Demonstrating your Best Networking Skills in a Professional Way

Why Network? Because it’s effective at:

- **Establishing relationships** so that you can comfortably ask for ideas, advice, and referrals

AND

- **You are already networking everywhere** you go and every time you meet another person

Before the Event:

- **Research** the company or organization (mission statement, programs, etc.) and **know it** well enough to discuss it
- **Know what you have to offer** (Communicating Effectively, Thinking Critically, Managing Time and Priorities, Acquiring Knowledge, Working in a Diverse Environment, Solving Problems, Contributing to a Team, Navigating Across Boundaries, Performing with Integrity, Embracing Change, Balancing Work and Life, Developing Professional Competencies)
- Be prepared to **share the most important skills** related to the position you want: Think about an **example from your past that SHOWS** you using each skill. **Practice** describing each skill to a friend verbally.
- If you’re uncertain how to dress for an event, **ask** the event planner. Better Safe than Sorry!

During the Event:

- **Dress appropriately** for the setting and purpose! What message are you trying to convey?
- **Introductions:**
  - Present a **firm** handshake
  - Say your name **clearly** and slowly so others can understand
  - Make **direct** eye contact
  - Be **courteous** and use common sense: watch your language, actions and jokes!
- **Working the Room**
  - **Handshake**: 2-3 firm pumps with your right hand, then drop
  - **Eye contact**: Look between their eyes if it is uncomfortable for you to look someone in the eye
  - **Introduction**: Clearly articulate your career interests, goals, and top accomplishments
  - To end the conversation say, “I’ve enjoyed our conversation. May I have your card?” Move on.
- **Small Talk**
Ask open-ended questions, listen to the answer, and build in to your next question.

Listen for clues such as interests and hobbies so you can assist your contacts as they assist you.

Ask Relevant questions: What would a day in the life of an intern in your company be like?

Make sure you give out your business card and get one in return!

After the Event:

- Maintain your Network
  - Send a quick thank you note or email for your contacts’ time
  - Update your network on your success; the more your contacts know, the more they can help