



101 Professional Networking Tips



Put your best professional foot forward

Networking makes the professional world go around. Whether you're trying to build up your personal brand, meet new people, find a job, close deals, find investors, or just sustainably grow your business, it always helps to form strong connections with your peers, colleagues, and customer community.

We all need [community](#) to thrive, and in the professional realm, networking is how you find yours.

“What do we all have in common? We all want to grow.”



DHARMESH SHAH

Founder + CTO, HubSpot





Grow your career by advancing your skills with HubSpot Academy

Access hundreds of free courses + quick lessons on marketing, sales, service, and more.

The more you know about your industry, the better prepared you'll be for networking and career development. Here are a few of our most popular courses + certifications:

- ✓ Building Your Network
- ✓ Critical Thinking and Problem Solving in Today's Changing Workplace
- ✓ Social Media Marketing Certification
- ✓ Inbound Sales Certification
- ✓ Working with Data in Excel

[Start a free course](#)

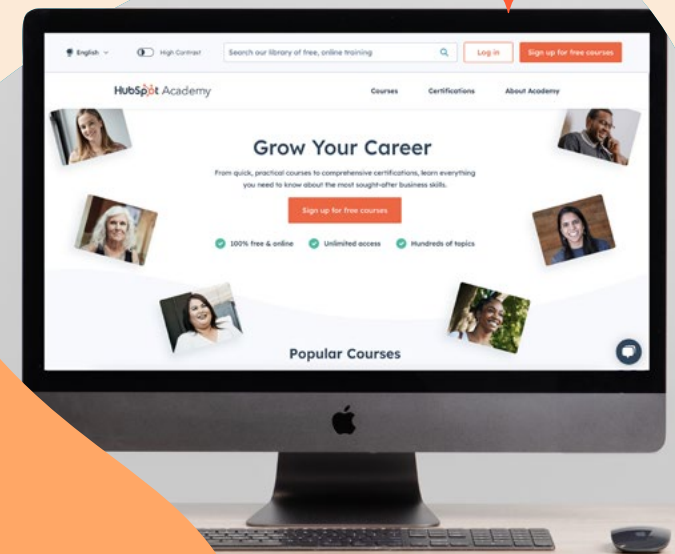


Table of Contents

The Dos and Don'ts of Networking	5	SECTION 05	19
How to Introduce Yourself	6	Strategic Networking for Sales and Marketing	
SECTION 01	7	SECTION 06	20
Networking Tips and Conversation Starters for Events and Conferences		Virtual Networking Tips and Advice	
SECTION 02	11	SECTION 07	21
Networking Tips and Templates For Students		Social Networking Skills	
SECTION 03	13	SECTION 08	23
Networking to Find a Job or Accelerate Your Career		Outreach and Follow-Up Templates for Personal and Professional Networking	
SECTION 04	16		
Networking and Personal Branding Tips for Entrepreneurs			

The Dos and Don'ts of Networking

When looking to start networking and growing your personal brand, here are some important general dos and don'ts to keep in mind.

- 1 Do** your research before any meeting or event. For conferences and networking events, research the panelists and speakers so you can be ready to ask informed questions.
- 2 Do** perfect your personal [elevator pitch](#). Whether it's to use in an email, a LinkedIn request, at a networking event, or even if you run into your career hero on a chance encounter.
- 3 Do** practice explaining what your company does. As part of your intro, you'll often want to mention what company you work for.
- 4 Do** be targeted in your networking efforts. [Sending standard connection requests on LinkedIn to hundreds of people in your industry will get you nowhere](#). Sending a few personalized requests to people who have the specific type of role you're looking for will be more effective.
- 5 Do** [build a great LinkedIn profile](#). Even if you're not big on posting, you need to be sure that when someone Googles you, your up-to-date and accurate LinkedIn page is ready to show you in your best light.
- 6 Do** know what you want to get out of any networking meeting. What specific questions about the industry would you like answered?



