

# Networking & Informational Interviews Toolkit - Alumni

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Created by:

**Hari B. Varshney**  
Business Career Centre

# Networking & Informational Interviews Toolkit

Reading time: 20 minutes

**Choose the path that suits your needs or explore both:**

**Networking 101 Toolkit**

**&**

**Networking Refresh Toolkit  
(mid to late career)**

Where you are in your networking may dictate the type of tips you're looking for. Networking 101 will go over the purpose and how-tos of networking. The Networking Refresh has you covered if you are already experienced in networking, just getting back to it, or want a refresh.

<b>Networking 101 :</b>	<b>Networking Refresh :</b>
Purpose and benefits of networking	Taking inventory of your Network
Etiquette for informational interviews (coffee chats)	Get creative
Finding, Making and Nurturing Connections	Keeping it strategic
Dress for it and what to do when food is involved	Remember your Alumni Connections

# Networking 101 Toolkit

Reading time: 20 minutes

- **Set the right expectations**

What is networking, and why should you network?

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- **Find places to network**

Where to meet people, online and offline, on and off campus.

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- **Attend networking events**

Conversation starters, etiquette, and tips.

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- **Arrange an informational interview**

How to increase your chances of securing that all-important coffee chat.

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- **Ace an informational interview**

What to do, and what questions to ask, during an informational interview.

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- **Follow up with connections**

How to thank people for sharing their time and expertise with you.

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- **Nurture your relationships**

How to further grow your professional relationships.

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- **Appendix: Your personal network**

A tool to help you find the best people to help you with your career.

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- **Appendix: Business attire guide**

What to wear when you're networking.

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- **Appendix: Dining etiquette**

Place settings, dinner table layouts, and tips.

# Networking 101

## What exactly is networking?

Networking is about increasing your chances of landing the right job, and creating opportunities throughout your career, rather than asking for a job.

It is the process of developing personal connections and building your knowledge and relationships in your area(s) of interest. This lets you slowly become a part of the “closed” networks that can be hugely beneficial to your career in general, especially when you are trying to break into a particular industry. We typically call these types of networking conversations **informational interviews** (or “coffee chats”).

This guide will encourage you to step outside of your comfort zone, reach out to people you don’t know, and set challenging targets—all at your own pace.

✓ Networking is:	✗ Networking isn't:
Gathering career-related information	Asking for a job
Building meaningful, two-way professional relationships	Using somebody for their connections
Showing genuine interest in an industry, company, or role	Demanding help from others
Being open to meeting new people	Being pushy or aggressive

## “Networking is just like asking for directions”

“When pursuing a professional connection or an informational interview opportunity, networking is just like asking for directions.

Think back to a time where you lived somewhere that you really knew your way around. Can you remember a time when a stranger asked you for directions? What happened? If you were able to point them in the right direction, how did you feel? Did you feel like they were using you? No!

If you're like most people, you felt good for being able to help someone out. In general, just like you're happy to give directions to strangers, most people are happy to do small things to help others. Asking for help to find people or information in a professional context, is similar to asking how to find the nearest Starbucks or ATM.

And if you didn't know how to help, you politely admit that, and wave good-bye or point them in the direction of someone who can help. No harm done. Networking is the same way: you're a tourist in a new field, and most people will be very happy to show you the way if you just ask.”

– Bill Burnett & Dave Evans, *Designing Your Life* (2016)

## You don't have to be an extrovert

Remember that the goal of networking is to create genuine relationships, which is best done one-on-one in an **informational interview**. While networking events can be extremely valuable ways to meet people that you might be able to chat with one-on-one, the next section in this toolkit gives you some other ways to find people to talk to. And making initial connections can also be done online in places like [LinkedIn](#).

## Why should I network?

- 1. When researching and exploring various career options, networking is a great way to get insight into a particular company, role, or industry to see if it's right for you.**  
There's nothing like hearing from someone with direct experience. Networking lets you find people in industries or jobs of interest to you, so you can then quiz them to gather information and inform your career decisions.
- 2. Networking lets you tap into the hidden job market.**  
LinkedIn and other sources estimate that **70-80% of jobs are not widely advertised**. Instead, they are promoted through professional networks and referrals, or hiring managers already have candidates in mind. Networking allows you to tap into this hidden job market, which emerged because many jobs posted online receive hundreds or thousands of applications—making it extremely difficult to stand out from the crowd. [Live Career](#) found:



**1 in 200**

resumes submitted online  
leads to a job offer

VS



**1 in 12**

informational interviews lead  
to a job offer

- 3. Networking helps you connect with people who can help your career.**  
Mentors can be hugely important to your career. Networking is one way to find a mentor in your area and nurture the relationship to the point that they take a hands-on interest in your career and how it develops. This doesn't just apply to people starting out in their first jobs. Everyone can use a helping hand or sounding board at all stages of their career. Networking lets you meet people who can take on this role.

## Get started: Your network is bigger than you think

This guide will encourage you to step outside of your comfort zone, reach out to people you don't know, and set challenging targets. But you can still start slowly. You already have a large personal network that you can tap into. People in your personal network care about you and want to see you succeed – so they are even more likely to help you out compared to other connections:

- Family:** siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins
- Friends:** former classmates, high school friends, family friends, friends of friends, neighbours
- Community members:** sports teams, clubs, associations, religious or spiritual community
- Business contacts:** colleagues, people in professional organizations, speakers at events
- University connections:** other alumni, faculty, [Sauder Alumni Career Services](#), [Sauder Alumni](#) on LinkedIn, [alumniUBC](#) on LinkedIn

This network extends beyond those you personally know. Your neighbor might not work in an industry you're interested in, but they might have a friend who does. A fellow parent from your child's class might not have worked at a company you want to know more about, but maybe she has a connection from someone she worked with a couple years ago.

