

PROTECTING YOUR BRAND

PROFESSIONAL

ETIQUETTE

First Impressions Are Key

Do you have the social skills needed to be successful in a professional workplace long-term? Let's review some basic strategies to help strengthen your confidence in this area. Social (or soft) skills can make or break your career.

Meet & Greets:

- » A firm shake.
- » Make eye contact while shaking hands.
- » Rise when introducing or being introduced to someone.
- » Unless given permission, always address someone by his or her title and last name (e.g. Dr. Phillips or Mrs. Banks).
- » Provide information in making introductions - you are responsible for keeping the conversation going.
- » Be prepared to share your pronouns, as it is always a great idea to invite an inclusive space.



Dining:

- » Arrive 15 minutes early.
- » Place a napkin in your lap before eating or drinking anything.
- » Keep in mind that this is a talking business lunch. So order something easy to eat, such as a hearty salad, boneless chicken or fish. That way you stay clean and have more time to communicate your strong interest in a position.
- » Practice proper posture; sit up straight with your arms close to your body.
- » Bring food to your mouth - not your head to the plate, and try to eat at the same pace as everyone else.

“Be prepared to share your pronouns, as it is always a great idea to support an inclusive space.” – Antoine Stevens-Phillips, M.Ed.



- » Take responsibility for keeping up the conversation.
- » Place your napkin beside the plate at the end of each meal.
- » Push your chair under the table when excusing yourself.

Eating:

- » Begin eating with the utensils that are farthest away from your plate.
- » You may have two spoons and two forks. The spoon farthest away from your plate is a soup spoon.
- » The fork farthest away is a salad fork unless you have three forks, one being much smaller, which would be a seafood fork for an appetizer.
- » Remember to work from the outside in.
- » Dip soup away from you; sip from the side of the spoon.
- » While you are speaking during a meal, utensils should be resting on the plate (fork and knife crossed on the plate with tines down).
- » Don't chew with your mouth open or blow too hard on your food.
- » The employer will usually take care of the bill and the tip. Be prepared if this doesn't happen. Never make an issue over the check.

Credit: Jennie Hunter, a professor at Western Carolina University.



Taken prior to 2020.

SOCIAL MEDIA & LINKEDIN

Employers Will Check Your Posts

Employment recruiters are known to use social media sites to research background data on potential candidates. Don't miss an opportunity because of negative information on your social media page. Avoid this by cleaning up your online presence, as this is key to landing a job.

MONITOR YOUR ONLINE IDENTITY

Employers can find out more information about a candidate by spending five minutes on their Facebook page than they can by talking to a former employer.

- » **Google Yourself** - Take note of all the sites that contain positive and negative information about you. The majority of negative information can be eliminated, so it's best to start now.

<p>What I Discovered:</p>	<p>What I Didn't Like:</p>
<p>What I Liked:</p>	<p>Action to Take:</p>

- » **Use Privacy Settings** - Make sure you are utilizing the privacy settings when posting nonprofessional content. This is suggested for popular social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and etc. The rule of thumb is not to post anything you don't want your potential employer to see.
- » **Podcast, YouTube Channels & Blogs** - Everyone has an opinion and a right under the First Amendment to say what they please, but remember ... what you write or post can negatively impact your professional career for years to come. If necessary, use these platforms, but keep your identity anonymous!
- » **Criminal Records and Court Cases** - Getting arrested, not paying your traffic tickets or driving under the influence (DUI) may end up online depending on which state holds the public records. Remember to uphold the value of your professional brand by using sound judgment on and off the clock.

IMPROVING YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

The goal of a positive image is to impress recruiters and increase your marketability. You may use the following suggestions to establish or improve your reputation.

- » **Create Your Own Website** - Many professionals and students have their own website to showcase their portfolio of work, awards, articles, resume, and areas of specialization or talent. Purchasing your own domain name is a great way to occupy one of the top 10 Google listings for your name (e.g. see [GoDaddy.com](https://www.godaddy.com)).
- » **Archive Your Content** - Start an archive by using a YouTube channel, podcast or blog to document your career interest and lifestyle passions like traveling, cooking, sports or volunteer work. For example, If you are interested in a career in equity and inclusion, consider producing content about industry trends, news and related topics. Recruiters like to see that candidates have interests outside of work.
- » **Post (Respectful) Comments** - Using your full name, post intelligent comments on LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and other open forums. The more popular the forum topic, the better chance it will surface when employers conduct a search on your name. Always include a link to your website whenever you leave a comment. It's free marketing!
- » **Write an Article** - Author articles through the Daily Aztec, local publications (e.g. The San Diego Union-Tribune), professional organizations, or an SDSU club or organization. If you do this, your name may be placed at the top of their search engine.