- 7 **Don't** ask for too much of a connection's time. Ask for a half-hour Zoom meeting or a short coffee walk near their office.
- 8 **Don't** lead with asking for a favor. If you want full-on mentorship or even something tangible like a resume review, wait to ask until after you have a live discussion.
- 9 **Don't** worry if every interaction doesn't work out. When you're meeting dozens of people, there's no way that every interaction is going to be perfect. Try to learn something from every experience.
- 10 **Don't** exclusively concentrate on making new connections. Building up existing relationships can be even more effective than reaching the elusive 500+ connections on LinkedIn.

How to Introduce Yourself

It can seem simple, but introducing yourself in a networking context takes practice. Networking intros can feel like higher-pressure interactions, especially compared with any other type of socializing. You want to come off friendly, but professional.

- 11 Show interest in the other person, but ensure you're still putting your best foot forward.
- 12 Try practicing the following simple introductions.

If you don't know the person:

Hi! I'm [name], I work in [industry or sector].
What do you do?

If you know who they are, but they might not know you:

Hi! I'm [name], I work at [company] on the [name of your team]. I've seen your work on [project], [something you liked about it]. It's great to meet you!

SECTION 01

Networking Tips and Conversation Starters for Events and Conferences

Industry events and conferences are incredible opportunities to kickstart or grow your career, find new prospects, close deals, and build relationships. But they can also be costly, tiring, and overwhelming. Here's how to prepare for networking at conferences so you can get the most out of the event, put your best foot forward, and feel a bit less awkward in the moment.

- 13 Find out what to expect. Conferences are generally packed with presentations, panels, and even some hands-on skills building sessions. Take the time to read all the pre-event materials sent your way in the weeks leading up to the event.
- 14 Conferences are marathons, not sprints, so you don't need to try to do every single activity offered. Prepare for extreme amounts of social interactions, and know your limits.
- 15 At multi-day conferences, people fly in from all over the region, or even all over the world, to attend major industry conferences. Expect happy hours and dinners, as well as other social events, scheduled around sessions. Wear your nametag with your name and company the whole time.



- 16 Half-day (or shorter) industry networking events are typically attended by local industry professionals, and are a great way to connect with your peers in your region. They typically revolve around one big session, like a panel discussion, or a workshop. Be sure to take advantage of any post-session socializing, as that's where most of the real networking happens.
- 17 Plan your agenda. Conferences are often made up of dozens of optional sessions and featured keynotes. Reflect on why you're going: Which sessions are you excited about? Do any of them have conflicting times? Use an online schedule building platform or your personal calendar. Include room numbers for each session so you're not scrambling to get to the right place on time.
- 18 Register for a [combination of inspirational talks, informational sessions, and social events](#).
- 19 Figure out what to wear ahead of time. The better you feel in your outfit of choice, the more confident you'll feel in your ability to walk up to people over and over again.
- 20 Wear comfortable shoes. Whether you're at a three-day conference or at an afternoon-long college fair, you're going to be out and about a lot.
- 21 Try to add an eye-catching or defining accessory or color to your outfit, if that's your style. Everyone will be meeting so many people that it can help to wear something that makes you stand out a little bit!
- 22 Consult with your seasoned event-attending peers, as well as the organizers of your particular event, about what to bring to your networking event or conference.
- 23 Some key things to remember to bring to a conference: a backpack to use during the day, your business cards, a notebook, a charged external battery pack, tissues, hand sanitizer, snacks, and a reusable water bottle.



24 Charge all your gear! You'll be using your phone and laptop to take notes, consult your agenda, take down phone numbers, and make LinkedIn connections.

25 Don't be afraid to strike up a conversation with any person at the conference, from speakers to fellow attendees. That's literally why everyone is there! The first few conversations may be a little awkward, but it'll get easier as the day goes on.