**For more help expanding your network, try the [personal network brainstorming activity](#).**

As a member of the UBC Sauder alumni community, you are part of a community of more than 43,000+ UBC Sauder alumni in over 80 countries, and over 325,000+ UBC Alumni in over 140 countries. Sauder Alumni Career Services is here to help you with networking strategies and to connect you with individuals that may help you along your career path. Connect with us anytime:

[Book a coaching appointment here](#)

# Find places to network

## Networking online

Resource	Description
<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>	LinkedIn is the best way to connect with people online. LinkedIn's helpful <b>Alumni tab</b> lets you filter through the <b>229,000+ UBC alumni</b> on <a href="#">UBC's LinkedIn</a> page. You can also find <b>23,900+ alumni</b> on <a href="#">UBC Sauder's LinkedIn page</a> . Take the <b>LinkedIn Guys Online Masterclass</b> for tips on connecting online (access the link <a href="#">here</a> on the Alumni Career Services Website).
<a href="#">Shapr</a>	The Shapr app is a great tool to get in touch with industry professionals who share similar tagged interests, locations, and professional experiences.
<a href="#">Ten Thousand Coffees</a>	A platform that lets you <a href="#">browse members of the UBC community</a> to find connections who have opted-in to provide fellow alumni with advice and mentorship. The automated tool lets you invite professionals to chat over coffee.
<a href="#">Twitter</a>	Twitter may not seem an obvious place to network, but it is a great way to find, and follow, professionals and thought leaders in your area of interest. Twitter makes it easy to connect with people and start building a relationship through common interests.

## Networking in person (when not restricted by Health Authorities)

Opportunities to meet people are everywhere. Here are some of our favourites:

Opportunity	Description
<b>Professional association events and open houses</b>	Most industries have their own professional association that hosts networking events, such as the <a href="#">BCAMA</a> and <a href="#">PMI</a> . These events are great opportunities to meet people outside of your UBC Sauder community. Companies also host their own events at their offices to meet potential candidates.
<b>Conferences</b>	Professional Associations and Industries put on many conferences throughout the year, which can provide opportunities to meet other professionals, keep up-to-date on the latest information and trends, and find out more about an industry you might be interested in.
<b>Community Clubs</b>	Community Clubs such as Rotary or Toast Masters often put on events that let you network in more relaxed, casual settings. Get onto the mailing list of relevant clubs to avoid missing out.
<b>Volunteering</b>	Find events (e.g. industry or interest-specific) to volunteer your time at. You will meet other volunteers that will have established careers to connect with in a more social setting.
<b>Meetup</b>	<a href="#">Meetup.com</a> is an online social network intended for people to organize meetups in real life. This is another chance to explore outside of the UBC Sauder community with meetups like <a href="#">TechVancouver</a> and <a href="#">Small Business BC Meetup</a> . Be aware that these events, especially less industry-specific ones, can attract people who see them as an opportunity to promote their services or products. You'll learn how to spot, and avoid, these people over time.

# Attend networking events

## Preparing for networking events

Remember, the goal of networking is to start developing genuine connections with professionals. Networking events, such as conferences, meet-ups, or receptions are opportunities to meet people and start that process.

- ✓ **Dress for success.** Different events have different levels of formality, from business formal, to business casual, to casual. Check out our handy [business attire guide](#) to figure out exactly what to wear.
- ✓ **Bring business cards to in-person events.** Coming prepared with a non-digital version of connecting (business card) with you may pay off with potential contacts who prefer more traditional aspects of connecting – paying particular attention to cultural differences in business practices.
- ✓ **Do your research** on the individuals and companies you are interested in ([LinkedIn](#) is a huge help). Having one or two specific questions to ask based on someone's background is a great way to break the ice.
- ✓ **Think beforehand about how you want to briefly introduce yourself.** It should be a mix of personal and professional information. Consider your experiences, your goals, your passion and/or a personal hobby.
- ✓ **Shine while you dine.** If the event is happening over food or drinks, [view our tips on dining etiquette](#).

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## Meeting people at networking events

- ✓ **Use names** to create a strong connection. Dale Carnegie (of *"How to Win Friends and Influence People"* fame) suggests that, "a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language".
- ✓ **Use positive body language.** Your body language and tone of voice is often more important than what you say.
- ✓ **Avoid food and drink at the same time.** One or the other is fine, but keep one hand free at all times to shake hands.
- ✓ **Be curious.** Reduce any stress you're feeling by making the event all about the other people. Instead of telling yourself, "I should really go talk to that person," consider, "I wonder what that person has to say?".
- ✓ **Go with a friend.** A friendly face can reduce your nerves and give you an easy way to get back to your comfort zone.
- ✓ **Make it a game.** Challenge yourself to talk to a certain number of people. Remember that everyone is there to talk to people, so being approached and talked to is expected.
- ✓ **Stay realistic.** You won't make a connection with everyone you meet, which is normal. Maybe they've had a bad day? Or they're tired? If you feel you're not clicking, politely ("It was nice to meet you.") move on to the next person.

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## Joining conversations at networking events

- ✓ **Learn to merge.** At networking events, people often end up in clusters or circles. To break in, don't interrupt; instead, wait for a lull in the conversation. Stand nearby, make eye contact, listen, and wait for the right moment.
- ✓ **Break into the conversation.** Being positive and assertive helps here: catch the eye of someone in the circle, smile as you walk up, offer your hand, and say, "Hi".

- ✓ **Continue the conversation.** Listen, ask open-ended questions about other people in the circle, follow up on previous conversations points, and be kind by bringing other people into the conversation in your circle.
- ✓ **Exit gracefully.** Usually, 10 minutes is the most amount of time you should spend with one delegate. Excuse yourself kindly and assertively (“It was great chatting with you”), shake hands, and move on. Exchange business cards, but only if you made a connection, and tell them you would like to follow up.

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## Tips for virtual networking events

Connecting virtually is now part of the new norm. Here are some best practices to help you make meaningful connections with people at online networking events.

- ✓ **Dive in early.** When you're meeting people on a virtual event platform, speak up early. If you wait, someone else will start talking and you might miss your chance to make an impression and a connection.
- ✓ **Plan a few questions to get the conversation going.** Since online networking events will typically put you into smaller breakout rooms with others, it's best to be prepared for direct conversations. Try questions that can lead to inspired conversations. See our sample questions below.
- ✓ **Then, really listen to their answers with genuine interest and pose follow-up questions.** Great questions get better answers. And people who ask great questions can be perceived as more likeable, competent, empathetic, and trustworthy.
- ✓ **Be mindful of your body language and tone of voice.** Is it positive? Enthusiastic? If you are bored or nervous, it will come across through the video. Remember to look into the camera to make eye contact.
- ✓ **Follow up afterwards.** As you would after an in-person event, send thank you messages to people you connected with within 24 hours through email or LinkedIn.

