Networking is arguably one of the most important strategies in career preparation... 70-80% of jobs are never advertised.

What is Networking?
- The creation of an ever-expanding web of contacts in a particular career field or industry
- The art of developing alliances and informal interpersonal contacts and relationships
- Ongoing communication and exchanges between individuals and groups that are mutually beneficial

The importance of Networking
- To meet people in your career field to share professional information and help each other succeed
- Networking can help you uncover the “hidden job market"
- A large number of job seekers find their positions through referrals

Where to Network
- Structured Networking Events
  - Information Interviewing
  - Career Fairs
  - Pathway to Professions
  - Job Shadowing (Panther Shadowing)
  - Professional Conferences
  - Creative Careers Seminar
- Unstructured Networking Events
  - Social events (Social clubs/Religious Groups)
  - Talking to your roommate, their family, friends of your family
  - Striking up a conversation while waiting for class to begin
  - Advisors, professors, high school teachers
- Networking Online
  - Pitt Career Network
  - Web forums
  - LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter

NOTE: Pay attention to “netiquette” and how you are presenting yourself online…presenting yourself professionally is just as important online as it is in person.

Marketing Yourself
- Personal Pitch/Elevator Speech
  - A brief statement that introduces you and your situation
  - Include information about your strengths and qualifications
  - Tell them what kind of position you are looking for
  - The goal is to request information about job opportunities
- Business Cards
  - Name, contact information, major, expected graduation date

Follow Up and Stay in Touch
- Don’t forget to ask for THEIR business card/ contact information
- Thank you notes are strongly suggested
Questions to Ask

Now that you have a networking meeting scheduled, you need to prepare questions to ask this person who has been kind enough to agree to meet with you. Here are some to get you started:

About the Job:

- What is a typical work day like for you?
- What aspects of your job take up the most time?
- What do you find most interesting about your job? Least interesting?
- What is most difficult about your job?
- What skills and abilities do you find are the most important in your work?
- What other career areas are related to your field?
- How would you suggest I gain additional knowledge about this career?
- What is the typical work environment for someone in this field?
- What are the paths for advancement in this career?
- How long does it usually take to advance to the next level?
- What is the average length of time a person remains in a position similar to yours?
- What are the basic prerequisites for jobs in the field?
- Are there recommended courses a student could take that would be helpful?
- What specific advice would you give someone entering this field?
- Is there a demand for people in the field? Is it growing?
- What is the best way to obtain an entry-level position in this area?
- Can you recommend internships or co-op experiences that would be beneficial?
- How much flexibility does one usually have regarding hours of work, lifestyle, creativity and decision-making?

About the Person:

- What is your educational background?
- How did you get started in this career?
- What jobs have you held before this one?
- What best prepared you for this job?
- What are your future career plans?

About Career Planning and Job Search:

- How suited is my background for working in this field?
- How do I find out about job openings in the field?
- What is the most common job search strategy used by people wanting a job in this area?
- Do you know of others to whom I may speak about this career? May I mention your name when I contact them?