in classes or with a tutor.

Two-Way Stereotypes

Stereotypes that limit the "objectivity" of both interviewers and interviewees are almost inevitable. You can best deal with this issue by examining your own stereotypes of Americans, as well as of the particular work culture you are interviewing for, and by imagining what the stereotypes of the potential employer toward you might be. Then, when you communicate, try to indirectly counter questions or actions, or in some cases, confront them directly in your cover letter or the interview. You will need to have a convincing argument for wanting to remain in the U.S. for career reasons. Even more difficult, if you are seeking practical training only, you will have to counter the employer's bias against hiring and training you for just a year. There is no obvious response beyond assuring them that you learn quickly and would like to stay longer and that the INS process is manageable. Finally, it is always a good strategy to stress both your unique strengths and qualities as an individual and the special contribution you can make because of your international background.

Common Cultural Differences in the Job Search

U.S. Employer Expectations	Conflicting Values of Another Culture
1. Self-Promotion • Assertiveness • Confidence in openly discussing goals and accomplishments • Follow-up with employers (telephone inquiries about status of application, thank-you notes) • Appropriate dress	• Unless presented as part of group activity, citing accomplishments and skills is viewed as boastful, self-serving, and too individualistic • Asking employer directly about status of application is rude
2. Directness in Communication • Open and direct responses to questions • Eye contact with interviewer, relaxed posture, and other appropriate nonverbal behavior	• Eye contact, especially with persons of higher status (e.g. employer, interviewer) is disrespectful • Appearance of criticism must be avoided to save face
3. Self-Disclosure • Personal descriptions of experiences, hobbies, strengths, weaknesses • Answers to questions related to personality (e.g. leadership style, problem-solving abilities)	• Personal questions about likes, dislikes, etc., are considered an invasion of privacy and are discussed only with close friends and family
4. Career Self-Awareness • Demonstrating knowledge of self, career goals, and how they relate to the job • Discussion of long-range career plans	• Jobs are assigned by government or family • Questions about role in a company indicates potential disloyalty • Company assigns work responsibilities • Individual must be flexible to accept whatever job becomes available
5. Individual Responsibility in Finding Employment • Use of wide variety of resources for identifying jobs (friends, family contacts, associations, career services, academic mentors, etc.) • Networking	• Jobs are found through government or family • Dependency relationships in job search are fostered. One resource (e.g., academic adviser, employment agent) will find appropriate work for job seeker

6. Informality in the Interview Process Congenial interviewing environment that encourages openness, some joking, exchange of information	• Sitting with person of higher status requires deference. The job applicant is very polite and does not ask any questions or provide information that may indicate lack of respect for interviewer's position • Handshaking, touching, using first name, crossing legs, etc., are inappropriate
7. Punctuality • **Arrive 5-15 minutes before appointment**	• Personal relationships are more important than time. Anywhere from 15 min.-2 hrs. lateness from agreed meeting time is not insulting
8. Effective Letters of Application and Resumes One page, error-free, concise and attractive outline of relevant job experiences, skills, accomplishments, and academic credentials • Personalized to reflect each individual's qualifications and professional interests	• Resumes are a detailed chronology of academic and formal work experiences and not a tool for self-promotion
9. Individual Equity • Race, sex, age should not affect interview relationship	• Males are expected to assume dominance in interactions with females • Younger persons defer to older ones
10. Preparation and Organization • Obtain as much information as possible about job and organization before interview • Demonstrate awareness of organization in letter of application and during interview	• Research about organization may indicate excessive and undesirable initiative or independence

Excerpt from Jessup, Catherine (1995). "Discover the Hidden Job Market" in <u>Global Opportunity</u>, 1995, pgs. 48-51.