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## Sample questions

### ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

Icebreakers are a way to make a connection and start chatting. Ideally, icebreakers should be professional rather than just small talk, but they can also be about the food, venue, music, or other shared experiences at the event.

“What a great event! Is this the first time you’ve attended?”

“What did you think of the first speaker?”

“What keeps you busy when you’re not at work or at events like this?”

“Any staycation plans this summer?”

“This event runs so smoothly, how long have you been on the organization committee?”

Don't shy away from more personal questions about hobbies and holidays. It's a good way to make a connection.



## FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

These are more related to the context of your discussion, and what you learn about the other person during your conversation. The right questions give the other person the chance to expand on their interests, experiences, and other topics.

“What excites you most about the work you do?”

“What’s the most interesting problem you’re currently solving?”

“Where are the windows of opportunity in your profession?”

“What advice would you give someone who wants to get into this field?”

“What is the work culture like in your industry/company?”

“What resources (websites, industry associations or organizations) would you recommend I look into?”

“What is the most effective way to learn about current events and news particular to your industry?”

## QUESTIONS TO AVOID

There are some questions you shouldn’t ask unless you know someone well.

Salary and benefits information of the person you’re speaking with.

Confidential information about the company.

Opinions about other people.

# Arrange an informational interview

## Getting to the next step

Networking events are a great way to make meaningful professional contacts. The next step in building a deeper relationship comes with a 1:1 informational interview (also known as a coffee chat).

- ✓ **Get in touch within 24 hours.** If you meet someone at a networking event or conference (either online or in-person), get in touch within a day. Add them on LinkedIn, and send them a longer note over email, assuming you have their contact information.
- ✓ **Follow-up.** Following-up isn't annoying if you are positive and polite. Sometimes people are busy or have other priorities, but that doesn't mean that they don't want to help.
- ✓ **Follow-up a second time.** Persistence is key. Following-up a second time is more than appropriate if you craft your initial and follow-up messages.

### Sample: Email invitation after a networking event

Here's an example of an email invitation sent the day after a networking event:

Hi Upinder,

It was great to get the chance to speak with you at last night's networking event. I was inspired by what you said about the value of having a mentor, and I am looking forward to putting your advice into practice by connecting with a few people I would like as mentors.

I would love to continue our conversation about your experience at Hootsuite. Are you available for 20 minutes next week to share your story?

I can send you a Zoom invite or call you if you prefer.

Thank you!

### Sample: Email invitation to a personal connection

If you have an email address given to you by a personal connection, your message can be short and sweet:

Hi Upinder,

Our mutual friend Billy Chow passed on your email address to me. He mentioned that you'd be open to tell your story about working at Lululemon. Thanks for the kind offer - I'm excited to learn more about the company and hear about your experience working there.

Are you free for half-an-hour towards the end of next week? Please let me know what days work best.

I can send you a Zoom invite or call you if you prefer. Thank you!

## Sample: LinkedIn invitation to a cold connection

Without paying for [LinkedIn](#), the best way to contact someone on LinkedIn is by adding a personal note when connecting for the first time (click on the Connect button on the user's profile to do this). You only have a 300-character limit for this message, so you need to keep it brief:

Hi Upinder. I'm a fellow UBC Sauder BCom alumnus working as a financial analyst. I'm interested in changing industries from commercial banking to the entertainment industry so I was excited to see your profile. I'm connecting with the hope that you'd be open to sharing your story.

Running out of space in this message but can send you more details. Thanks!

## Sample: Email invitation to a cold connection

Here's an example of an email invitation to someone you don't know (perhaps you found their email on their company website's directory). Notice how the invitation also includes a few personal, specific elements that show that the individual has done research before sending the message:

### Recent Graduate

Hi Upinder,

I'm a 2020 MBAN alumna from UBC Sauder School of Business, interested in exploring the tech industry in BC. I'd love the chance to chat with you about your experience at Amazon - I'm curious about your experience working with Amazon's cloud architecture, and interested to see how Amazon's company culture expresses itself on your team. Plus I'm always happy to chat with another cycling enthusiast (I just signed up for my first GranFondo...yikes!).

Are you free for 20 minutes next week to chat? I'd be happy to do a video chat over Zoom, or talk over the phone. Thank you!

### Senior Graduate

Hi Upinder,

I'm an MBA 2012 alumna from UBC Sauder School of Business and I'm interested in transitioning into the tech industry in BC. I'd love the chance to chat with you about your experience at Amazon - I'm curious about your experience working with Amazon's cloud architecture, and interested to see how Amazon's company culture expresses itself on your team. Plus I'm always happy to chat with another cycling enthusiast (I just signed up for my first GranFondo...yikes!).

Are you free for 20 minutes next week to chat? Your office is several hours away from where I'm located, so I'd be happy to do a video chat over Zoom, or talk over the phone. Thank you!

## Sample: Email follow-up #1

You should wait about a week before following up after your initial message.

Hi Upinder,

Checking in again to see if you have 20 minutes to chat about your life at Amazon.

I'm available [date and time], [date and time], and [date and time], or feel free to suggest another time that works for you.

Thanks!

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## Sample: Email follow-up #2

Wait another 7-10 days before following up a second time:

Hi Upinder,

I'm guessing you have lots going on and I don't want to clog up your inbox.

I wanted to check one more time to see if you'd be open to telling me about your experience at Amazon with me over a 20-minute coffee or phone call.

[Date and time], [date and time], and [date and time] all work for me.

Cheers,

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## Follow-up #3?

It's up to you whether you feel it's appropriate to follow-up a third time.

As long as you are polite and respectful, there is generally no harm in one final attempt, as long as you haven't already said you won't be following up with them again.

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## Need more inspiration?

For more ideas about how to write a persuasive invitation to an informational interview or coffee chat, read *The Muse's* article about [email templates](#).