26 If you're very extroverted, you'll likely have no problem getting into the flow of conversation. But get your key information out before you just let the conversation roll like you would at a bar or a party — instead of “Hey! How's it going?”, think “Hi! I'm [your name] from [your company and city]. What brings you here?”

27 If you're more introverted, try preparing a few different conversation starters in advance. Don't shy away from practicing them in the mirror or with your partner or friend before attending the conference. Here's some to try:

28 For a college job fair, where you'll be going up to dozens of booths to learn about companies that are hiring, open with “Hi! I'm [your name], I'm a [your major] major hoping to work in [industry]. What kind of work might a junior hire at your company get to do?”

29 For an industry conference, open with “Hi! I'm [your name] from [your company and city]. What brings you to [conference name]?”

30 For a short panel discussion event, open with “Hi! I'm [your name] from [your company]. What kind of work do you do?” OR “Hi! I'm [your name] from [your company]. What was your favorite part of the panel?”

31 For a local industry happy hour, open with “Hi! I'm [your name] from [your company]. What brought you to your current role?”



32 Report back to your manager and team after the event — especially if your company paid for you to attend. While you're at the conference, note down the best tips, tools, and insights that you think would benefit your company and your colleagues. When you get back, collect these into a short presentation.

33 Use events as a personal branding and growth opportunity. There's nothing like meeting dozens (or hundreds) of new people in your industry to make you consider what makes you special — and help you figure out how to communicate it. Which aspects of your experience did your peers want to hear more about? Which of your goals caused people to want to get in on your vision?

34 After you leave, reflect on your time at the conference, including which connections felt the most exciting and which conversations made you feel like you were shining.

35 Take your new IRL connections virtual. After a conference, send out any LinkedIn connection requests you didn't get to do while chatting with someone. As always, personalize the connection request, and mention that you'd like to keep in touch after meeting at the conference.

36 [Read up on 8 networking tips for LGBTQ+ professionals at conferences and events.](#)

37 [Learn 5 networking tips for professionals with disabilities at events and connecting remotely.](#)

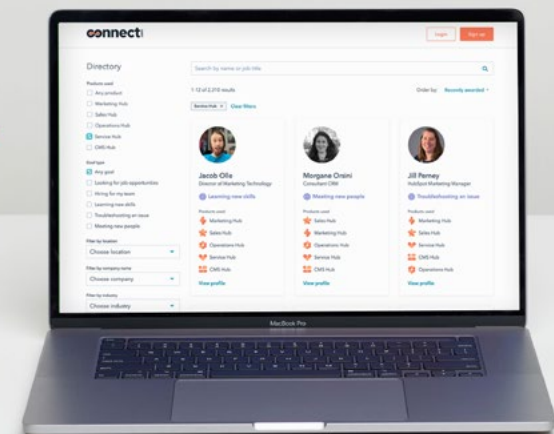
connect.com

Try out Connect.com

Looking for your community?

This database of professionals can help you find your next industry collaborators.

Make a profile now



SECTION 02

Networking Tips and Templates For Students

You know what they say, the early bird gets the worm. For students, it's never too early to start networking. School is a time for exploration and discovery, so take advantage of your school's alumni network and career resources. The more people you connect with, the more opportunities you'll find, from internships, to full-time roles, and in-between.

- 38** Seek out student networking opportunities. Networking as a college student, or even a high school student, looks different than it does in the professional world. Networking as a student tends to happen in clubs, associations, competitions, volunteer opportunities, part-time jobs, and internships. And of course, there are college job fairs to attend.
- 39** Go to job fairs, but go with a plan! Research which employers will be at the fair and prepare a shortlist of the ones you're sure you want to speak to. Bring your resume or a business card if you have them, and try to establish a few solid relationships.



