

# **Networking from Scratch: A College Student's Guide to Building Contacts.**

by **Donald Asher**

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# The Truth about Networking

- Networking is about information, not power.
- An adult American knows 600 people.
- The networking game...
- Ask the next 50 people you meet,

**“Who do you know who would know anything about \_\_\_\_\_?”**

## The Big Four

- **Family**
- **Friends**
- **Alumni**
- **Faculty**

**Always start with your mom...**

# People Who Want to Help You

1. Every alumna or alumnus of your school
2. Every former employer
3. Every branch, subsidiary, parent, and affiliate of every former employer
4. Every former co-worker
5. Every competitor to every former employer
6. Every supplier or vendor to every former employer
7. Every customer or client of every former employer
8. Every venture or business partner to every former employer
9. Every consultant (person or group) to your former employer
10. Every famous person in your targeted industry
11. Every writer at every newspaper or journal that covers your field
12. Every friend you ever had
13. Every friend your friends ever had
14. Every spouse your friends ever had
15. Every parent or close relative your friends ever had
16. Every acquaintance, however fleeting, you ever had
17. Your parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, ...
18. Every friend your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc., ever had
19. Every employer or business associate of any kind of your parents, etc.
20. All the alumni of all your other almae matres
21. Every professor or teacher you ever had, or who ever worked anywhere you went to school
22. Every career center officer and career counselor at every school you ever attended
23. Every teacher or professor of your kids, siblings, friends, parents, etc.
24. Every leader and member of your church, synagogue, or temple
25. Every leader and member of every social, academic, or professional club you know of
26. Every neighbor you ever had
27. Every doctor you ever had
28. Every accountant and financial advisor you ever had
29. Every attorney and every insurance agent you ever had
30. Every hair dresser or barber you ever had
31. Every dry cleaner you ever had
32. Every masseuse or masseur you ever had
33. Every personal trainer you ever had
34. Every coach and member of every sports team you were ever on
35. Every gym manager or membership director you've ever met (or known of)
36. Every real estate broker you ever had
37. Every auto mechanic you ever had
38. Every veterinarian you ever had
39. Every yenta you ever had
40. Every wedding planner or photographer you ever had
41. Every funeral director known by anyone you know
42. Every doorman or doorwoman in every building in the financial district
43. Every clerk in every corner store
44. Every cabdriver of every cab you ride in while looking for work
45. Every bartender at every club you shouldn't be hanging out in anyway
46. Everybody you know by first name from A.A.
47. Every psychic you ever consulted, or thought you consulted
48. Every drill sergeant or fellow soldier or sailor you served with
49. Everybody *you* ever helped out in this life
50. Start over and talk to them all *again*

**Research, then →**

**Write or Email, then →**

**Follow up with a Call or Tickle**

**Don't ask for a job!**

**Goal:**

**Advice, ideas, leads and referrals**

# “The Elevator Speech”

## aka “The 30 Second Introduction”

I am a college student majoring in psychology. I am interested in sports administration. I am on several campus committees devoted to promoting and producing sporting events, both intercollegiate and intramural. My ultimate goal would be to land in sports marketing and sponsorship sales, but I am also interested in other areas. I got your name from the alumni office, and I wonder if you would have a moment to speak with me about the sports business.

Tell (a) who you are, (b) why you're calling, and (c) what you want. Be straightforward, be direct, and remember to push hard for referrals. Broken down, here is the skeleton of a typical script for a thirty-second introduction:

Hello, \_\_\_\_\_ . My name is \_\_\_\_\_ . I was referred to you by \_\_\_\_\_ . I'm interested in learning more about \_\_\_\_\_ . I wonder if you would have a moment to share with me any advice, ideas, leads and referrals.

Construct your own thirty-second introduction right now. Remember to convey who you are, why you are calling, and what you want:

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**I wonder if you would have a moment to share with me any advice, ideas, leads and referrals.**

Read it aloud and revise it until you can make it sound natural.

Adapted from *How to Get Any Job with Any Major*, by Donald Asher, Ten Speed Press, 1-800-841-BOOK.

Make your own business cards, whether you've ever had a job before or not:

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# Ruby Jewel

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**B.A. Candidate, French Language & Literature, Minor in Marketing  
University of Wisconsin**

**Areas of Knowledge:**

- **Fluent in French (read, write, translate)**
- **International Business**
- **Intercultural Marketing**
- **Demographics & Psychographics**

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# Informational Interviewing

1. How did you get into this?
2. What kind of preparation is typical to get into this? Is that really required, or just the typical approach?
3. What was different from what you expected? What was the biggest surprise when you went into this? Any myths you want to shatter for me?
4. Who else does this? What other companies? Who else should I be talking to?
5. What ensures continued advancement?
6. What is the typical career path out of this position or field? What does this prepare you for next? For example, What's next for you?
7. What advice do you have for someone like me?

And maybe an eighth question could be about salary, but *be careful!* If you ask about salary, don't ask about *their* salary or salaries at *their* company. Ask, "What could a person expect to make in a position like this?" Or, "What would be a typical salary industry-wide for a position like this?" Then subtract 10 to 40 percent.