# Ace an informational interview

## Review the 5 P's of Informational Interviews

“The art of conversation is the art of hearing as well as of being heard.” - William Hazlitt

An informational interview is a chance for you to learn more about a particular job, company, or industry, and to explore career options by learning about others' journeys. It's also a great way to help you to transform professional connections into more personal relationships by meeting in a one-to-one setting. Personality and soft skills such as emotional intelligence and communication skills are consistently rated the most important quality that recruiters look for. A successful informational interview is a great opportunity for you to bring your own personal brand into play. Remember, these interviews are also known as coffee chats for a reason; they are meant to be informal and relaxed!



**Prepared:** Write down 10 questions you want answered before going to the interview. Determine your goal for the interview, such as company research, role details, or general advice.



**Positive:** Remember, your request for an interview isn't annoying, you're just asking for directions. People remember what it was like being a student considering their options, and they want to help.



**Polite:** Offer to meet your interviewee at a time and place that's convenient to them such as nearby their office. A Zoom chat during their lunch break is also a great suggestion.



**Persistent:** Just because somebody doesn't respond to your request for an informational interview doesn't mean they don't want to talk to you. Maybe it's a busy time. Following up once or twice is more than appropriate (and not annoying) as long as you remain polite.



**Proper:** An informational interview is about learning and exploring. Remember, you aren't there to ask for a job.

## Tips for what to do during the informational interview

- If meeting in person (restrictions permitting), arrive five minutes early to get settled and find a quiet spot.
- Offer to pay for coffee or tea.
- Ask for permission before taking notes.
- Be genuine; don't be afraid to show your personality as it makes for better conversation.
- Try to develop a connection and a natural conversation before referring to your list of questions.
- Keep an eye on time. Be respectful and wrap up when you said you would.

## Tips for virtual informational interviews

As with in-person informational interviews, the key to success with virtual informational interviews is preparation. Here are a few other things to consider when meeting with someone through video conferencing software like Zoom or Skype.

- **Find a quiet, distraction free spot** to do the interview. Check your lighting and your audio. You want to make sure the person you're speaking to can see and hear you.
- **Make sure you have downloaded the latest version of the platform you're using** to communicate (Zoom, Skype, etc.) and log in at least 5 minutes early. Also, make sure you have stable internet connection.
- **Look directly at the camera** when speaking so that you're making direct eye contact with the person you're talking to.
- **Sit a little bit forward in your seat.** This is how TV News anchors sit when delivering the news to make sure they have great posture. It's also a reminder to "lean in" to the conversation with engaged body language and an energetic speaking voice.
- Use gestures when appropriate but, **keep your movements close to your body.** Try not to fidget or do anything that might be distracting or annoying such as tapping your pen on the table while the person is talking.
- **Be positive.** Even if your informational interview is being conducted over the phone and the person can't see you smiling, they can still sense it in your voice. You want to come across as a positive, even when talking about negatives. Instead view negatives as challenges.
- **Remember to say thank you.** Then, as you would with an in-person informational interview, send a follow-up email within 24 hours

## Sample informational interview questions

Here are a few examples of general questions you can ask. However, the best questions are specific and personal, so if you think of something related to someone's job, career, industry, or personal background, that's even better.

Topic	Sample Questions
<b>About their career journey</b>	"Tell me your story" "How did you end up in your current position?" "Did you always know you wanted to work in this job/company/industry?" "What has been the most valuable experience you have had, or connection you have made, in your career journey?"
<b>Workplace culture at their organization</b>	"What's the difference between a good employee in this position and a fantastic one?" "How would you describe your company's corporate culture and management style?" "What are some ways your company focuses on employee development?" "What do you love about working here, and what do you dislike?" "What's your favorite tradition at your company?" "What is your company's recruitment process like? Would you be able to share your experiences about how you were hired to your current role?"

<p><b>Industry knowledge</b></p>	<p>“Do you know of any interesting conferences and/or networking events for me to attend?”</p> <p>“What do you believe is the most important experiences for an individual such as myself to break into this industry?”</p> <p>“Are there any industry-specific media (i.e. podcasts, magazines, or newsletters) that you would advise I subscribe to in order to keep up to date on topical issues?”</p> <p>“What key associations would you suggest I join for individuals interested in this industry?”</p>
<p><b>Wrapping up</b></p>	<p><i>These are the most important questions. They give you deeper insight from your interviewee, and open the door for other possible connections.</i></p> <p>“Do you have any advice for me?”</p> <p>“How can I help you?”</p> <p>“Based on our conversation, I’d love to learn more about _____. Could you recommend one or two people I could talk to in order to find out more?”</p>

# Follow up with connections

## The importance of following up

It's vital to follow-up after an informational interview, even if just to say "Thank you".

A simple follow-up email shows your appreciation for the time they spent answering your questions. Who knows, this person may play a pivotal role in connecting you with future contacts or career opportunities.

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## Follow-up email template

Send a follow-up message to thank the interviewee for their time within 24 hours of your interview.

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

Thanks so much for chatting with me earlier today. I really appreciate you telling me more about \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and based on your advice, I'm looking forward to \_\_\_\_\_.

I'd love to stay in touch to keep you up-to-date about my career journey and to hear about how your project works out.

*This is just an example. You should use your own individual voice.*

*Saying "thanks" is more meaningful if you are specific about your main takeaways from the meeting.*

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## Email sample

Hi Chen,

Thanks so much for chatting with me earlier today. I really appreciate you telling me more about your diverse role at Accenture and the overall management consulting industry. Based on your advice, I'm looking forward to further developing my communication and strategic thinking skills in my current role.

I'd love to stay in touch to keep you up-to-date and chat more with you about the upcoming Meetup if that works for you.



# Nurture your relationships

## Staying in touch

Nurturing relationships means keeping in touch in a meaningful way. If you can, and you feel it's appropriate, try getting in touch every couple of months. You could share industry-related news, offer congratulations if your contact reached a milestone, like a post on LinkedIn, or follow-up on a previous conversation point. Keep it natural and personal.

## Email samples

Hi Justin,

Hope all is well with you since we last spoke. I know you mentioned you were helping run an online conference last month—hopefully the event went smoothly.

I recently received a LinkedIn notification that you have a new role as a Strategic Partner Marketing Manager at Hootsuite. Congratulations on your promotion!

