

# Networking: Overview, Tools and Elevator Pitches

Networking gives you a competitive edge in the market. **Eighty-five percent of job hires are a result of networking.** Your network is a web of people whom you know personally, professionally and/or academically. You can expand your web by meeting new people and through the connections of people you know. All this depends on making positive impressions.

Meaningful connections can be made during events like career expos, workshops and info sessions, and during brief and spontaneous interactions. For these moments, an **elevator pitch**—a brief introduction of yourself and your qualifications—is helpful.

## Elevator Pitch

Effective networking means knowing what to say when making a new professional connection. The elevator pitch is a great way to answer the common interview question, ‘tell me about yourself.’ It’s not a speech; it’s a two-way conversation in which you give detailed information about yourself. Make sure to ask questions and listen.

- Include your name, major, year in school.
- State what you are seeking (job or internship) and in what field.
- List one or two experiences (job, internship, volunteer, etc.) that have strengthened two or three of your skills.
- State what you know about the organization, including positions, projects or values.
- End by stating how interested you are to learn more about the organization.

## Sample Elevator Pitch

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I’m completing a \_\_\_\_\_ degree at Oregon State University.

I am interested in a career/internship in the \_\_\_\_\_ field/industry.

I have been involved (during college) in \_\_\_\_\_ and have developed skills in \_\_\_\_\_.

I have also worked as a \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ and discovered that I really enjoy \_\_\_\_\_.

Could you tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_?

# Handshake

Handshake connects Oregon State University students and alumni to **tens of thousands of employers, jobs and internships, regionally and across the country.** Many of these employers specifically search for Oregon State students.

You can also use Handshake to sign up for on-campus and virtual workshops, information sessions, career fairs/expos and other career-focused events.



## Features

**Search thousands of jobs and internships in the U.S.** under the 'Jobs' tab:

- Filter by keyword, industry, job type, location and more to find exactly what you want.
- Save filters and create search alerts.
- 'Favorite' jobs. As Handshake learns what you're interested in, it will suggest similar jobs.

**Register for** career expos, workshops and college-specific events:

- Click on 'Events' to browse a list of upcoming in-person and virtual events or search for key terms. Career fairs are listed under the 'Fair Search' tab.
- Preview the list of companies that will attend the career fair to better plan your visit.

**Follow employers** to stay connected and up-to-date with them:

- Search for companies you know or search for relevant organizations by key terms, then 'Favorite' them.

## Optimizing Your Presence on Handshake

1. Log in with your ONID at [oregonstate.joinhandshake.com](https://oregonstate.joinhandshake.com). All students have an account.
2. Update and fill your profile with relevant experience, qualifications, skills and more. The profile is an online résumé, similar to what you'd put on **LinkedIn**.
3. Make your profile public so employers can find you. Under 'Settings & Privacy,' click 'Allow employers to be able to find and view my profile,' then click 'Save Update.' This is optional.
4. Turn on notifications so you know when employers are reaching out. Go to 'Notifications,' select 'Edit Notification Preferences,' and choose when and how you want to hear from Handshake.
5. Download the Handshake app to get direct notifications and have easy access to the platform.

## Vetting

The Career Development Center reviews all employers and jobs coming through Handshake. Fraudulent requests and those not adhering to OSU policy are eliminated, but some illegitimate requests may slip through.

- Never provide personal financial information (PayPal, bank accounts, etc.) to any employer.
- Never send money to an employer.
- Be cautious of opportunities showing excessive grammar/punctuation errors.
- Be wary of larger companies using personal email domains (yahoo, gmail, etc.). Smaller or family-owned companies may have personal email domains for their contact information.
- Do a web search if you feel unsure about an employer or position.
- Report fraudulent/spam employers or jobs to the Career Development Center.

# LinkedIn

As you make new professional connections, you need a place to stay in contact. LinkedIn is the **premier platform for creating and maintaining your professional online presence**. On LinkedIn, you can engage with your connections, expand your network, and search for job and internship opportunities.



## LinkedIn Best Practices

1. Create a **custom URL** related to your name by going to your profile and selecting 'Edit public profile & URL.'
2. Connect with people you meet at career expos and other networking opportunities within **24 hours** of meeting them.
3. When connecting with someone, send a **personalized message** explaining the purpose for your invitation to connect.

*Hi Xiomara– I am currently a senior studying mechanical engineering at Oregon State and hope to enter the aerospace industry upon graduation. I noticed that you are an OSU alumna with experience in this industry. I would love to connect with you and learn more about your career path. Thanks in advance! -Phuong Quynh*

4. **Follow organizations** and influencers that align with your goals and values.
5. **Stay active** in your network and share, like and comment on posts you find interesting.