# Informational Interviewing

## Part II:

### How to convert an info interview Into an application interview

When you are conducting informational interviews, you will stumble across promising openings for internships and permanent positions. If you want to apply for one of these openings, *you must apply for a change in status.*

As a good informational interviewee, you are a polite novice seeking access to insider information. As an applicant, you are a confident provider of needed skills, seeking an appropriate fit or match. These are very different conditions. Also, managers who provide access to you on the basis of providing information are doing you a favor. They may resent it greatly if you suddenly start applying for an open position.

So, apply for a change in status by saying this:

**“That sounds like a very interesting opportunity.  
How would I go about formally applying for that  
position?”**

Then, follow their instructions precisely.



## The Railroad Track Letter

For those people who are important to your network, but that you don't want to pester, unnecessarily. Send by email, or short note or card, or both. After sending this, put the contact on your calendar for every ten days, and remind them in those calls or emails, "Bart, this is Jan Smith, contacting you again to see if you've heard about anyone thinking about hiring an intern in advertising. If you've heard something, give me a call, and as before, if you haven't heard anything, feel free to just disregard this message. I'll be in touch again in ten days. My number is .... Thanks so much." Then do it religiously, every ten days, until you have a solid job offer.

Dear Bart:

I've been trying to reach you by phone for a week or two now, and we just haven't been able to connect. What I want to talk to you about is this: You're very knowledgeable in the field. You know a lot of people and a lot of people know you. I've refined my job search to a very specific type of opportunity, and I want to know if you'll keep your ears open on my behalf about that opportunity.

Here's what I'm going to propose: If you've heard something that I might benefit from knowing, please take a moment and take or return my contact. But, if you haven't heard anything that will be useful to me, please feel free to *not* return the contact. That way, I won't be uncomfortable dropping you a message every ten days or so, as my search continues, and I'm hoping that you will agree that this is a minimally invasive way for you to be of potential benefit to two parties, both me and someone out there who is going to want what I bring to the table.

Here's the type of opportunity I'm after: [BE VERY, VERY SPECIFIC, e.g., "I want to be a public affairs assistant for a public agency, a governmental or legislative agency, or a corporation in some way active on behalf of education or the public welfare. I'm willing to relocate anywhere, including internationally, to get experience in this role." This is just an example; write your own version; see the career center for help with wording.]

So, as you go about your normal business, if you hear about anyone considering such a push, give me a "heads up" and I'll take it from there.

If this is okay, then just keep me in mind. If this is not ok, just get on the phone anytime and tell me it's not working out for you.

And of course, if there is anything I can help *you* with, now or in the future, please don't hesitate to ask.

My greatest appreciation,

U. Wanna Job

# Getting past *Gatekeepers*

1. Cite a referral: “Dr. Johnson from M.I.T. suggested I give her a call.” Of course, this has to be true.
2. Mail any kind of letter, card or note informing your targeted decision-maker that you will call. Then you can tell the gatekeeper, “Yes, she’s expecting my call.” The best line for the letter is: “I will call you on Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. You can count on me to be prompt. I look forward to our conversation.” It doesn’t matter if you say what the call is about.
3. Call once a day until one of you dies.
4. Level with the gatekeeper: “You know, Bill, I’ve been trying to reach your boss for seventeen weeks now, and he just won’t call me back. What should I do?”

Adapted from *How to Get Any Job with Any Major*, by Donald Asher, Ten Speed Press, 1-800-841-BOOK.

## Voicemail

***Fully automated:*** Make yourself a pot of coffee, sit down with the newspaper, and hit redial... You can call as often as you like, but be sure to leave no more than one message a day!

***Human link:*** Call once a day, and no more than once per day, and say this: “Hello. This is Donald Asher. I’m sorry to have missed you. My number is 543-7130, but there’s no need to ring me back. I’ll be calling again.”

Adapted from *The Overnight Résumé*, by Donald Asher, Ten Speed Press, 1-800-841-BOOK.

# Overcoming Objections

## 1. We're not hiring.

- That's okay. I'm not applying for a job with you anyway. I am interested in your advice.
- That's okay. I'm not in any hurry. I just wanted you to know what I have to offer in case something opens up later.
- That's okay. I just wanted to know if you would take a look at my résumé and give me any advice, ideas, leads or referrals that come to mind.
- That's okay. Perhaps you can think of someone else who might be interested right now in what I have to offer. Your referral could be appreciated by both of us.

## 2. I'm too busy.

- This'll only take a moment.
- Yeah. I heard you guys were pretty successful right now.  
[then, STOP, no matter how long the silence]
- I'd be happy to meet you early, late, during lunch, even after work. What's best for you?
- What's a better time for me to reach you?

## 3. Send me your résumé.

- Well let me tell you what's on it. I'm the one who...
- What's your fax number? I'll fax it and call you right back.
- I'll bring it to the meeting. What's a good time for you?

## 4. I'm not the person you should be talking to.

- But I'm not applying for a job. I got your name from \_\_\_\_\_. She said you were quite knowledgeable about this field. I just want to know if you would have a moment to share with me any advice, ideas, leads and referrals.
- Actually, I'm going to be applying through "official" channels, as well, but I wondered if you could give me a little inside information.
- Who should I be talking to? I appreciate the referral.

## NOTES