Clarify your networking goals

The networking process is much more efficient and effective if you first clarify your goals before you start. The people you connect with are not there to be career counselors. Consider the following points when crafting a coherent and compelling personal narrative:

Prior background: Be prepared to summarize the relevant points of your past experience and how they’ve formed your career direction. For example:

- Conduct a personal Strength Weakness Opportunities Threats (SWOT) analysis
- Identify key transferable strengths and talents
- Interests and passions on the job
- Skills and talents you’d like to build and nurture
- Relevant industry experience

*Be prepared to ask and discuss what drove their career goal decisions.*

Temperament: Be prepared to connect your self-awareness of your personality and preferences with your future career direction. For example:

- Preferred roles and responsibilities (e.g. project management, research)
- Ideal working environment (e.g. fast paced, highly structured)
- Preferred level of interaction (e.g. level of teamwork, customer-facing interaction)
- Preferred level of managerial responsibility
- What is needed to be a good cultural fit?

Future work: Be prepared to articulate what your ideal future work looks like in the short and long-term. For example:

- Ideal functional role(s) and day-to-day responsibilities
- Industries or market segments of interest (e.g. Bio-tech focusing on medical devices)
- Ideal company size and type (e.g. private company with 500-1000 employees)
- Ideal geographic area(s)

Goals for meeting: Before reaching out to your contact, gain some clarity about your desired goals and reasons for reaching out. For example:

- General informational interview: career field and/or industry
- Targeting a position within the contact’s company
- Targeting opportunities for a short-term project
- Developing contacts and building a network of support from within a target company
- Requesting pre-interview advice

*Have an idea of what you can offer them based on your pre-meeting research. How can you add value and keep the relationship going?*

*Find more networking tips in the Berkeley-Haas MBA Alumni Networking Guide*