



How Do I Build My Network?

Networking can feel overwhelming to many job seekers – simply put, the process entails building relationships with like-minded professionals. Networking isn't asking people for a job; it's *asking people for their story*.

Consider career exploration as a treasure hunt – each person you meet holds a set of clues to help you on your quest.

Networking allows you to gain access to information and job leads, find and pass along opportunities, and connect your work and ideas with other people and organizations.

How to Build Your Network

- Look to informal and formal relationships
- Attend events and take advantage of opportunities. Your local Home Builders Association hosts volunteer, fundraising, and networking events.
- Plug into [NAHB Connect](#) – this member-exclusive social media platform and virtual community is great for connecting members, sharing ideas and learning from one another.
- Ask people for their business cards and follow up with them
- Join professional groups or listservs
- Utilize LinkedIn or other social networking sites as professional networking tools

Why Set up a Career Chat (or Informational Interview)?

- Hear insights from a professional about their role, the field, and overall background
- Learn about position/organization and if it's a good match for you
- Figure out how to translate your work experience into marketable skills for a new job
- Get connected to other professionals and learn about other job leads

How to Request a Career Chat

- Keep e-mail or LinkedIn message short and answer the following questions:
 - How did you come to know of the person?
 - Who are you and what are you looking for?
 - How could this person be a resource?
- Ask for a specific time frame for phone call or meeting (e.g., “Are you free in the next two weeks? I'm generally available in the mornings.”)
- Jot down a set of 3-5 questions to ask during the conversation – lead with your curiosity
- Be prepared to answer a few questions about yourself

Suggested Activity

1. Write down three people whom you'd like to meet for an informational interview.
2. Now, write down a date when you plan to contact each person.