- 40 Get to know your professors. Go to office hours and discuss the course and your assignments, and not just when you're stressed or overwhelmed. It will undoubtedly help you when it comes time to apply for internships or jobs and you need reference letters.
- 41 Explore and use college resources. Book time with your faculty's career counselor and find out about what kinds of resources your college has available. Job fairs, club and extracurricular fairs, internship placements, even job connections — most colleges have all or some of these ready for you to leverage. Use them!
- 42 Build a professional network online. Build a [detailed, professional LinkedIn profile](#). Ensure your experiences are all thoroughly described without spelling or grammatical errors, and that you use a consistent verb tense throughout your profile. Add everything including summer jobs, volunteer work, and any extracurriculars. Then, start connecting!
- 43 Act professionally and showcase your potential. Many students have very limited professional experiences, so it can feel very challenging to get your first one. Finding a first industry-specific opportunity often comes down to your attitude and your ability to network. Show that you're serious about getting experience in your field.



SECTION 03

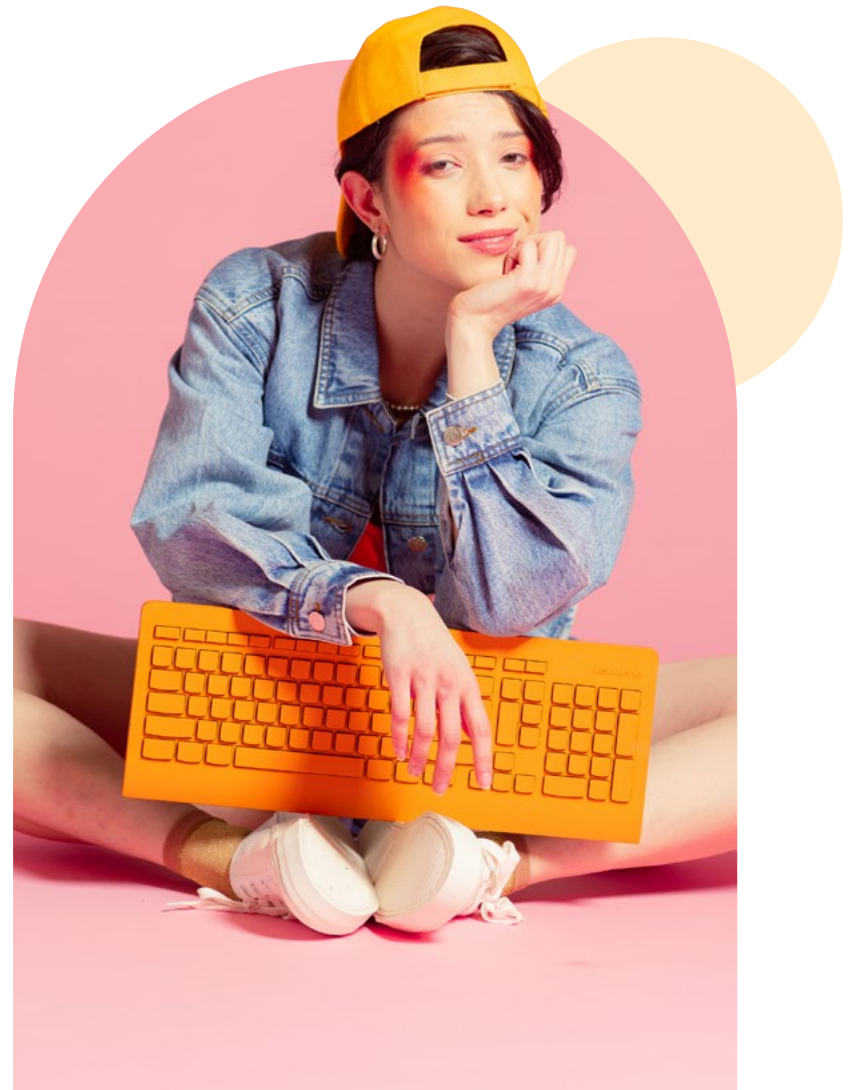
Networking to Find a Job or Accelerate Your Career

One of the best tips for anyone looking for a new role is to make sure that people know a) that you're on the job search, and b) what you're looking for. Building a community takes time, and it can be difficult if you're in a new area, or field. Be genuine, grateful, and pay it forward when you can.