MAXIMIZING LINKEDIN

With over 500 million registered members, this premium site provides you the opportunity to establish a professional online presence, engage in dialogue about relevant topics, and make connections with professionals across your industry or career path. Maximize this tool, research employers and connect with people of similar career interest, especially alumni. LinkedIn can even be used to search and apply for jobs.

5 TIPS FOR LEVERAGING LINKEDIN:

1. **A Professional Head-to-Shoulders Photo is a Big Deal.** In fact, these profiles are more than 10 times as likely to be viewed.
2. **Craft a Compelling Headline (or Summary).** Profiles with an effective summary are also more likely to be seen by users. This space should be used as a brief introduction to professional interest and to summarize your experience and achievements. Use keywords you want to be identified with. This will make your profile more eye-catching in search engine outcomes.
3. **Complete Your Whole Profile!** Use LinkedIn like an extended resume. Include the specifics about projects you have worked on, lab work you have completed and goals you have reached. Take advantage of publishing videos, documents, websites and other media. Strive to keep your profile page lively, while showcasing your skills.
4. **Grow Your Professional Network.** Connect with other SDSU alumni, interest groups and colleagues. These connections will build your professional network, and may help you secure the next job opportunity, client and etc.
5. **Publish Your Work.** After completing your profile, upload examples of your achievements, completed projects and knowledge of the field. Remember to trademark and copyright any original content before sharing with the public.

BUILD YOUR NETWORK THROUGH LINKEDIN: SENDING THE FIRST EMAIL

- » **Include A Photo.** A smiling and professional headshot is more effective than words. In our fast-paced world, people desire to see potential colleagues who carry positive synergy.
- » **Keep it Short.** Sending a brief, personalized message is more likely to garner a response.
- » **Refresh Their Memory.** Re-cap the first meeting between you and the correspondent. Sometimes professionals are approached by several customers, clients or potential employees. Stand out by refreshing their memory of the conversation that sparked an interest for exchanging contact information.
- » **Explain Why You Desire to Connect.** Don't ask for a job outright – you may scare off your contact, who may not be associated with the hiring committee. Instead, ask about the company's vision, goals of a department, the industry itself or your contact's career path to their current position. This approach comes off as simply requesting a conversation, versus a job interview.
- » **Follow-up.** This invites your contact to get back to you in an efficient timeframe. State that you understand they have a busy schedule and you are willing to follow up within a week or two; this creates the opportunity to contact them again.

CAREER FAIRS

Getting the Most Out of Them

Employers use career fairs – both on and off campus – to promote their opportunities and to prescreen applicants. Most career fairs consist of booths managed by recruiters and other representatives from a variety of organizations. Use this time to identify key companies, then proceed to inquiry about jobs of your interest.

QUICK TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- » **In most cases, “business casual” is the norm**, but it wouldn’t hurt to be on the overdressed side – you’ll make a better impression if you appear professional.
- » **Remember to bring:**
 - Copies of your resume tailored for each career choice.
 - Your smartphone or a pen and notepad to take notes.
 - Portfolio of your best work, relevant to the job opportunity.
 - A list of companies and the recruiter’s name and position who connected well with you.
 - Don’t bring your backpack! You’re presenting yourself as a strong candidate, not a student.
- » **Keep your eyes and ears open** – there’s nothing wrong with subtly eavesdropping on the questions asked and answers received by your fellow career fair attendees.
- » **Don’t just stroll around**, collecting business flyers and loading up on the freebies. You won’t accomplish anything worthwhile professionally. It is essential to chat with company recruiters and ask meaningful questions.
- » **Have a game plan**. If you’re interested in a particular career field, ask generalized questions about working within the industry. If you’re seeking career opportunities with a specific employer, focus your questions on the application and interview process, and ask for specific information about that employer.



Taken prior to 2020.