Best of luck as you continue to advance in your career, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Vivian - hope all is well with you since we last spoke. During our conversation, you had mentioned that you were interested in following Arianna Huffington. I just came across this article and immediately thought of you. I hope you enjoy it and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

[insert article link here]

## Putting it all together

If you're keen to start developing your networking skills and gain opportunities for informational interviews, we recommend you follow this general checklist:

### Find an "accountability buddy"

- Choose a friend and challenge one another to meet your professional development goals
- Check-in with one another at a set time (such as once every two weeks) for updates and progress

**Set networking SMART goals**—actionable, timely, and attainable goals for you to achieve (see our **SMART Career Goals Toolkit** for guidance). For example:

- Make five new connections via LinkedIn by end of August
- Sign up to attend at least three networking events this quarter
- At each networking event attended, research and target six professionals to connect with
- Check out two industry-related associations within the next three-month period
- Conduct at least three informational interviews in the next six weeks

### Refer to these links and resources

- [Never Eat Alone](#) by Keith Ferrazzi, with tactics for how to create a fast and meaningful connection with others.

- **The Fine Art of Small Talk** by Debra Fine, how to start a conversation, keep it going, build networking skills, and leave a positive impression.
- **Live Career**: find articles on the art of interviewing.
- **LinkedIn Guys Online Masterclass**: Access for a step-by-step process to find people working at the companies on your target list. Find the Masterclass link on the UBC Sauder Alumni Careers website [here](#).

### Download the more user-friendly COOL app!

Now you can access **COOL** anytime, anywhere.  
Download the **Symlicity Jobs and Careers** mobile app and log in with your CWL.

Available for iPhone (App Store) and Android (Google Play).



# Appendix: Your personal network

## Exercise: Who do you have in your network?

Category	Name/Description of Contact
Decision-makers from your target market	
Hiring executive / managers	
Human resource managers / directors	
Influencers from your target market	
Association executives	
Consultants you have worked with	
Professional services providers (lawyers, accountants...)	
Board members	
Former Managers who champion your work	
Functional / job / professional mentors	
Head-hunters: Recruiters / Search firms	
Current and former peers	
Former senior colleagues	
Former team members	
Customers / suppliers	
Venture Capitals (VCs) / angel investors / bankers	
Fellow alumni (and other affiliations)	
Former professors	
Entrepreneurs	
C-level executives or VP level professionals	
Media / journalists	
Public relations consultants	
Lobbyists	
Government employees	
Bloggers	
Speakers / celebrities	
Conference organizers	
Personal service providers (mortgage brokers, wealth managers)	
Fellow members of recreational clubs	
Fellow members / participants in sports	
Early adopters / trendsetters	
People 5-10 years younger than you	
People 10-20 years older than you	
Other:	

## Exercise: Your Top 20

Now that you've brainstormed a list of connections you have in your network, choose the Top 20 who you think could help you most in your career:

Top 20 Connections	Does this relationship need nurturing? (Yes or No)
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	
16.	
17.	
18.	
19.	
20.	

## How well do you know these people?

Consider the following factors to assess your relationship with each connection:

- Name and business/personal contact information
- Photo
- Correct title, and past titles, at the same organization
- Their organizational chart (boss, subordinates, peers)
- Past organization and titles
- Common connections / referred by
- Spouse / family information
- Community/Social connections, causes
- Personal interests and hobbies
- Where they studied
- Professional credentials/certifications
- Where they were born and grew up
- Key dates
- Current professional focus and challenges
- What are they reading right now?
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix: Business attire guide

## How to dress the part to make a solid first impression

What you wear sends a powerful message about who you are. You want to present an image that's professional and credible to your prospective employers. The UBC Sauder School of Business wants to help new grads and more seasoned alumni make a positive first impression; we've created guidelines for professional attire at our events that fall into categories of **business formal** and **business casual**. In a workplace setting, expectations for professional attire vary depending on the industry and workplace so it's best to get prepared for any occasion – especially an important job interview or networking event.

### Business formal

Business formal is a high standard of professional attire consisting of a full business suit that includes a blazer with dress pants or a dress skirt. A business formal suit is also distinguished by:

- **Darker suit colours:** A black suit is considered the most formal, and other colours such as navy and gray are considered slightly less formal.
- **Solid-coloured shirts and blouses:** Solid colours are more formal than patterns, and white or black is considered more formal than bold or lighter colours.
- **Complementary colours:** Shirts and blouses should complement the suit such as a white or light-coloured button-up and tie or a solid-coloured blouse. A matching blazer and dress skirt or dress pants are slightly more formal than an unmatched suit.
- **The 'two-patterned rule':** Wear no more than two patterns with your suit.
- **Optional vest:** A '3-piece suit' includes a dress vest and when worn with your skirt or pants and blazer presents slightly more formal, and is optional to wear with your suit.
- **Formal footwear:** Wear heels/pumps, flats, or dress shoes (e.g., oxfords) that match your suit – just make sure your shoes are clean, polished, and comfortable for your big day!
- **Quick tie tip:** If you're wearing a suit with dress pants a collared shirt, generally speaking, you should also wear a tie. If you're wondering which tie to choose, choose a colour or pattern that complements your suit, but don't wear anything too bold for your job interview such as a tie with animals or other prints (if you're wondering which prints are best, stick to paisley or stripes).



## Business casual

Business casual means less formal than business formal but still professional. Generally speaking, business casual includes:

- Professional dresses or skirts, dress pants, chinos, or khakis (but not jeans or athletic pants for example).
- Sweaters, blouses, collared shirts with or without ties.
- Patterns and colours are acceptable as business casual (but not hoodies, t-shirts/tank tops, or tops with slogans).
- Clothing should be crisp and not wrinkled.
- Footwear should still be professional for an office setting such as loafers, dress shoes or boots, heels/pumps, or flats (e.g. not flip flops or running shoes).



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## Casual

Casual is also a style of attire that applies to your comfortable day-to-day wear (which may include jeans or casual pants, t-shirts, sweatshirts and hoodies, casual dresses and skirts, for example). For your day-to-day business, you may be able to dress in casual attire (unless there's an important meeting or event and you're directed otherwise). **However, keep in mind you still need to be presentable**, which means avoiding items of clothing such as pajamas, athletic wear, or wrinkled/torn clothing.