## Use the LinkedIn Alumni Search to Explore Careers and Network

Find out where your classmates and recent OSU alums from your program are working and how they got there.

Search for Oregon State University's page and click on the 'Alumni' tab. Then search for your majors or program by keyword. You can see where the alums are, follow their careers, make a list of possible companies and send messages to connect with them. Your affiliation with other Beavers may be your foot in the door of a great opportunity.

# LinkedIn Checklist

## Photo

- Industry-appropriate attire
- Plain or natural background
- No selfies
- Just yourself

## Headline

This is a short sentence to tell someone who you are and what you have to offer.

- Relate it to your field of study/industry.
- Mention what you want to do.
- Make it short, memorable and professional.

**Example:** *Spanish and sociology double major, vice president of OSU Language Club—seeking communications internship*

## Summary

In a few sentences to a few paragraphs, demonstrate why they should hire you.

- Be clear and concise.
- Use key words that are relevant to your industry.
- Describe your skills and goals.

**Example:** *In my three years of study at Oregon State University, I have been highly involved in intercultural and diversity student activities and organizations. Together with my Spanish and sociology education, these experiences have inspired me to pursue a career with non-profits, specifically working with Latinx communities, post-graduation.*

## Work and Volunteer Experience

- Include past and current work experiences, leadership roles, military experience and/or volunteer opportunities.
- Highlight your accomplishments.
- Use power statements.
- Can include more information than a standard résumé, but keep it concise and effective.

## Skills and Endorsements

- Make sure the skills you list are relevant to your industry.
- If making a career or discipline shift, focus on universal, transferable competency skills (such as communication, problem solving, etc.).
- Add at least five skills.
- Connections can endorse you for the skills at which you are best.
- Endorse the skills of people's with whom you have direct experience. Message coworkers, faculty, etc. and ask for endorsements of your skills.

## Education

- Do not list high school.
- Include community college or previous school if applicable.
- List your university, field of study and expected graduation year.
- List the activities and societies in which you are involved.

## Recommendations

- Ask supervisors, professors or team mates to write you a recommendation.
- Pick a person who knows your skillsets and abilities well.

## Accomplishments

- Include projects, certifications, languages, relevant courses, military acknowledgments and compelling awards.

## Custom URL

- Customize/personalize your public URL so that it reflects your name and can be used in professional documents like résumés.

# Ten Tips for a Great LinkedIn Presence

**Showcase** your experience and professional interests on LinkedIn.

## 1. Write an Informative Profile Headline

Your headline is a short, memorable professional slogan. For example, 'Honors student seeking marketing position.'

Check out the profiles of students and recent alumni you admire for ideas.

## 2. Pick an Appropriate Photo

LinkedIn isn't Facebook. Upload a high-quality photo of you alone, professionally dressed. No party shots, cartoon avatars or puppy pics!

Profiles with photos are seven times more likely to be viewed.

## 3. Show Off Your Education

Include all your schools, major(s) and minor, courses, and study abroad or summer programs. Don't be shy! LinkedIn is an appropriate place to show off your GPA, test scores, and honors or awards.

## 4. Develop a Professional Summary

Your summary statement is like the first few paragraphs of your best-written cover letter—concise and confident about your qualifications and goals. Include relevant work and extracurriculars.

## 5. Fill 'Skills & Expertise' with Keywords

This section is the place to include keywords and phrases that recruiters search for. Find relevant ones in job listings that appeal to you and profiles of people who have the kinds of roles you want.

## 6. Update Your Status Regularly

Posting updates helps you stay on your network's radar and build your professional image. Mention your projects, professional books or articles, or events you're attending.

Many recruiters read your feed.

## 7. Show Your Connectedness

Groups you join appear at the bottom of your profile. Joining some shows that you want to engage in professional communities and learn the lingo.

Start with your university and industry groups.

## 8. Collect Diverse Recommendations

The best profiles have at least one recommendation for each position a person has held. Recruiters are most impressed by recommendations from people who have directly managed you. Ask supervisors/mentors/managers to post something on your behalf.

## 9. Claim Your Unique LinkedIn URL

To increase the professional results that appear when people search for you online, set your LinkedIn profile to 'public' and create a unique URL (e.g., [www.linkedin.com/in/JohnSmith](http://www.linkedin.com/in/JohnSmith)).

## 10. Share Your Work

You can also add actual examples of your writing, design work, or other accomplishments on your profile, where you can share rich media or documents. What better way to sell your skills than to show employers exactly what you can produce?

