

Networking Event Guide

Networking events are opportunities to build genuine connections, learn about industries, and practice talking about your goals. They are not just about getting a job, but about starting conversations that could grow into future opportunities.

Before the Event: Prepare with Purpose

Know Who's Attending

- Review the employer or alumni list (if provided).
- Identify 3–5 people or organizations you'd like to connect with.
- Research:
 - What they do / Recent news or initiatives
 - Types of roles or internships offered

Clarify Your Goals

- What do I hope to learn?
- What kinds of roles or industries am I curious about?
- What skills or experiences do I want to talk about?

Simple goal examples:

- “Learn more about marketing roles in healthcare.”
- “Make 2–3 meaningful connections.”

During the Event

- Wear business or business casual attire
- Arrive on time (or slightly early)
- Make eye contact and offer a firm handshake (if appropriate)
- Listen actively and ask thoughtful follow-up questions

Food and Drink Etiquette

Keep one hand free: Hold your drink in your left hand so your right is always ready for handshakes.

Pause before speaking: If someone approaches while you're eating, smile and finish your bite before talking.

Don't overload your plate: Take just 2–3 small items. A full plate makes it hard to move, gesture, and engage.

Use food as conversation exit: Grabbing food or drink gives you a natural way to transition: “I'm going to grab a bite - great talking with you.”



Your Pitch (30-second Introduction)

Prepare a brief, flexible introduction:

Include:

- Your name
- Year + major
- Area of interest
- A question or reason you're excited to connect

Example:

“Hi, I'm Sara, a junior studying English at Drake. I'm really interested in communications and nonprofit work, and I'd love to hear how you got started in your role.”

After the Event: Follow-Up Matters

Send a thank you email or LinkedIn message with the following:

- Gratitude
- A reminder of who you are
- One specific thing you learned
- (Optional) A next step or continued interest



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drake.edu/career