**Use your judgment when choosing casual wear.** For example, stylish sweatpants/joggers, when paired well with crisp tops, may be presentable in some companies; sweatpants that are sloppy or appear to be gym wear are inappropriate. When in doubt aim for comfortable but conservative.

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## Prepping for your interview? Follow these guidelines

- Match your attire to whatever the most senior individuals would wear at the place you want to work.
- If you're meeting with industry professionals or clients who dress professionally, you should also dress professionally in your interview or meeting.
- If necessary, modify your attire for your second interview or meeting.
- At least one day before your interview, decide what you'll wear and prepare your outfit. This avoids last-minute problems such as a stained tie, torn nylons and unpolished shoes.
- When in doubt about what is appropriate wear for your interview, err on the side of business formal, but always do research on the company to get a flavor for how to dress for your interview.

**Remember:** Find clothing that fits you properly and looks polished and professional. Make sure you're confident and comfortable in your clothing to help you focus on your interview or event so you can ace it!

# Appendix: Dining etiquette

## Understanding place settings

Have you ever walked into a restaurant, sat down at a table, and wondered what all the forks, glasses, and plates were used for? Understanding the layout of the dinner table will help you feel confident when dining in a professional environment.

### Informal place settings

If you look at the picture of the informal place setting to your right, you will see the simplest version of a table.

Remember: always work from the outside in or from top to bottom.

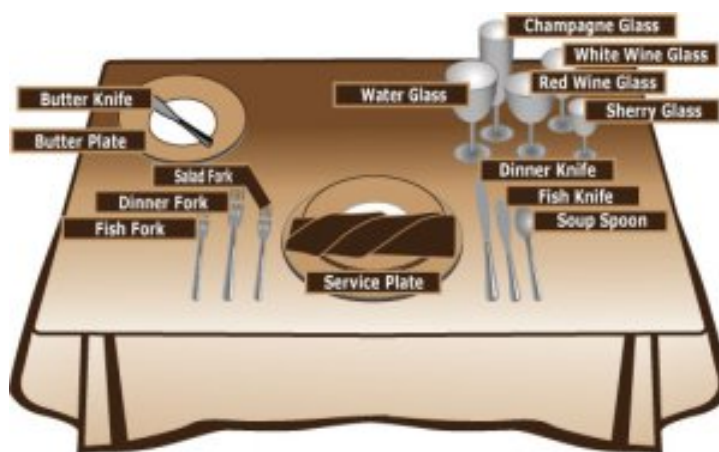


### Formal place settings

There is also a more formal place setting in which the glasses appear to be the most complicated part.

Here are ways to distinguish the glasses apart:

- The water-glass is always situated directly above the dinner knife.
- The champagne glass is easily recognizable by its distinctive flute shape.
- The red wine glass is the widest, and the white wine glass has the longest stem.
- If present, the small sherry glass will be located to the right of all the other glasses.



In a formal setting, the tricks previously mentioned in an informal setting don't work. In this setting, the salad fork is on the inside, not the outside.

## Dining do's and don'ts

Finally, here are a few more dining dos and don'ts:

- Do: Cut only bite sized pieces of your meal
- Don't: Blow on your food while it is hot
- Don't: Talk with food in your mouth
- Don't: Order alcohol for a lunch interview
- Don't: Order the most expensive item on the menu
- Don't: Order anything that is messy and difficult to eat

# Networking Refresh Toolkit

Reading time: 20 minutes

- **Taking Inventory**

Are you benefitting from all that Networking offers?

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- **Get creative**

Up the Conversation

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- **Keep it strategic**

You are busy, so are they - making it count

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- **Remember your Alumni Connections**

How to increase your chances of securing that all-important coffee chat.

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- **Further Resources**

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- **Industry associations/professional groups**

Get involved, Give back, Stay connected

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# Taking Inventory

The benefits of networking throughout your career are vast. Building and maintaining mutually-beneficial long-term relationships with others pays off at a personal and professional level. From collaborations and client referrals to learning from other experienced professionals and forming peer mentoring relationships sets you up for lifelong learning, renewed energy, and healthier business. And yes, networking still applies, more importantly at a senior level, in getting referred for those top roles.

Are you benefitting from all that networking has to offer? Are there any areas where you could expand the purpose of your networking?

7 Benefits of Networking	Are you currently taking advantage of this benefit? (Yes or No)
1. Peer learning - Connect to other experts in your field to share experience and tips.	
2. Information Gathering - Thinking about changing industries? Shifting from private to public? From for profit to non-profit? Launching your own company? Or perhaps you're moving into the third act of your career (retirement) but don't want to slow down yet? Gather information from professionals who have already been down that path.	
3. Collaboration - Not all introductions and meets click but when they do!... Ideas fly, minds come together, and projects are born!	
4. Service to Others/Mentoring - Giving back can be a major contributor to career and life satisfaction in mid or later career. Perhaps you can mentor someone else along their own path. Check out Ten Thousand Coffees, Volunteer opportunities with Sauder Alumni Engagement or the Business Career Centre! Mentoring others can help you revisit your expertise, close your own learning loop by teaching someone else, and reflect on your most impactful experiences.	
5. Staying up-to-date - To keep abreast of the latest information, technologies, and thinking in your field which can help keep you up-to-date on latest or upcoming expectations.	
6. Diversity & Inclusivity - Are you connecting to people at all levels of career and a variety of backgrounds? Focusing only on reaching out to the C-suite limits the type of information you can access whereas broadening the scope of people that you're connecting to can enhance your own learning, challenge your biases not to mention tap into a wealth of expertise, creativity, and perspective.	
7. Building reputation and rapport - People can't refer clients or collaborate with you if they don't know about you. Also, you may miss out on an opportunity or a service that you need. People are also more likely to refer you if they have a 'feel' about you as a professional. Join a local network - create a rapport in your geographical area and personal life, in addition to your professional arena.	

