



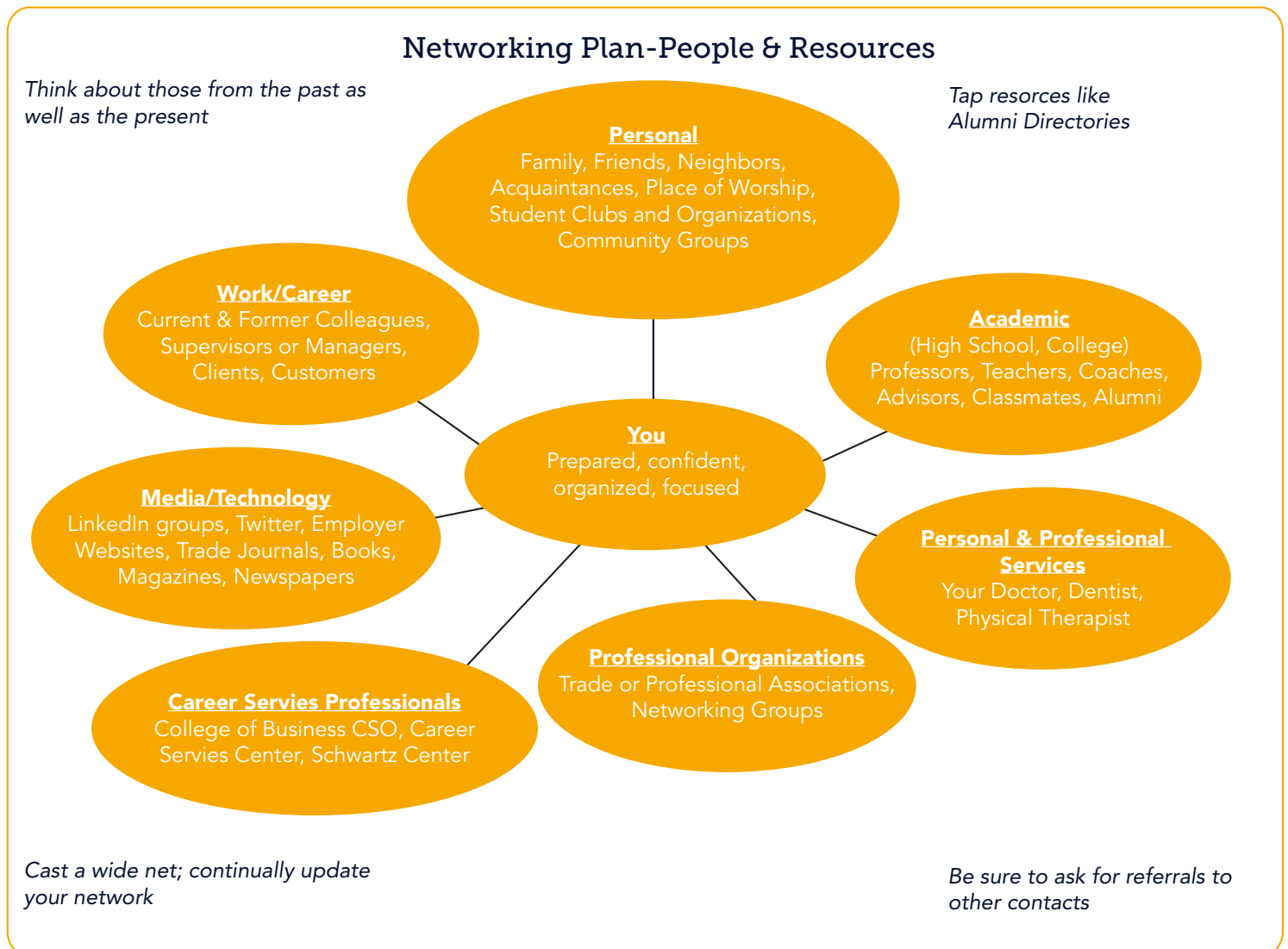
NETWORKING

Networking is building relationships and asking for information and advice. This is not a request for employment. Most individuals, especially alumni, are willing to share information about industries, companies, and occupations. Networking works because you may:

- Gather information, suggestions, and leads to other people
- Learn from established professionals in your fields of interest
- Find opportunities that are available but never advertised
- Form relationships with professionals who share your interests and may be willing to help you

Networking Contact List

Begin by reviewing the diagram below and creating a list of everyone you know. Cast a wide net!





INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW SAMPLE OUTREACH EMAIL

Once you have developed a list of individuals to connect with, the next step is to conduct a meeting, either in-person or over the phone. Reassure the contact that you are interested in a brief meeting – no more than 30 minutes. Consider the following outreach messages:

Dear Ms. Jones,

I am a current sophomore at Kent State University and found your LinkedIn profile through the Kent State University Alumni group. I haven't officially declared my major yet but I'm interested in marketing and economics. I see from your profile that you have worked at the Cleveland Clinic for 5 years in the marketing and communications department. I've started researching the marketing field and would like to learn more about your experience working in this area. Would you be willing to talk with me briefly on the phone, at your convenience, about your career background? I'm looking forward to hearing more about your marketing experience and appreciate any time you are able to share with me.

Sincerely,
Kim Smith

Dear Mr. Barley,

I am a freshman at Kent State University in the College of Business Administration and received your contact information from my professor, Dr. Tom Brady, who speaks very highly of you. He suggested I contact you to talk with you about your background in accounting. I've always been interested in accounting and have strong math skills. I understand that you have focused your work on the non-profit sector, working for the American Cancer Society for over 10 years. I would appreciate hearing your perspective about your work in this field and any advice you would have for me as an aspiring accountant. I will be in town the week of spring break, April 1-5, and would like to suggest meeting for coffee, if you're available. I appreciate your time and look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,
Tim Makley



QUESTIONS TO ASK IN NETWORKING MEETINGS

Once you have your phone call or in-person meeting scheduled, prepare a list of questions to ask. It is important to know what to say to be able to lead the conversation. Decide what you'd like to find out from your contact, and then prepare questions to elicit that information.

Here are some suggestions for questions to ask but tailor them to fit your personal situation and speaking style. Don't try to squeeze too many questions into your meeting.

WHAT WORK IS LIKE

- Could you describe a typical work day to me?
- What skills are required in your position on a day-to-day basis?
- What part of your job do you find most challenging?

STATE OF THE PROFESSION

- Is this field growing or in-demand?
- Are too many or too few people entering into this profession?
- Who are the most important people in this occupation today?
- Which companies have the best track record for promoting women and minorities?

CAREER PATH

- How did you get your job?
- If you could start all over again, would you change your career path in any way?

SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

- What educational preparation would you recommend for someone who wants to advance in this field?
- What qualifications do you seek in a new hire?
- How do most people enter this profession?
- What do you think of my resume? How would you suggest I change it?
- Can you recommend any courses I should take before proceeding further with my job search?
- What companies might be interested in hiring someone with my background?

FITTING IN

- Considering my background, how well do you think I would fit in this company and/or profession?
- Would the work involve any lifestyle changes – frequent travel or late-night business entertaining?
- Taking into account my skills, education, and experience, what other career paths would you suggest I explore before making a final decision?

MORE INFORMATION

- What professional journals and organizations should I be aware of?
- Is there anything else you think I need to know?
- Who else would you recommend I speak with?



DO'S & DON'T'S OF NETWORKING

DO

Set networking objectives and milestones. One of the first things you'll want to be clear about are your goals for networking. Exploring majors and careers? Looking for information about occupations or career paths? Interested in learning more about internships? Are you in an active job search?

Develop a LinkedIn profile. Your resume serves as the basis for content for developing your LinkedIn profile. Once you have your resume polished, you can easily copy and paste it to LinkedIn to create your profile. **Set the privacy settings for other social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest.**

Focus on relationship-building. Networking is about building relationships. You should never be networking with people only because you think they can give you a job or will become clients. The focus should always be on building relationships. New jobs and new clients are often multiple networking levels away from that initial encounter. The more networking you do and the more connections you make, the closer you come to that new job or next client. You will have found many opportunities to assist others with their networking goals along the way. Networking is always a two-way street.

Always follow-up with a thank you note. Thank your contact for his/her time and willingness to talk with you. Share how the information was helpful to you and your next action items.

Think of how you can add value to the relationship. Update alumni on current events at KSU or how his/her favorite professor is doing. Share your knowledge of another language which may be helpful to his/her organization. Email an article that relates to a topic you discussed together, or relates to his/her occupation or organization.

Assess your online identity from time to time. Set up a Google Alert to track online mentions of your name. If you find anything negative or unflattering, you'll need to clean up your "digital dirt." There are some strategies to use if you encounter a problem.

DON'T

Don't forget your manners. Don't "wear out your welcome" by making too many requests. Be considerate of others' time, and always express thanks and a willingness to give back.

Don't try to accomplish too much too fast. Wait for a second or third communication for special requests.

Don't have unrealistic expectations. Don't expect something from every connection; not every contact is a helpful contact. Expect that in online circles as well.

Don't put any private or sensitive information on online networking sites. Don't put anything on a blog, discussion group, or networking site that you wouldn't want your boss to see or wouldn't want to have publicized on national news. Make sure that your brand is consistent and positive across all sites. Consider blogging, tweeting, a webfolio, and joining or starting discussion groups on LinkedIn about professional topics.