Social Media

LinkedIn is for the people you know. Facebook is for the people you used to know. Twitter is for people you want to know. *(by Unknown)*

"Social media takes time and careful, strategic thought. It doesn't happen by accident."
— Brian E. Boyd Sr., *Social Media for the Executive*

Companies are relying heavily on social media to recruit new talent on their team. More than 80% of employers will post jobs and check profiles on social media. There are many social media outlets in which you can use to network with professionals. While Twitter and Facebook and other social networking sites (including sites popular in your home country), can be helpful with networking and job search, LinkedIn is the most used by employers and best social media source for networking.

Benefits of using social media for networking

- Easier to share your resume
- First step into building relationships
- Helps to find someone you may not know who could be a great addition to your network
- The economy and job duties changes every day. Being active on social media helps to know what areas are trending or who will be hiring
- A chance to build your own personal brand
  Personal branding – snapshot of what you want employers to see and a quick insight into who you are professionally. Great way to market yourself.

LinkedIn

UIC Office of Career Services offers LinkedIn Labs, an interactive session in a computer lab, to learn how to launch your professional network on LinkedIn – a professional networking site that you'll be using for the rest of your career! Bring your resume on a flash drive or e-mail it to yourself for easy access. You will want to use some of that information to create or modify your profile. Check out http://www.uic.edu/depts/ocs/ for all the updated LinkedIn Lab dates.

What is LinkedIn?

- A social professional network; "Professional Facebook"

What is it NOT?

- LinkedIn is not a job board. A job board is a physical or virtual area that lists available jobs where you can apply through. (i.e., Monster.com, CareerBuilder.com)
- LinkedIn is not a personal network

Why is it useful?

- To help communicate who you are as a professional
- To connect with others in a professional way outside of your other social networks
- To stay in touch with other students and alumni after you leave UIC
- To look for internships and job opportunities
- Increasingly, to APPLY for those opportunities
- To be a lifelong learner in your field
- To Follow companies (same as Liking them on Facebook, but you won't be getting coupons or recipes)

Who uses it?

- Everyone – over 200 million users worldwide. 75 million in the US alone.

What does the future hold?

- Thirty-seven percent of surveyed job recruiters identified social professional networks as one of the **most important** sources for hiring. Social professional networks are also the fastest growing source of quality hires.

- Ninety of the Fortune 100 companies use LinkedIn's corporate talent solutions to find future hires.

For more information on LinkedIN for UIC students, please refer to
http://www.uic.edu/depts/ocs/linkedin.shtml

Sourced by Steven Steinfeld and Yinping Huang

Tips and Tricks to Help Get You Started

First step - create a profile that highlights your strengths!

As a starting point, the first things you want to tend to are: **name, photo, headline, summary, education, experience, and contact info**. LinkedIn makes it simple for you by providing a resource (help.linkedin.com) for what each section of the profile should contain. You can add, change, or remove information on your profile.   For most items:

- Move your cursor over **Profile** at the top of your homepage and select **Edit Profile**.
- Find the section you'd like to edit and click the Edit icon next to it.
- When you're done making updates, click **Done editing** in the box at the top of your profile.

❒ **Name** - First, last, and former (maiden) names.
❒ **Photo** – Add a professional-looking headshot, but make sure you look friendly and approachable too.
❒ **Headline** - This information will default to your current job title. Change it to reflect how you want to communicate your professional identity, or opportunities you seek. Your job may be in customer service at Target, but if you are a Finance student, "Finance Internship Candidate" is a better choice.
❒ **Location** – Include the location where you will be seeking opportunities or where you live.
❒ **Industry** – What is your target industry? If you don't know yet, you can select "Higher Education."
❒ **Contact Info** - Add your preferred Contact information, which can include your email, phone, IM, and address (only visible to connections), as well as your Twitter handle and websites.

❒ **URL –** Customize it to *www.linkedin.com/in/(some version of your name).* Add your new URL to your resume contact information if you want employers to easily find your Profile.

❒ **Summary** - Information about your accomplishments and goals. If you are just beginning your career journey, this may be tough to summarize. As you acquire more experience and self-knowledge, this is a valuable section to communicate your professional identity.