- 44 Build a professional portfolio. Some fields lend themselves more easily to building portfolios, like designers, writers, and other media producers, but anyone applying for a job in any industry benefits from having a [website that features their best work](#). Learn how to do it with [our guide](#) to building a professional portfolio.
- 45 Write a general resume that gives a holistic view of your experiences and proudest achievements. [Use a strong resume template](#) that puts all the most important (and impressive) information front and center.
- 46 If you're early in your career and plan to apply for different types of jobs in different industries, create separate industry-specific resumes and [cover letters](#) that highlight the skills and experiences most relevant to each industry.



- 47 Discover the current state of your personal brand by Googling yourself and finding out what comes up. Is it old, unlocked social media pages? Lock 'em down and go onto private mode. Consider creating a [personal website](#) that includes a blurb about you, plus links to your portfolio, your general resume, and your professional social media pages like LinkedIn.
- 48 Take the time to learn personal branding 101. [This guide](#) walks you through everything you need to know about creating an appealing personal brand.
- 49 Maintain your professional relationships. Especially when a connection has actively helped you in any way, keep them posted! Thank them for their help and let them know how the process and your career moves along. Check in every so often to stay top of mind.
- 50 Build and manage your professional network. Attend alumni events, watch webinars and follow the speakers, take skill-building courses, volunteer — the more you show up, the more connections you'll make.



- 51 Find hiring events. Many fields have hiring fairs, even outside of the college setting. Search “[your city] + [your industry] hiring fair” and “[your city] + [your industry] hiring event.” Go to any of the events that feel relevant.
- 52 Build your skills. Sign up for a coding bootcamp, a UX design workshop, or any other kind of skill-building course. Not only will you meet people in your field in the process, but you’ll also have another skill to add to your resume. In fact, skills are [becoming more important](#) in the hiring process than degrees for some companies.
- 53 Understand what’s important to you in a new opportunity. Do you want better hours? Higher pay? Better healthcare benefits? A less stressful career? A new manager that’s more supportive? Use this to guide your job search. Narrow down the opportunities that truly align with what you want.
- 54 Be a reliable, respectful, and professional mentor or peer. Networking is ultimately all about word of mouth. A mutual connection has no obligation to connect you to their high-up colleague — they’ll only do so if you’ve shown yourself to be a kind, conscientious, and ambitious person who follows through.



SECTION 04

Networking and Personal Branding Tips for Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs are only as strong as their networks, and their ability to make lasting relationships. Start with your personal brand, and always be promoting your business. When you're working with limited resources, growing a community online will propel your business forward.



- 55 Follow the example of personal brand experts [Katie Burke, Liz Ryan, and Cristina Mittermeier](#). Creating a strong personal brand for an entrepreneur is about balancing humility and confidence, relatability with inspiration, and professionalism with genuine enthusiasm. Here's some of the ways you can get there:
 - 56 Develop a strong point of view. How do you want to improve your industry?
 - 57 Share your story and your goals, and don't be afraid to share learning moments as well as your proud successes.
 - 58 Provide educational resources and content that truly helps others. Dig deep and share learnings from your experience, and share learnings from other people you admire.
 - 59 [Try out various mediums](#): maybe you thrive on TikTok, or perhaps LinkedIn is a better fit for your industry. You won't know what works until you try it all.
- 60 Connect with your customers. Send personal emails to a handful of power-users of your product, and you might end up with a connection you can reliably turn to when you need a customer perspective.

61 Ensure you're comfortable with every part of your entrepreneur [personal branding checklist](#). That can include:

62 Knowing your business's [elevator pitch](#) backwards and forwards. You should be able to recite it in your sleep.

63 Building a strong social media presence. That doesn't necessarily mean having thousands of followers. It just means that you use and regularly update your social media platforms and [post useful content on a regular basis](#). Be ready to jump on trending topics.