# Get creative

Once you've tackled the inventory of the purpose of your networking (change), here are ten tips to enhance your networking:

1. What do you do? - When being asked the inevitable opener "What do you do?" go beyond stating just your profession and company. Talk about what you actually do, exciting problems you're trying to solve etc. Paint a picture of you in your work. This way, the person isn't left sticking you into a job category where one size fits all. It can also stimulate further conversation and potential collaboration.
2. Get creative - tap into the personal side of ice breakers. Go beyond 'What do you do' which usually illicit a closed answer. An open question may pave the way for easier conversation flow and energy. Try "What passion project are you working on right now?"
3. Send out a digital card. It's easy to do, you can send it out to a personalized list of all of your contacts, and it's a kind way to reach out to your contact at a busy time of year. It can nurture your relationship (especially with a personalized note) and refreshes your connection. Work anniversary, New Year (Lunar Persian, etc...) This is appropriate if you know what people the types of events or holidays the person is observing.
4. Build your network before you need it. Build and strengthen your network regularly. This includes personal contact and messages (not just liking posts) while also identifying new contacts that you'd like to make.
5. You have your network... now use it! People are often happy to help but you'll need to let them know what you're needing help with. You may even consider a Networking Cover Letter - a letter that you send to someone in your network letting them know what type of role you're looking for in case they might be able to help you.
6. Follow up! It's just good business practice - after a first meet, after someone has helped you out, or if you've promised to send them something...
7. Managers, Directors and Execs are busy people. Reach out with a specific ask and keep your questions limited.
8. Do your homework first including getting the trusted opinion of fellow colleagues. Try to identify executives who are more open to connecting and helping others develop.
9. Remember your network is outside of your professional circles - sports teams, Being curious about people in general, parent committees, spiritual community, cultural associations etc...
10. Mentoring puts you in touch with keen learners, fellow mentors and professionals depending on the program you join through.

## Where to Get Creative

- LinkedIn - build your presence and network by adding content, joining groups, and sharing your expertise. It is also a great place to grow and nurture your network by engaging in other's posts (not just giving 'likes').
- Conferences - Attending professional events gets you in front of other professionals. It's also a great way to bridge industries by immersing yourself in the latest information, trends, and hot topics while meeting professionals in your desired industry. You can start out as an attendee, then a volunteer, perhaps become an organizer once you've been a few times. For the more outspoken - starting as a panelist is a great way to be seen without all of the spotlight on yourself. Then why not become a speaker and then maybe even a keynote once you've got reputation and expertise.
- Professional Associations - Give a presentation, join an industry panel, become a guest speaker at your professional association. Rotary International, Toast Masters, LeanIn, Vancouver Board of Trade...
- Give a ted talk - not only will you hone your message that you deliver and up your presenting skills (they coach you through the process) but you'll also meet other speakers from a variety of backgrounds at the session. A starting point is as a panelist.
- Start your own Podcast - Be the expert or bring on the experts
- Giving back - volunteering as a speaker at an Alumni event often can lead to meeting other accomplished Alumni. It can also put top talent in front of you in the event that your company is hiring.
- Community organizations, neighborhood committees, recreation clubs, spiritual groups etc...

# Keep it strategic

- Target the best person - ask your close colleagues for recommendations on who has a good reputation for coffee chats and professional development type of conversations. You don't want to reach out to someone who is not open to career conversations and potentially be shut down.
- Choose the time wisely. If it's year end, tax season, or in the middle of a launch - you don't want to be distracting people whereas, a week or two after peak periods might be a welcome reprieve.
- Touch base on something the other person cares about, - this is where small talk can pay off. Do they follow the playoffs? Love gardening and it's May? How is their current passion project shaping up?
- Limit the number of questions to 1 or 2 unless pre-arranged. The never-ending list of questions or "oh, just one more..." can become bothersome and seem disorganized.
- [Networking Cover Letters](#), "This job-hunting tool lets you reach out to friends, friends of friends and professional contacts, asking for job leads, career advice, referrals and introductions. The letter's focus is not to ask your contacts for a job, but to request their assistance in your job search by connecting you with people or opportunities."
- Nurture your network before you need it.
- Let others know how you can help them - Approach with a spirit of service (giving first), curiosity, and mutual exchange. Do an inventory on your relationships that are more taxing than rewarding. Clean house to make space for more rewarding interactions, relationship (think about this one)
- Revisit regularly to identify any holes in your network and to reconnect *before* the connection is lost.
- It's okay to say not right now - When over-stretched... it's okay to say no as opposed to showing up distracted or dropping the ball on that introduction you promised. Try to be clear that it's 'not now, but I'll touch base when I have the capacity to set that up because I want to show up 100% for you' type of vibe.
- It's okay to doing a thorough weeding every now and then, making room for more reciprocal relationships.
- Zoom fatigue is a thing! Offer up a walk and chat (according to current safety precautions) or even just over the phone. The screen break may be well-appreciated.

# Remember your Alumni Connections

Tap into your exclusive communities – from Sauder to UBC to any other professional or academic programs you’re a part of.

Alumni Engagement....



[UBC Sauder Alumni group via LinkedIn](#)

A great place to keep up to date on coming events specifically for Sauder alumni or engage with other Alumni.



[UBC Alumni Search Tool via LinkedIn](#)

Search and connect with over 23,000 alumni via the alumni search tool on UBC’s LinkedIn page. Search by city, profession, degree, and more.



[Ten Thousand Coffees](#)

A platform that lets you [browse members of the UBC community](#) to find connections and opt-in to provide or seek advice and mentorship. The automated tool allows users to invite professionals to chat over coffee.



GoingGlobal via [COOL](#)

Country and city-specific career guides with details on job search resources, industry trends, professional associations, work permits, and cultural advice. Access through COOL with your CWL

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**Don’t forget to tap into any other Alma Maters or program cohorts including:**

- UBC Sauder School of Business Continuing Business Studies
- UBC Sauder School of Business Executive Education
- UBC SAuder DAP Program
- Professional Development (Yale, Rhodes...)
- Your undergraduate
- ...