❒ **Samples of your work** – You may add samples to your Summary that showcase your skills, making your LinkedIn profile much like a professional portfolio. You can add a link or upload a file (as long as it's not proprietary to your work). Include writing samples, coding samples, presentations, spreadsheets, etc.

❒ **Education** - Schools attended, majors and degrees, and other educational information. As in your resume, include information that highlights your strengths. Include study abroad, high GPA, Dean's list awards, etc. High school is typically not appropriate unless you are a freshman or perhaps a sophomore.

❒ **Courses** - Adding related coursework can help you support the importance of your education.

❒ **Projects** - Showcase the projects you've worked on, particularly capstone or thesis projects, and especially if they are evidence of skills you have listed in your Skills section.

❒ **Experience** - Positions and experiences, including jobs, volunteering, military, and student activities or clubs. The information here will be similar to your resume, and you can cut and paste from it.

❒ **Skills & Expertise** - A list of relevant skills will help others to understand your strengths and improve your chances of being found when employers search for those skills. You can add up to 50 skills – look at other student and young professional Profiles in your field to get ideas of skills to add.

❒ **Recommendations** - You can request recommendations from contacts and display them on your profile.

❒ **Certifications** - Certifications, licensures, or clearances you've attained.

❒ **Honors & Awards** - Show off your hard-earned awards.

- ❒ **Languages** - Languages you understand or speak.
- ❒ **Organizations** - List the organizations or associations you belong to. Purchasing student memberships to professional organizations is a great idea, and can be inexpensive.
- ❒ **Patents** - Any patents you've applied for or received.
- ❒ **Publications** - Publications that have featured your work.
- ❒ **Test Scores** - List your scores on tests to highlight high achievement.
- ❒ **Volunteering & Causes** - Organizations you support, and causes you care about.
- ❒ **Additional Information** – There is space for interests, personal details like your birthday or marital status (not recommended), and advice for people who want to contact you.

Next, join groups

You can join up to 50 groups. When you want to connect with others, it's much easier if they are in a group that you share with them. You can search for groups using the search bar, and also look at others' profiles to see what groups they are in. Look for groups related to UIC, to your major or profession, and for professionals based in Chicago. Groups are a wonderful resource for learning about your field – check out the discussions that happen, and participate too.

Then, begin to create a network

Once you've created a strong profile, you can begin to invite people to connect. Don't worry about getting your Profile perfected before you connect, as you'll be editing it frequently. Your network can include fellow students, friends, family, friends of family, relatives of friends, professors, co-workers, and even your hair stylist. A professional network does not mean only people who are in your major or field. You never know who people are connected to now, or who they might be connected to in the future.

When reaching out to connect with others, it is ESSENTIAL that you are polite, professional, and create a customized invitation rather than use the default generic invite. Here is an example:

> Hello Jim,
>
> It was a pleasure meeting you at the party on Saturday at (location/event). I enjoyed hearing about your experiences at ABC company/department, and I hope you will consider joining my professional network.
>
> Sincerely,
> Juan Rosas

Potential connections may not be interested in joining your network, but there is no harm in asking as long as you are professional. Reach out to your network to ask for recommendations, and write them for others if you are able. To support your communication of yourself as an educated, accomplished, and well-rounded emerging professional, it helps to have reputable people verify in a detailed way that you actually can do what you say you can do. Therefore, it's helpful to get recommendations from people within your LinkedIn network so that employers can use them as a first-round reference check when skimming through your profile. Get your former employers, colleagues, professors, and/or clients to put in a good word in for you. When you ask them, you can remind them of your accomplishments in class or on the job, which may make their job easier.

Endorse others for skills (but only if you know they have them).
Is your classmate great at PowerPoint? Endorse her. Is your supervisor at your job excellent at training? Endorse him. You get the idea. Others will do the same for you. Skill endorsements do not carry the same importance as recommendations, but they help, especially when you are just getting started. LinkedIn will ask you when you sign on if your connections have skills you would like to endorse.

Sourced in part from Payscale.com

[Twitter]() – What is it??

