
IRHRSA
2023-24
Edition

NETWORKING 101

A networking guide CIRHR
students for CIRHR students

PREPARED FOR :

IRHR, WOO, and CHRP
Students



ABOUT IRHRSA

The IRHRSA is an organization of undergraduate Industrial Relations and Human Resources students at U of T. It is an official member of the Arts and Science Students' Union (ASSU). Its purpose is to enhance the experience of IRHR students beyond the classroom by organizing social and career-related events.

IRHRSA sponsors events to help students prepare resumes and prepare their interview skills; attends the HRPAC Conference as a group; and organizes a very successful networking event, which enables students to meet professionals from various organizations in Toronto.

[HTTPS://IRHRSA.SA.UTORONTO.CA/](https://irhrsa.sa.utoronto.ca/)

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NETWORKING

DEFINITION

Networking is an activity where people come together to share experiences and learn from those experiences. Networking is not only about having someone that may refer you to a job, but to develop a community of people to learn from, and who can contribute to your professional and personal growth.

Building professional relationships within your industry or field is what professional networking is all about. To form a lasting relationship, it is crucial to be genuine and authentic in your approach. Building trust should be the first step in creating a relationship. Remember, a relationship is a two-way street. Therefore, both partners need to gain something from the conversation and the relationship you are building. Effective communication is the key throughout this process, which involves active listening and asking questions while being clear and concise about what you have to say. Additionally, you should show appreciation for their time and effort in meeting you and be reliable and dependable. Lastly, remember to stay in touch with your connections!

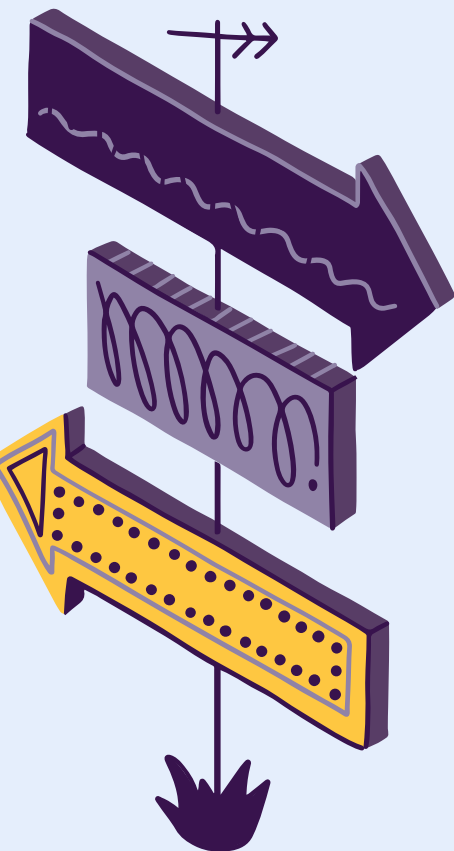
WHY NETWORK?

IMPORTANCE

Networking is essential and allows us to go above and beyond to achieve career and individual growth. It is certainly rewarding as it provides the following:

- Key for career exploration allowing you to gain insight of many aspects of the work and learn other career possibilities.
- Be the first to know about new opportunities
- Use your network to gain feedback to support your professional development

One can leverage networking and be ahead of the game.



HOW TO NETWORK?

Building a Professional Network

To build a successful networking relationship, it is important to first establish your professional goals. Start by assessing your current position and determining your accomplishments, and what you would like to achieve next. Seeking guidance from peers, mentors, professors, or other professionals to help with your goal setting process can be a great first step in developing your network.

When setting goals, it is helpful to consider setting goals that benefit both you and your employer. When starting your career, it is essential to set employability goals, which should align with the goals of the organization's values and mission. This can work to your advantage for promotions and pay raises. Ensure that your goals are actionable, measurable, and realistic, but also be ambitious and challenge yourself to grow. Remember, the purpose of setting goals is to push yourself forward and help you achieve success.




YOUR PITCH!

Craft Your Elevator Pitch

A good elevator pitch works to introduce yourself while starting conversation in networking. Therefore, it is useful to equip yourself with a carefully-crafted elevator pitch. An elevator pitch refers to a concise and compelling self-presentation, usually one minute in length, that serves to introduce yourself and makes a few key points about your experience.





So, how can we create an impactful elevator pitch?



- **Start by introducing yourself:** Begin by offering a strong handshake and providing your full name. Simultaneously, express genuine interest in the other person by inviting them to share a bit about themselves. This initial interaction sets the stage for a positive first impression.
- **Provide a summary of what you do:** Offer a concise overview of your background, focusing on the most relevant aspects of your resume. Include key details such as your educational background, work history, professional interests, and any notable specialties or strengths.
- **Explain what you can do:** Articulate the value you can bring, taking this opportunity to discover ways you can help one another.
- **Practice Pitching:** Find partners with whom you can practice your elevator pitch. Use their feedback to refine your delivery and adapt your pitch to different settings. This rehearsal process ensures that you can confidently articulate your pitch in both formal and informal settings, enhancing your networking effectiveness.

YOUR COMMUNICATION!

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION



Effective communication encompasses both the art of expressing information and the skill of receiving it.

- **Clarity:** Skillfully articulate your ideas and thoughts with clarity and conciseness during the networking conversation. Employing effective verbal communication includes choosing the right words that resonate with the recipient, ensuring a thorough understanding of your message, and adopting a tone that fosters a meaningful response.
- **Active Listening:** Cultivate the habit of listening attentively while engaging in conversation. Actively listening not only appreciates the fundamental values of others but also demonstrates a genuine sense of respect. This involves maintaining eye contact, smiling, nodding, and utilizing other nonverbal cues to convey that the speaker has your full attention.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

The adage “the more the merrier” is especially true with networking. A good place to begin is to develop meaningful relationships with those around you: your peers, alumni, and faculty. Though over time you should seek opportunities to expand and diversify your connections as you develop in your career.



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Our network is only as strong as the connections we make, and so here are three suggestions to enhance your relationship-building efforts:

- **Be Genuine:** Establish authentic relationships by displaying genuineness and demonstrating sincere interest in others.
- **Follow-up:** Invest a few moments in sending a thank-you email after each conversation. This small gesture not only showcases your professionalism but also leaves a lasting positive impression on your contacts. Personalize your thank-you note by referencing specific topics or takeaways from the discussion that resonated with you or that you plan to explore further.
- **Maintain Long-term Connections:** Stay engaged with your professional network by scheduling periodic coffee chats. These sessions provide an opportunity to share career milestones, discuss personal growth, and strengthen your professional bonds over time.



NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Being able to attend networking mixers and after-work events would be a significant way to meet new people in your industry, share ideas, and form valuable connections.

With these events being in a more relaxed environment, it makes it easier to start conversations and build strong relationships.

Some strategies and resources to make the most of networking opportunities would include:

- Attending Networking Mixers
 - Follow school clubs (like IRHRSA) and U of T's Career Centre to get the dates and times for mixers

