

Networking 101

Prompt Overview

How comfortable would you feel at a career fair introducing yourself with a firm handshake and talking about yourself to potential employers? How about telling a job representative what your personal strengths are? What about following up with a potential employer after meeting her and expressing interest in applying for the job? These are all examples of **networking skills**! In every area of your life – personal, academic, or professional – networking is critical. Networking requires that you are able to communicate well with people, which includes the ability to hold a conversation, make good eye contact, give a firm handshake and know how to ask for what you want.

Core questions:

Tell your mentor about three of your strongest networking skills. Then tell your mentor the three networking skills that you need to improve. Please be specific and describe why you are strong at certain skills and what you need to improve in the others.

Just For Mentees

Paragraph #1: Personal Paragraph

Begin your email with a personal paragraph where you respond to what your mentor wrote you in their last email. It is often helpful to paraphrase their comments in order to better respond to them. Please also feel free to update your mentor on what's going on with you, your family, school, etc.

Paragraph #2: Prompt Paragraph

In this paragraph, you will discuss your networking skills. In addition to the questions in the prompt overview, please use the questions below to help guide your response:

- ▶ Describe a situation where you had to network and what your experience was like.
- ▶ What have you already learned about the importance of networking and where/from who did you learn this information?
- ▶ The only way to get better at networking is to practice. When and where do you plan to practice networking?
- ▶ Ask your mentor to share tips, advice and suggestions with you for improving your networking skills.

Web resources:

Mapping Your Future

This website provides information on careers, college and financial literacy for high school students. Click on “middle & h.s. students” and go to the “Planning a Career” link to search for helpful information about best career planning tips.

<http://www.mapping-your-future.org/>

Paragraph #3: Signing Off

In 2-3 sentences, you will wrap up your email. You can raise any final points you have about the prompt. Tell your mentor that you are looking forward to hearing about their networking skills and experience. Say goodbye and sign off!

Just for Mentors:

Paragraph # 1: Respond to your Mentee's Email

As you respond to your mentee's email, please consider the following:

- ▶ Comment on how your mentee describes his/her networking skills.
- ▶ Respond to the skills your mentee says he/she needs to improve upon to become better at networking.
- ▶ What are the similarities and/or differences between your mentee's networking skills and your own networking skills when you were a high school student?
- ▶ What is your advice for your mentee as he/she plans to practice their networking?
- ▶ Please respond to the tips, advice and suggestions your mentee asks you for.

Paragraph #2: Prompt Paragraph

In this paragraph, you will describe your own networking skills. Use the questions below to help guide your response:

- ▶ Describe a situation where you had to network and what your experience was like.
- ▶ What do you know about networking now that you wish you knew as a teenager?
- ▶ The only way to get better at networking is to practice. When and where do you practice networking? Is networking still important for you to practice? Why?
- ▶ Tell your mentee how networking has continued to be important throughout your career, both in finding a job and while working in the job.