Twitter is an online social networking and service that enables users to send and read short 140-character text messages, called "tweets". You can use Twitter to create a series of mini blogs, share your thoughts, news, or simply show your industry that you're knowledgeable and up to date with the trends. You can also "follow" other people on Twitter to see what others have to share or start a conversation. Be intentional on who you follow. Unlike Facebook, anyone can follow you – you have the choice to follow them back . However, if you make your profile private you do not have to accept them as followers. Registered users can read and post tweets, but unregistered users can only read them.

Best Practices on Twitter

It is good practice to use professionalism on Twitter. Everyone can see what you tweet, including your boss, work colleagues, family and friends. Although Twitter is a great tool to share ideas and connect with people, be careful about what you post or you could lose friends, fall out with your family, and maybe lose your job.

Know the Twitter language

- **Tweet:** A 140-character message.

- **Retweet (RT):** Re-sharing or giving credit to someone else's tweet.

- **Feed:** The stream of tweets you see on your homepage. It's comprised of updates from users you follow.

- **Handle:** Your username.

- **Mention (@):** A way to reference another user by his or her username in a tweet (e.g., @UICCareerSrvcs). Users are notified when @mentioned. It's a way to conduct discussions with other users in a public realm.

- **Direct Message (DM):** A private, 140-character message between two people. You can decide whether to accept a Direct Message from any Twitter user, or only from users you are following. You may only DM a user who follows you.

- **Hastags** – The # symbol, is commonly called a hashtag. It is used to mark keywords or topics in a tweet and is a way to categorize messages. Hashtag (#): A way to start a topic of conversation or participate in a larger linked discussion (e.g., #AmericanIdol, #Obama). A hashtag is a discovery tool that allows others to find your tweets. You can also click on a hashtag to see all the tweets that mention it in real time — even from people you don't follow.

Lists

- When you choose to follow someone, you have the option to add them to a list. You can create different categories of lists. Also look at other people's lists to find followers.

Your Profile

In order to engage in conversation, you must introduce yourself. A handle is essentially your "business card", and is how people will interact with you and include you in conversation. Your profile pic, header image and bio should also reflect who you are.

- Include an enticing description and a professional picture
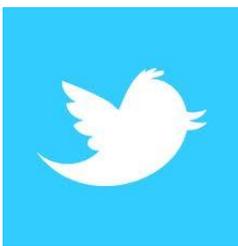
- If you're looking for a job include that in your profile. Remember to include keywords!

Following and Followers – Once you've created your username, photo and bio, you need to seek out people to follow. You can find them in a few different ways.

- Follow your friends and people you know at first

- Explore people your friends are following

- Once you get started, Twitter will give you better follow suggestions, based on the industries/fields associated with your interests. Over time, you will discern who is worth following and who is not. There's no set strategy for this — it's completely up to you and your own personal tastes. If someone follows you, there's no requirement to follow them. If someone is tweeting too much and clogging your feed, feel free to unfollow him or her immediately.

Privacy preferences

- Twitter gives you the option to allow anyone to follow you and have a public profile or be more private and approve followers for your account. If you choose the public option, it is easier for people to find you and see what you are tweeting about.

Tweeting/Retweeting

On the Twitter homepage, type your update into the Tweet box just below your name. You can also click the Tweet button to start a new tweet from any page.

Similar to forwarding something you received in an email, Twitter's **retweet** feature (often abbreviated as **RT**) allows you to repost other people's tweets so your other followers can read them too.

