

Top 10 Tips for Making Better Connections

Link-In Live is about making connections for career exploration. It is focused on discovering more about the **type of work** the professionals do (job category) than the industry in which they do it.

Here's how:

- 1. Be open! Most job categories can be found in most industries.**
 - For example, you can find accountants, managers, marketers, consultants, HR professionals (and more) working within government, non-profits, healthcare, IT, retail, banking, education, media, etc.
- 2. Try to work the room yourself. Don't cluster with friends.**
 - It's ok! These professionals are here to connect with you.
- 3. Approach individuals or small groups (1-3 people). Avoid sitting down.**
 - Look for people standing in loose circles or aside each other rather pairs who are involved in a deep discussion or tight circles of people.
 - Use welcoming body language and good eye contact.
- 4. Introduce yourself. Initiate conversations. Listen to their names and use them.**
 - Follow up with where you attend school and what you are interested in, **then ask a question.**
 - *Example:* "I'm a senior at Willamette and I am interested in social work. What initially interested you in your field?"
- 5. Be curious. Ask questions and listen.**
 - Don't put the burden of conversation on the other person.
 - Ask **open-ended** questions (why, when, what, how, etc.) vs. yes/no questions.
 - Go deeper: **ask follow up questions**, not a series of starter questions.
 - Ask for advice. These professionals are here to share their experiences.
 - If you did research, avoid just reciting facts about the person back to them.
- 6. It's ok to share your own opinions and be real.**
 - But stay away from controversial topics and don't provoke arguments.

7. **Get to know them.** It's ok to ask about them as people, not just their work.

- Talk about current events, their summer plans, interests, hobbies, etc.

8. **It's all about links – people know people.**

- The person you are speaking with may not do what you are interested in, but they probably have colleagues who do.
 - *Ask* how someone in their role collaborates with other professionals.
- If it feels natural, ask if they would be willing to connect you with someone who can tell you more about your prospective career path.

9. **Exit conversations gracefully and move around the room.**

- *Example:* "I've enjoyed talking to you, thank you for your time! If you don't mind, I want to be sure to get around to meet some more professionals today."

10. **Offer to exchange business cards, especially if you want to follow up.**

- **Keep your cards easily accessible.** Do not give your resume since they are not recruiting for specific positions.
- Avoid handing cards out just to hand them out. Make quality connections.
- Out of sight, write a quick identifying note before meeting more people.
- **If you say you will follow up, do it.** Best timing is within 72 hours.