# Career Fairs and Expos

Career fairs or career expos are valuable, on-campus opportunities to **find, meet and network with hundreds of potential employers**. Every term, employers looking to fill positions come to campus. They aren't just looking for full-time hires; they are looking for interns, summer workers, volunteers and the opportunity to just meet you. It doesn't matter if you aren't looking for a job right now; come explore possibilities for your future and build relationships with organizations. Use Handshake to find career fair dates and lists of attending employers.

## What to Expect

The day before the fair, the Career Development Center holds **mock interviews** to help you feel comfortable and prepared to meet employers.

At the expos you can expect hundreds of employers from various industries with tables offering information and job announcements. **Also, watch for field-specific sub-fairs and events for certain majors.**

Don't wait until your last year to attend the fairs! Career fairs are beneficial for students of all years and majors.

### Tip

After chatting with employers, make notes on the back of their business card so you remember the details of your conversation. This will help you tailor your follow-up.

## Steps for Career Fair Success

- 1. Stay in the loop on Handshake.** Know when and where career fairs and accompanying events are held.
- 2. Prepare your Résumé.** Use **Vmock** for a virtual résumé review in advance of the fair or come to Career Development Center drop-ins to work with a career assistant. Once your résumé is ready, print at least 10 copies to share with organizations of interest.
- 3. Do employer homework.** Research the employers planning to attend the fairs. Find companies or positions you are interested in so you can have informed conversations with them at the event. This will help you stand out from other candidates.
- 4. Know your audience.** Remember the importance of a first impression. Dress, prepare and present yourself for the position/organization you want.
- 5. Meet and greet.** Smile and offer a handshake to the recruiters. Be confident, but wait your turn to speak. Introduce yourself and ask well-informed questions. This is a conversation, not a pitch contest. Offer to leave your résumé with them and get their contact information.
- 6. Make a move.** Within 48 hours of the fair, send an email or call employers you made a connection with. Thank them for their time and reiterate what you had discussed at the fair. Make it personal and unique to them/their organization and try to set up a next step (company tour, informational interview, volunteering, application).

# Experience Outside the Classroom

Experiential learning provides **hands-on experiences outside of classrooms, a chance to clarify your career interests and expand skills** for your career. All of these experiences can also be included in your résumé.

## Jobs

**Compensated work, on or off campus, short- or long-term, part- or full-time**

- Each job is a stepping stone in your career where you develop valuable skills like communication, time management and organization.
- Aim for jobs, even part-time or summer positions, that are related to your field as they will be more compelling to future employers.
- Positions on and off-campus also guide your career and educational goals and help you discover new interests.

## Internships

**Temporary, paid or unpaid, student training experiences at a company or organization in the field of interest to gain skills and qualifications for your career**

- Internships help students figure out what positions interest them. They also show employers you have academic and real-life experience.
- More than half of all graduates in a recent survey said that an internship got them a job.
- Many OSU majors require internships, often defined as including a mentorship component and formal learning objectives.

## Study, Intern or Work Abroad

**A variable amount of time a student spends studying for a degree in a country that is not the student's country of origin**

- Study-abroad experiences show that you are well-rounded and culturally aware and are a great asset for employers.
- Study abroad can also help you discover interests in new industries, locations, programs or languages.

## Clubs

**On- or off-campus associations dedicated to a goal, activity, hobby, cause, etc.**

- Being a part of a club shows initiative and passion which employers find appealing in candidates. It highlights your non-work-related qualities that employers might relate to.
- OSU hosts hundreds of student organizations. Chances are there is one that will help you grow in your field.

## Volunteering

**Unpaid, freely chosen opportunities to help others or an organization with a project, event, etc.**

- Volunteering demonstrates generosity, initiative and investment in your community/surroundings.
- It's a way to get your foot in the door of organizations in your field or to get experience in a shorter, more flexible time than a formal job.

## Research

**A faculty-mentored or independent investigation aimed at solving important problems**

- OSU is Oregon's top public research institution, and opportunities abound. Research projects show expertise in your field and build your résumé.
- It's a great way to network and build relationships in your department, in labs or across campus.
- Research experience can be key to getting in to graduate school.

## Non-Academic Training

**Training for particular certifications relevant to the position of interest that is not required for your degree**

- Examples: A local medical clinic hosting a HIPPA training or a CPR/first-aid certification or an ad agency sponsoring a certified course in Photoshop and editing programs.
- Participating in these experiences shows your initiative and genuine interest in the field or organization and is a great networking opportunity.