Hover over the tweet you want to share, then click Retweet.
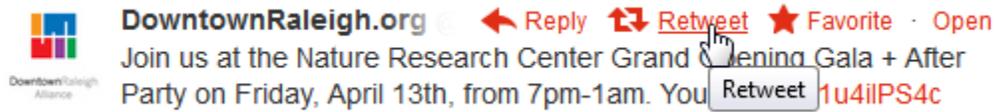
Follow Conferences Virtually

- Many conferences will tweet from conferences giving you updates on speakers, sessions, etc. Do research on conferences you might be interested in and see if they are offering a hashtag to follow along *(e.g., #NASPA)*

- If a conference is virtual, it's a great opportunity to add to the conversation and stay involved

- Retweet what other virtual attendees are posting. In turn, others may retweet your posts as well. This will help to widen your reach and find new relevant followers (Ex. RT Great article about #sustainability bitly.com)

Search Organizations

- Get news updates and current blog posts/articles

- Some organizations will include staff members profile in their description.

- See job posts

Industry Articles/Blog Posts

- Once you have established a network on Twitter, make sure to post relevant professional articles about your field. Post questions about jobs in the field you're interested in.

- Find relevant posts/articles from those you are following and retweet their information to build relationships in your network.

- Make sure to use hashtags (e.g., #NASPA) so others who don't know you can find the information you are tweeting about.

Interact With Those You Follow

- **Ask Questions:** Do you have a question about finding jobs in your field? Post a question to help build connections and get answers from professionals in the field. Ask career advice or let people know you are looking for a job.

- **Answer Questions:** Make sure to answer questions of other people who you are following. Comment on interesting articles they have posted or interesting conversations that you come across through your newsfeed.

Sourced by http://www.gcflearnfree.org/twitter101/5

Facebook

Facebook is a social networking site which allows you to connect and share news, pictures, website links, and personal posts with family and friends online. Facebook also lets you connect with present or former co-workers, and other professionals, who share similar interests or who have common backgrounds. Facebook is a good way to stay in touch with your classmates after finishing school.

Facebook Settings:

- Facebook often changes privacy settings. If using for personal reasons and not professional, make sure to make your account private from search engines so companies can't view your profile.

Facebook Groups:

- Similar to LinkedIn, find groups you are interested in following

Follow companies:

- Great way to keep up company news for those companies you're interested in
- Some companies will post jobs on Facebook – another way to be in the loop
- Follow a company's Communications page to keep on top of upcoming news, job postings, or events (i.e., attendance at job fairs)

How do I set up an account?

For more information on how to start a Facebook account, go to

http://www.cnet.com/news/newbies-guide-to-facebook/

Job Fairs

A job fair (also known as career fair or career expo) is an event where employers, recruiters, and schools meet with prospective hires. Try to attend these fairs even though you may not be looking for a job in the near future. You will gain valuable experience for the next job fair, and you may even make new connections with people in your field. Go To http://www.uic.edu/depts/ocs/events_career_fairs.shtml for upcoming career fairs at UIC.

How to prepare for a job fair

- Update your resume and have it reviewed by a career counselor well in advance of the fair.
- Look up the employers attending the fair on the fair's website. If the job fair is sponsored by your college, you can also ask your career counselor for a list of the employers and recruiters.
- Research and make a list of the companies that interest you
- Practice your values statement*
- Prepare some questions for the employer (e.g., What do you look for in a candidate?")
- Talking with employers at a job fair can also be a "mini-interview" opportunity. Prepare to answer some basic questions about yourself (education, what you're looking for in a job)

At the Fair

- Go to the table or booth of the list of companies that you have narrowed down
- Engage with employers about employment opportunities
- Ask them for their business cards so that you can follow up with them on LinkedIn or for informational interviews
- Leave a copy of your resume with employers only if it is not tailored to a specific company or position.
- Use your time at the fair to network with other students

After the Fair

- Review the business cards that you have collected at the fair and follow up with the employers that you met.
- Send an updated electronic version of your resume through email, if necessary.
- Connect on LinkedIn or request an informational interview through email