64 Having a [media kit](#) at the ready (including your positioning statement). If you get any media requests or opportunities, it's important to have a brand-ready media kit ready to send off, including photos of you and your business and products, your mission statement, and any interesting facts or statistics you want shared.

65 Craft a [professional bio](#) that shows your personality and accomplishments, and includes a way for people to reach out.



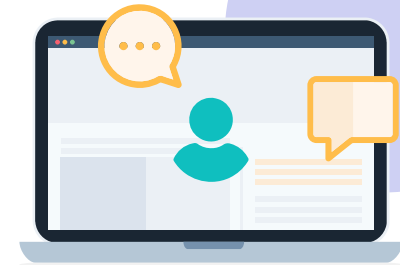
- 66 Grow your personal brand through speaking events and media opportunities. Pitch yourself to be a guest, host, or speaker at any of the following:
 - 67 Podcasts. Be a guest on a podcast that's relevant to your industry. Or, [start your own podcast!](#) But do be aware that they are a significant time investment.
 - 68 Opinion pieces or blogs. If you're a strong writer, invest your time in writing thought leadership pieces for local (or even national) media outlets — [or for your own blog.](#)
 - 69 TV appearances. If there's a newsworthy angle about what you're building, pitch a local or regional business show to have you on.
 - 70 In-person networking events. Position yourself as an industry leader by hosting a networking event for your industry.
 - 71 Panel discussions. Sit on a panel and discuss the issues and the future of your industry.
 - 72 Conferences. Present at a conference and you'll have a chance to mingle and connect with lots of people in your industry.
 - 73 Workshops. Show off your practical skills and pass them onto new industry joiners.



SECTION 05

Strategic Networking for Sales and Marketing

Sales and marketing grows more relationship-based and personalized every day. With every tool imaginable on the market to reach new audiences, at the end of the day, it's a trustworthy face or brand that will seal the deal and generate a new customer. Here's how to use networking to build rapport with prospects and grow your marketing audience.



- 74** Try prospecting by networking within user groups and active communities in your industry. Join and actively participate in Facebook groups, relevant Reddit threads, and events. Even if you don't make any direct sales right away, you'll be building connections and sowing the seeds for future sales.
- 75** Send emails! Sales emails are a huge part of the sales process at many companies today. [Here are 25 sales email templates](#) that can guide you as you develop your own style.
- 76** Gain a deeper understanding of your target audience through networking. Take the time to connect in real life with people who work in your space: go to industry events like panel discussions, conferences, and happy hours.
- 77** Experiment with [social selling](#). Get yourself a LinkedIn Premium subscription and start using this professional platform to broaden your net and connect with new prospects. [Check out our guide](#) to selling on LinkedIn to learn more about how to close more deals online.
- 78** Build and maintain relationships with customers. Once you've closed a sale, keep in touch! Follow all your customers on Instagram, and like, share, and comment on their posts when appropriate. Help keep the lines of communication open in case they're looking to upgrade their products.

SECTION 06

Virtual Networking Tips and Advice

Networking used to be heavily reliant on physical business cards. Now, business cards are still important, but so much of the networking process happens online. At the bare minimum, you'll need a complete LinkedIn profile and a quiet, well-lit area for virtual meetings and networking.

- 79** Create your perfect Zoom setup for interviews. Experiment with lighting, headsets, microphones, and seat height to ensure you're coming through loud and clear — and looking your best.
- 80** If you don't want to show your messy office background, [opt for a Zoom background](#). You can even make one that showcases your own brand.
- 81** Mind the time. Zoom networking meetings have a tendency to run long, especially if neither party has another meeting coming up right after, like in the evening.
- 82** Monitor your muting. Especially if there's any amount of noise in the background, or if there are more than two participants on the call, mute yourself when you're not speaking.
- 83** Know when to use professional vs. casual language online. Be honest and candid, as consumers today want to be able to relate to the entrepreneurs they buy from (and their brands). Some entrepreneurs can lean into slang and casual language. But presentations, pitches, press releases, and other formal brand building moments should use professional language.