# Further Resources:

## Books:

- All You Have to Do Is Ask: How to Master the Most Important Skill for Success, Wayne Baker (2020)
  - Networking for People Who Hate Networking, Second Edition: A Field Guide for Introverts, the Overwhelmed, and the Underconnected by Devora Zack (2019)
  - Never Eat Alone - And other secrets to success, one relationship at a time by Keith Ferrazzi, Tahl Raz
- 

## Podcasts:

- [Networking for people who hate networking](#) with Adam Grant
  - [How to Grow Your Professional Network with Tom Henschel](#). Featured on Coaching For Leaders podcast with Dave Stachowiak.
- 

## Articles/Blog Posts:

- [7 Professional Networking Tips for Executives](#), Sarah K. White
  - [Networking for Introverts](#) by Dorie Clark
  - [An Introvert's Advice for Networking](#) by Karen Wickre
- 

## Tools:

- [Jobscan LinkedIn Optimization](#) - see if your LinkedIn profile matches the industry you are targeting
- Grade [Your LinkedIn Profile](#) for free! The only LinkedIn Profile Grader created by former LinkedIn employees - the LinkedIn Guys

# Industry associations/professional groups

Industry associations and professional groups provide excellent opportunities to network for job leads. Some associations even have resume databases and job postings for their members. Many will offer discounted membership rates for students. The following is a list of industry associations, professional groups, blogs and conferences related to certain industries/areas of Business and their websites:

## Accounting

- [Chartered Professional Accountants](#)
  - [Institute of Chartered Accountants of British Columbia](#)
- 

## Asia

- [Ascend UBC](#)
  - [Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada \(biweekly press releases\)](#)
  - [Canada China Business Council](#)
  - [Contact Singapore](#)
  - [Japan External Trade Organization](#)
  - [North American Association of Asian Professionals, BC](#)
  - [The Hong Kong Canada Business Association](#)
  - [Goldbeck Recruiting for China/Asia](#)
- 

## Bio-Economy

- [BioTalent](#)
  - [International Bioeconomy Forum - Government of Canada](#)
  - [BioIndustrial Innovation Canada](#)
  - [Biotechnology Innovation Organization](#)
  - [Ready to Rocket - for Agri-Food](#)
  - [BioTalent Canada](#)
- 

## Consulting

- [American Management Association](#)
  - [Canadian Association of Management Consultants](#)
- 

## Data & Analytics

- [Crossover AI Conference](#)
- [SAS Women in Analytics](#)

- [Tableau's recommended data science blogs](#)
  - [Women in Data Science Conference](#)
- 

## **Environmental**

- [Environmental Careers World](#)
  - [Eco Canada](#)
- 

## **Finance**

- [Association for Financial Professionals](#)
  - [Association of Women in Finance](#)
  - [Canadian Banker Association](#)
  - [The Canadian Fintech Ecosystem Map](#)
  - [Financial Executives International](#)
  - [CFA Society Toronto](#)
  - [CFA Society Vancouver](#)
  - [Treasury Management Association of Canada](#)
  - [The Canadian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association \(CVCA\)](#)
  - [Global Association of Risk Professional \(FRM\)](#)
- 

## **Gaming, Media & Entertainment**

- [Global Game Jam Vancouver](#)
  - [Full Indie Summit](#)
  - [Vancouver Indie Game Developers](#)
  - [Women in Games](#)
  - [Women in Film](#)
- 

## **Human Resource Management**

- [Chartered Professionals In Human Resources](#)
- 

## **International Business**

- [Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters](#)
- 

## **Latin America**

- [Latincouver Cultural and Business Society](#)
- [Latam Management Recruitment](#)
- [Mesoamerica PE Investor in Latin America - Internship opportunities](#)

## Management Information Systems

- [Association of Information Technology Professionals](#)
  - [BC Innovation Council](#)
  - [Canadian Information Processing Society](#)
  - [Information Systems, Audit & Control Association](#)
  - [Information Technology Association of America](#)
  - [TECHNATION Canada](#)
  - [Society for Information Management](#)
- 

## Marketing, Communications, Product & Brand Management

- [Additional Industry information on Product Marketing](#)
  - [American Marketing Association, BC Chapter](#)
  - [Association of International Product Marketing and Management](#)
  - [Canadian Marketing Association](#)
  - [CPG Connect - Consumer Packaged Goods Professionals](#)
  - [Marketing Jobs](#)
  - [Sales & Marketing Executives International](#)
  - [Canadian Women in Communications](#)
  - [Product Marketing Alliance Meetup Group](#)
  - [Product Management Association of BC \(Product BC\)](#)
  - [Product BC Slack Community](#) (Contact Iris Cai or someone already in the community to add you)
  - [Product BC Meetup](#)
  - [Women in Product Meetup](#)
  - [Women in Product Slack Community](#) (Submit this [request form](#) to join)
- 

## Professional Communities

- [Women's Enterprise Centre](#)
  - [Female Funders](#)
  - [LeanIn Canada](#)
- 

## Real Estate

- [Appraisal Institute of Canada](#)
  - [BC Real Estate Association](#)
  - [International Association of Assessing Officers](#)
  - [National Association of Industrial and Office Properties \(NAIOP\)](#)
  - [Real Estate Institute of BC](#)
  - [Urban Development Institute \(UDI\)](#)
- 

## Technology/Entrepreneurship

- [BC Tech Association](#)
- [BC Tech Ecosystem Map](#)
- [Biotechnology Industry Organization](#)



- [Canadian Advanced Technology Alliance](#)
  - [The Canadian Fintech Ecosystem Map](#)
  - [DigiBC](#)
  - **FLIK (Female Founder / Apprenticeship Portal)**
  - [Forum for Woman Entrepreneurs](#)
  - [HackerNest](#)
  - [Tech Vibes](#)
  - [T-Net British Columbia](#)
  - [Vancouver Enterprise Forum](#)
  - [LifeSciences BC](#)
  - [Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster](#)
  - [New Ventures BC](#)
  - [Ready to Rocket](#)
  - [Women in Tech World](#)
  - [Vancouver Startup Week](#)
- 

## Transportation and Logistics

- [American Production & Inventory Control Society](#)
  - [Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Canada](#)
  - [Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals](#)
  - [Supply Chain Canada](#)
  - [Supply Chain & Logistics - Canadian Business Journal](#)
- 

## Other Associations

- [Angel Forum](#)— Entrepreneurship
- [Canadian Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Forbes Lists](#)
- [Non profit Sector](#)
- [Vancouver Board of Trade](#)
- [Vancouver Enterprise Forum](#)