Job Fair Tips

- Meet with a career counselor to go over your resume
- Edit your resume to be free of formatting or grammatical errors
- Once you have updated your resume, make copies to bring to the fair. Bring more resumes than you think you will need.
- Bring the list of companies and notes that you have researched before hand. List at least 3 questions to ask each job representative.
- Dress professionally to stand out and make a good impression to employers. Invest in a business suit to look sharp and clean.
- If you plan to approach a companies for two different positions, make sure to bring two sets of resumes and keep track of which resume you gave to which company representative.
- Go early if possible so that you will get maximum time with employers
- Practice your approach with companies before engaging with companies on your list. You can practice with your friends, or career counselor.
- Do not ask if company sponsors international students for H-1B visas. Discussions about H1-B sponsorship should come later, either when the employer brings it up or when the applicant is offered a position. You can, however, check out myvisajobs.com to research companies that have hired international students in the past.
- Do not ask about salary and benefits at the job fair. You can likely find this information on your own by browsing the company website, or glassdoor.com.

Sourced by Steven Steinfeld and Yinping Huang

Informational Interview

An informational interview is a meeting in which the job seeker (you) seek and ask individuals about to gain insight about a career, industry and company information and/or advice rather than ask about job leads or opportunities. Sometimes an informational interview can lead to a job opportunity, but this should not be your expectation. Informational interviewing is a great way to network.

So, how do you set up an informational interview? It can be hard to ask for a favor. Many job seekers procrastinate on setting up informational interviews or networking meetings because they are afraid of being rejected. If you follow these guidelines, you'll be much more likely to get a positive response.

A Step-by-Step Guide to Informational Interviews

STEP 1: IDENTIFY PEOPLE TO TALK WITH

Start with a list of people you already know who might be willing to serve as a contact or referral source. Consider friends, relatives, fellow students, faculty, job supervisors, neighbors, people you met at job fairs or professional association meetings, and people they know. Utilize UIC's online database of alumni career mentors or LinkedIn.com.

STEP2: ARRANGE AN "INFORMATIONAL" INTERVIEW

The interview can be arranged by telephone, email, writing a letter and initiating a follow-up phone call, stopping by in person, or having someone who knows the contact make an appointment for you.

However you make contact is up to you, but your message should contain the following:

- Give a polite salutation. "Dear Ms. Ali" or "Hello Dr. Lee" are safe bets.
- Tell your contact where you know them from, or if you have a mutual connection.

- Inform them of your objective: to meet, talk via phone, or simply exchange emails.
- Be clear that you want a brief meeting to discuss a specific set of questions, and that you are not inquiring about a job or seeking feedback on your resume.
- Provide a hint of what the questions are about, (i.e. you'd like to know more about the inner-workings of XYZ Company, you're interested in joining ABC association and would like to know about her experience)
- Provide two or three options for your meeting so that it is easy for them to check their calendar and schedule the appointment in a return email.

Here's an example you can modify for your own use:

Dear Dr. Lee:

A good friend of mine, Mary Ali, M.D., suggested that I contact you. I recently told her that I have always been intrigued by the work that your organization does and I heard about your new research on patient care. As a current student who is considering entering your field, I'd love to talk with you about courses I'm thinking about taking and your insights on forming a career path. Just to be clear, I'm not looking to ask you to hire me, or to have you look at my resume, but just to learn from your expertise. Would it be possible to meet with you for 30 minutes to conduct an informational interview to gain further insights into the industry? I am available most Monday-Friday, before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m. Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Carlos Bravo

STEP 3: PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Prior to the interview, you should develop a firm grasp of your interests, values and skills, so that your fit with the work environment can be discussed and assessed. Read all you can about the organization prior to conducting the interview.

STEP 4: CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

Dress neatly, be on time and conduct yourself in a professional manner. Refer to your list of prepared questions, but allow for some spontaneity as well. At the end, ask your contact for names of others that might be helpful to you.

STEP 5: FOLLOW-UP

Send a thank you note immediately following the interview. Be sure to record helpful information from your interview for further reference. This might include name, address and phone number of the person interviewed, the date of the interview, information gathered and suggested names. Organize you information: Keep all the information you gather together. Stay on their radar though monthly emails.

SAMPLE INFORMATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell me about your career path to date. How did you get involved in this type of work?