SECTION 07

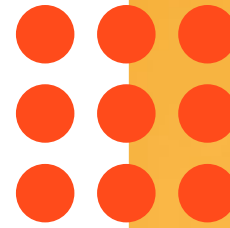
In-Person Social Networking Skills

While Rolodexes may have gone out of fashion a few years ago, a solid handshake and active listening skills will never go out of style in networking and relationship-building. After several years of limited social interactions, here are some tips to brush up on your in-person networking skills.

- 84 Practice a few ways to make people feel comfortable when meeting. These can include:
 - 85 Using their name. Not only does this help you remember new names, but it can help you and your peer feel more connected.
 - 86 Making eye contact. It's overwhelming to hold eye contact the entire time you're talking to someone, but ensuring you meet their eyes helps show you're listening. Speaking of which:
 - 87 Actively listening. This sounds obvious, but especially in situations where social interactions are a little nerve-wracking, it's human nature to start thinking about what you're planning on saying next instead of completely listening to what your peer is saying.



- 88 Find peers with similar interests, even if they work outside your industry. Connecting with people with similar hobbies and interests can also help you build your professional network. You never know: that friend you meet at a pottery class may have a sibling who works in your field and wants to connect.
- 89 Proactively make connections between contacts who you feel should meet. If you're at a conference and you've met two people at a mixer who seem like they'd have a lot to talk about, connect them!
- 90 When introducing two people, lead with interesting details you've learned about them. Instead of "John, meet Paavan. Paavan, meet John," try "John, this is Paavan, he just launched a YouTube channel for emerging musicians. John is a synth and keyboard collector."
- 91 [Learn to gracefully exit a conversation.](#) There will always be a conversation or two that you'll feel the need to move on from. When there's a lull, try saying "Well, do let me know how [project they mentioned] goes, I'd love to hear how it turns out. It was great to meet you!"



SECTION 08

Outreach and Follow-Up Templates for Personal and Professional

It's easy to get caught up in the moment of the event, networking session, or conversation with a new contact. But don't forget to follow through. It will make you stand out and keep you top of mind for your connections. Here's how to reach out, even when you don't have any updates or any "real" reason to.

92

When reaching out to people you don't know, via email or social media, try following this [email template](#). For social media, you can just remove the subject line.

Subject: Looking for advice on [subject matter]

Greeting of choice,

[Introduce yourself and mention something about their work you admire.]

[Call out your similarities.]

[Tell them how you can help, if applicable.]

[Ask them for help or advice — always start with an easy ask, like a short Zoom or a coffee.]

Thanks, [Name]



93

When reaching out to someone with a mutual connection, via email or social media, follow this [email template](#).

Subject: Friend of [mutual acquaintance] who needs your advice

[Greeting of choice,]

[Introduce yourself and mention who you know in common, and how you know the mutual connection.]

[Mention something about their work you admire.]

[Call out your similarities.]

[Tell them how you can help, if applicable.]

[Ask them for help or advice — always start with an easy ask, like a short Zoom or a coffee.]

Thanks, [Name]

94

When reaching out to someone you know or have met, via email or social media, follow this [email template](#).

Subject: Looking for advice on [subject matter]

[Greeting of choice,]

[Introduce yourself and mention the context in which you've met, and call out your similarities.]

[Mention what you're asking for.]

[Tell them how you can help, if applicable.]

[Ask them for help or advice — always start with an easy ask, like a short Zoom or a coffee.]

Thanks, [Name]



95

If you don't hear back about your email or social media connection request,

it's normal to respectfully follow up. Wait at least a week after sending the first one. Networking is never an emergency, and smothering a potential connection is a bad idea.

Subject: Following up: Looking for advice on [subject matter]

[Greeting of choice,]

I hope you're doing well.