ADVICE ABOUT CAREER FAIR ETIQUETTE

1. **Don't interrupt the employer recruiters or your fellow job-seekers.** If someone else is spending an unreasonable amount of the recruiter's time, try to make eye contact with the rep to let him, her or them (e.g. inclusive pronouns) know that you're interested in speaking. If all else fails, move to the next booth and come back later.
2. **Sincerity always wins.** Be researched, a great listener and well-spoken. Virtually all employers are looking for candidates with good communication skills.
3. **Don't just drop your resume on an employer's table.** Try to get it into a representative's hands, then share a few words about your strong interest in the position.
4. **Get the recruiter's business card** and send a follow-up email with a virtual copy of your resume attached.
5. **Research, research, research!** If you know ahead of time that one of your "dream businesses" will be a career fair participant, do some prior research on the company's vision, goals, job opportunities, department culture and community service involvement. A little advance preparation goes a long way and can make you stand out among the masses of other attendees.



Job Search Strategies

The job search process involves many strategies. Consider using a combination of strategies to maximize results. Take advantage of SDSU Career Services' free resources to support a successful job search. To help you select a productive approach review the following strategies.

Type	Strategies	Advantages	Challenges
<i>Published Ads</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow stated application guidelines Customize your application materials Submit quality materials Use listings as reference material to apply for future/related openings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct access to job listings and requirements Targeting an open position An opportunity to individualize resume and cover letter to specific requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly competitive due to large number of applicants May require substantial number of applications to get responses Small percentage of jobs are advertised Low placement rate
<i>Internet</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that postings are current Review websites constantly Adhere to submission guidelines Customize your resume Use links to research related jobs and organizations Verify website reputation before sharing information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economical and time efficient Easy access to many jobs/organizations An opportunity to research related jobs and customize approach to meet criteria Ability to search in distant locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Millions of applicants have "easy" access Some postings are not updated frequently Many companies don't post online May be difficult to check status Information confidentiality concerns
<i>SDSU On-Campus Interviewing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend employer information sessions Have your resume reviewed by a career counselor Upload your resume(s) to Aztec Career Connection Login frequently to learn about new listings and schedule on-campus interviews Research the employer database to prepare for potential interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No-cost/efficient way to contact employers Many companies hire exclusively college graduates for specific jobs Less competition/higher success rate than traditional methods Ability to research employers in depth through SDSU Career Services' free resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all industries recruit on campus Recruiting is active during academic calendar and slows down in summer Jobs may be available after graduation
<i>SDSU Career Fairs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research employers in advance and create a list to target your top choices at the fair View recent fair additions at (http://career.sdsu.edu) Attend a "Networking a Career Fair" workshop and pick up a flyer in Career Services Dress professionally and bring resumes Ask questions to learn more about your field Obtain business cards and stay in contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to many employers in a brief period of time and a single location Very personal approach to learn about companies, careers and requirements Opportunity to network with recruiters Many positions target students and recent graduates and may not require experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many disciplines may not be represented Small companies and non-profit sector representation may be limited Hiring may not be immediate

Job Search Strategies (continued)

Type	Strategies	Advantages	Challenges
<i>Staffing Agencies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research agencies to find about the services offered and their reputation Locate agencies that specialize in your field Be cautious if you are required to pay a fee Highlight relevant experience and transferable skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service is normally free to job seekers Agencies conduct pre-screening before referral A temporary assignment may be the only way to obtain a permanent job with some firms An opportunity to survey employers and acquire experience through job assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignments can be short-term The variety of jobs can be limited It can be difficult to obtain positions for recent graduates with limited experience May start at a lower salary than comparable permanent positions Agencies' primary commitment is with the paying recruiting firm, not the job seeker
<i>Unsolicited Mail/Email</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research companies to learn about specific needs Customize your prospecting letter to address each company uniquely Obtain the name of the hiring manager and address this person Follow up by phone whenever possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to target employers in a specific field May access unadvertised positions Employer may be impressed with a well tailored mailing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time consuming Requires significant research and high-degree of individualization Response rates are low
<i>Direct Contact (Cold Calls/Visits)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use business/phone directories to locate employers Learn about company before calling/visiting Develop meaningful questions to ask Have a resume/cover letter ready Schedule an informational interview Ask about future openings/contacts in absence of jobs Stay in touch once you have established a contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal contact with hiring authority Resume/Application can be submitted directly to hiring manager May become aware about unadvertised current and future vacancies Access to jobs that are never posted An opportunity to obtain new contacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes time to research companies and contact information It is difficult to access hiring managers Requires being assertive and willing to take risks Success rate is low (1 in 20 average)
<i>Networking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform people that you are searching for a job Provide details about the desired job Ask contacts if they know someone who can help Update and distribute your resume Contact new leads and expand network Stay in touch with all contacts Join professional organizations/clubs Attend events/conferences and network Volunteer for boards and organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective way to find jobs May learn tips about company and hiring trends from "inside" sources Ability to access the "hidden" job market and find jobs that will not be advertised Less competition than traditional search May be referred to a company that only hires through employee/contact referrals An opportunity to expand network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires significant time and effort Willingness to talk to any potential contact May require talking to numerous contacts before obtaining results Requires tenacity to follow up Contacts need to be maintained over time



BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

Initiate the Conversation

A network is a committed group of supporters who serve as resources for your job search and ultimately for your career. Some of your great contacts might include people you've met at a company luncheon and other social meetings where you received mentorship, career information and advice.

EIGHT KEYS TO NETWORKING

1. **Be Prepared** - Your purpose in networking is to get to know people who can provide information regarding careers and leads. Some benefits of networking include increased visibility within your field, propelling your professional development, finding suitable mentors, increasing your chances of promotion and perhaps finding your next job.
2. **Be Targeted** - Identify your network. Start by listing everyone you know who are potential prospects: family members, friends, faculty, neighbors, classmates, alumni, bosses, co-workers and community leaders. You never know who might help you to land your next job.
3. **Be Professional** - Ask your contacts for advice – not a job. This is also called free consultation. In the real world, professionals charge a fee to share their knowledge and expertise. So be grateful for the time and wisdom of your established contact, mentor or life coach. Otherwise, it might cost you.
4. **Be Patient** - Networking is like gardening. You can't plant a seed, then quickly get a harvest. Networking requires time to develop and evolve in order for the connection to pay off.
5. **Quality, Not Quantity** - In large group settings, move around and meet people, but don't try to talk to everyone, it's better to have a few meaningful conversations than 100 hasty introductions. Also don't cling to people you already know; you're unlikely to build new connections that way. If you are at a reception, be sure to wear a nametag and collect or exchange business cards so you can later contact the people you meet.
6. **Be Referral-Centered** - Exchange information and then expand your network by obtaining additional referrals each time you meet someone new. Be sure to mention the person who referred you.
7. **Be Proactive** - Stay organized and keep a list of your contacts. Update your personal directory frequently with the names of any leads given to you. Always send thank-you emails when appropriate. Work to arrange a follow-up conversation via Zoom, a phone call or in person (Per COVID-19 guidelines: stay six feet away for social distancing and wearing a mask).
8. **Be Dedicated** - You will want to stay in touch with contacts over the long haul – not just when you need something. Make networking part of your long-term career plan.

Questions to Ask During a Networking Meeting

- » What do you like most (or least) about your work?
- » Can you describe a typical workday or week?
- » What type of education and experience do you need to remain successful in this field?
- » What are the future career opportunities in this field?
- » What are the challenges in balancing work and personal life?
- » Why might people enter/leave this field or company?
- » Which companies have the best track record for promoting minorities?
- » What advice would you give to someone trying to break into this field?
- » With whom would you recommend I speak? When I call, may I use your name?

Written by Thomas J. Denham, director of the Siena College Career Center in Loudonville, N.Y.

SPECIFIC PLACES TO NETWORK - ANYWHERE!

Networking is a very effective way to secure a job that's a perfect fit for you – so start networking immediately. Connect with classmates or engage fellow alumni and professors. Review your network of friends and acquaintances, as they can help you identify career opportunities and prepare you for your job search.

- » Career Fairs, Panels, Networking Events
- » Social Networking Sites, LinkedIn
- » In Class, Conferences, Seminars
- » Work, Volunteer Meetings, Social Gatherings
- » Professional Associations
- » Every interaction can create the opportunity to engage with new people.

PRACTICE NETWORKING - ELEVATOR PITCH

Introduce yourself: _____

Share your educational background: _____

State your purpose: _____

Identify relevant skills: _____

Share how can you help the contact: _____