- In the position you know hold, what do you do on a typical day?

- What are the most interesting aspects of your job?

- What part of your work do you consider dull and repetitious?

- How long does it usually take to move from one step to the next in this career?

- What is the top job you can have in this career?

- Are there other areas of this field to which people in it may be transferred? What are they?

- Are there are basic prerequisites or specific courses a student might take that would be beneficial in this field?

- What entry-level jobs qualify a person for this field?

- What types of training do companies give to persons entering this field?

- What are the salary ranges for various levels in this field?

- What aspects of a career in this field do you consider particularly positive? Negative?

- What special advice would you give to a young person entering this field?

- How do you see the jobs in the field changing over the next ten years?

- What is the best way to obtain a position, which will start me on a career in this field?

- Do you know of any summer jobs or internship opportunities?

- Who else in this field do you know that you could refer me to?

Being Creative in How You Network

Be Persistent and Creative - Consider unusual job search techniques!

Indeed, there are many different ways to increase your network as you embark on your U.S. employment search. It is important to be creative in the ways you make connections, whether they are from the use of social media or in-person at a job fair or professional conference. Be aware of different cultural differences, such as U.S. employer expectations and your own cultural values. Keep in mind that UIC has resources and counselors to help you through this process. UIC Office of Career Services hosts several job and major fairs throughout the year and offer specific workshops, such as International Student Career Month, that will help you practice your networking. Check out the event calendars from the websites below for a list of the upcoming fairs, workshops, and/or socials.

Office of Career Services

Student Employment Office

Office of International Services

While the Office of Career Services and Office of International Services provides select resources for you, relying on this guide or websites is generally less effective than meeting with an advisor to discuss your options.

UIC Office of Career Services (OCS)
Student Services Building (SSB), Suite 3050
1200 West Harrison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60607-3344
Phone: (312) 996-2300
EMAIL: ocs@uic.edu
OFFICE HOURS: M-F : 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
WEBSITE: http://careers.uic.edu
TWITTER: @UICCareerSrvcs

UIC Student Employment Office (SEO)
Student Services Building, Suite 2100
1200 West Harrison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60607-3344
Phone: (312) 996-3130
EMAIL: studentjobs@uic.edu
OFFICE HOURS: M-F: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
WEBSITE: http://www.seo.uic.edu
TWITTER: @UICStudntEmploy

Call to ask for updated drop-in career advising schedule, or to schedule an appointment. (Career Counseling, resumes, cover letters, etc.)

UIC Office of International Services (OIS)
Student Services Building (SSB), Suite 2160
1200 West Harrison Street
Chicago, IL 60607-7164
Phone: (312) 996-3121
EMAIL, general account: ois@uic.edu
EMAIL, newly admitted students:
newintl@uic.edu
EMAIL, department access to Tracker:
OISscholar@uic.edu
OFFICE HOURS: M-F: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
WEBSITE: http://www.ois.uic.edu/
TWITTER: @UIC_OIS

Call to ask for updated open advising for J-1s, H-1Bs, and O-1s, or to schedule an appointment. (Visa process, OPT, etc.)

Resources

American Chambers of Commerce Abroad
(**www.uschamber.com/international/directory**) —Directory of American companies and individuals doing business in a particular country, as well as firms and individuals of that country that operate in the United States.

H-1B Visa Jobs and Sponsorship Portal (www.H1Bvisajobs.comm) —Advice about applying for H-1B and list of H-1B sponsors.

The USA JOBS (Employment of Noncitizens)
https://help.usajobs.gov/index.php/Employment_of_Non-citizens

U. S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration's website contains a wealth of useful information regarding Foreign Labor Certification, including applying for H1-B visas. The site features an overview of the H1-B visa, a brief description of the filing process, frequently asked questions (FAQs) and updates about H1-B regulations
http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/

The Office of Foreign Labor Certification
http://www.flcdatacenter.com/CaseH1B.aspx
Find employers who have applied for H1-B visas

Foreign Born
http://www.foreignborn.com/visas_imm/start_here/3employment_visa.htm
Website used to assist individuals with living and working in the U.S.