Just wanted to get in touch to follow up on my previous email on [subject].

Let me know if you have time to [reiterate your request].

And if now isn't a great time to connect, please let me know if there's another time that might work better.

Thanks, [Name]

96

If you're looking to do an informational interview at a company you hope to one day work for,

use this template via email or social media.

Subject: Informational interview request

[Greeting of choice,]

[Introduce yourself and mention how you heard about the company, and their particular team]

[Mention something about their work you admire.]

[Call out your similarities.]

[Ask them if they'd be available for a 30-minute Zoom call or a short walking meeting to hear about life at their company or on their team.]

Thanks, [Name]



97

If you're following up with a hiring manager, or someone else you interviewed with at a company, use this template via email:

Subject: Thanks again for meeting me.

[Greeting of choice,]

Thanks again for taking the time to chat with me [say when you interviewed].

[Express what excites you about the position, including new details you learned in the interview process.]

[Mention something you admire about the team you'd be joining if hired. Reiterate why you feel you'd be a good fit.]

[Thank them again for being welcoming and for the opportunity.]

[Name]

98

[Check out this list of many more templates](#) and strong subject lines for many more types of outreach.

99

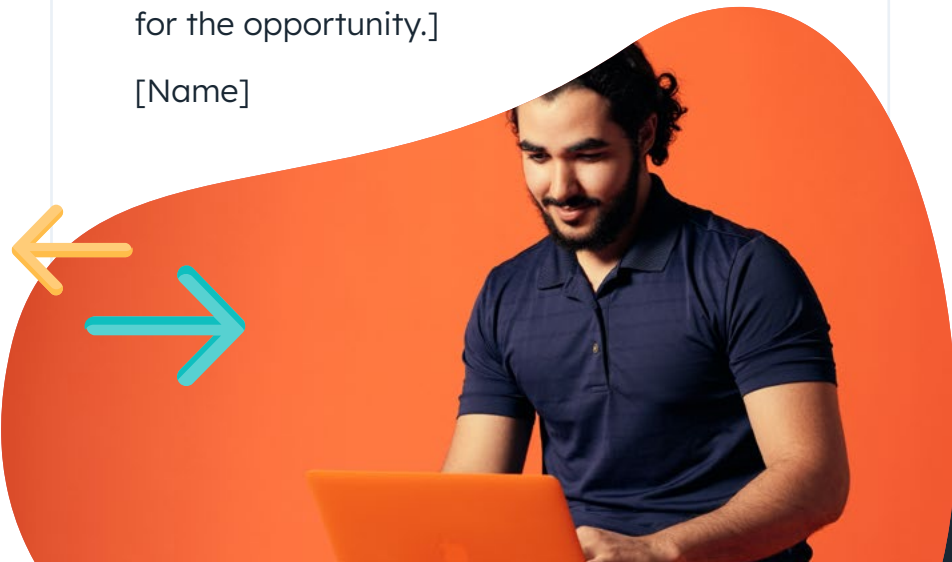
Send thank you cards. If a connection has done you a big favor, go the extra mile and send a written thank you card. For example, if the coffee chat they helped you set up ultimately got you a new job, get out the pen and paper.

100

Send "great to meet you!" emails. It won't make sense to send an email like this to every person you ever connect with, but if you did feel like there's a foundation for a stronger professional relationship, consider sending a quick note to say you really enjoyed meeting them and hope to see them at another industry event.

101

[Use follow-up templates](#) for after you meet new connections to stay in touch and keep the conversation going. Templates can help you answer the question, "What should I even say when I don't have a reason to reach out again?"





You're ready. Get networking!

Networking can be nerve-wracking at first, but just like anything else, it gets easier with practice. Advance your career, grow your business, learn about your industry, discover new career paths, and even make a few friends by investing time in networking.

Keep growing your connections with HubSpot Community.

Want to learn more about growing your business? Want to connect with other HubSpot users and learn their tips? Join [HubSpot Community](#).

Get started