The ForeignMBA.com is reportedly the #1 internet community for MBA students from around the world. The site includes a list of more than 70 employers that have a history of hiring foreign MBAs. The site also offers a guide, "Getting a Job in the U.S. -- a Guide for International MBA Students," which can be purchased online -- **http://www.foreignmba.com**

Going Global is a web site with career and employment resources including world-wide job openings, internship listings, industry profiles and country-specific career information. More than 30,000 pages of constantly-updated content is included on topics such as work permit/visa regulations, resume writing guidelines and examples, employment trends, salary ranges, networking groups, cultural/interviewing advice, corporate profiles and worldwide job listings...plus much more! **H1-B employer listings** are also listed for all 50 states!
http://www.goinglobal.com/

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services provides information on their website about working in the U.S. Topics include eligibility criteria, the application process, period of stay, H1-B cap and more. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services also provides annual reports of

employers who have received approval for H1-B petitions, characteristics of specialty occupation workers, and more -- **http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis**

Money Magazine Global 500
http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/global500/

MyVisaJobs
MyVisaJobs is a resource for finding H1-B sponsors in the United States. Students can view reports of H1-B sponsors and view information by industry, economic sector, state and more. Reports feature information regarding the number of visa petitions/applications and salary. **http://www.myvisajobs.com**

OneSource: UIC Library
Using online databases to search companies with both a base in your home country as well as the US may increase your chances in the job search. You can market yourself as flexible (geographically, linguistically, and culturally), which can greatly benefit multinational companies. Offer your unique international status as a benefit to these companies.

Utilize the UIC library online database entitled OneSource. You must log-on through the library website at **researchguides.uic.edu/databases** to gain full access.

Once in OneSource, under the "Companies" icon, click the "Build a List" link. This will bring you to a screen with multiple tabs: Global, US/Canada, United Kingdom, Europe and Asia Pacific. Under the default "US/Canada" tab, the procedure for building a list of duo-nation companies (with both foreign and US base) is as follows:
1. Under "Location," change the "Country" to "United States."
2. Under "Company," change the "Parent Company" to the country you are from.
3. Be sure to click also the "both" tab next to the "Parent Company" field.
4. At the bottom of the screen, click "Run Search."
5. Click the link for "View List" to view the companies matching your criteria.

You may also use the system in *reverse* and find a *Parent Company* headquartered in the US with international subsidiaries.

Uniworld: UIC Library Provides listings for American firms and their locations in other countries and firms based in other countries with locations in the United States. Can be used to track foreign subsidiaries or for job and internship opportunities.

Social Media Resources

Twitter
www.twitter.com
http://www.digitaltrends.com/social-media/how-to-use-twitter/#!F4S3l
http://mashable.com/guidebook/twitter/
http://www.gcflearnfree.org/twitter101/5
http://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2011/dec/15/twitter-rules-etiquette

Facebook
www.facebook.com
http://www.cnet.com/news/newbies-guide-to-facebook/

LinkedIn
www.linkedIn.com
http://mashable.com/2012/05/23/linkedin-beginners/
Attend an interactive workshop at UIC – LinkedIn Labs (call, email, or check the calendar of events on UIC OCS website)

U.S. News.com – International Students and Social Media
http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/international-student-counsel/2014/01/09/3-rules-for-international-students-using-us-social-media

Other Resources

The Art of Handshaking
http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/spycatcher/201307/the-art-handshaking

Book: Breaking the Bamboo Ceiling: Career Strategies for Asians, by Jane Hyun

Book: 3 steps to your job in the USA. International student ed., by Steven Steinfeld and Huang Yinping

References

3 steps to your job in the USA. International student ed., by Steven Steinfeld and Huang Yinping

Jessup, Catherine (1995). "Discover the Hidden Job Market" in Global Opportunity, 1995, pgs. 48-51.