



# Networking Etiquette

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Whether you're contacting a family friend for a networking meeting, or requesting an informational interview with an N.U. alumnus/a you've never met, it is critical to observe the appropriate etiquette.

## Initial Contact

Once you've identified a professional you'd like to meet, through the Online Directory or other source, call their organization's main number to make sure the person is still there and to verify their contact information, including proper spelling.

Write a clear, succinct letter or email to request a meeting before calling a potential contact cold. Not only is cold calling difficult for most people, but it is less courteous to the person being called. Moreover, preparing your contact for your call is more likely to result in an interview.

## Email Etiquette

It is perfectly acceptable to email your request. The only difference between an email letter and a paper letter is that it is not necessary to include the date and the recipient's address at the top of an email. It is necessary to be just as careful with grammar and format. *(See sample letters on back.)*

Other tips on business communication via email:

- ✓ Keep your messages short; in business, time is money.
- ✓ Use a typeface and formatting that is easy to read.
- ✓ Make the subject line descriptive.
- ✓ Save the high priority/urgent option for real emergencies.
- ✓ Do not use cute abbreviations or faces drawn with punctuation :-)
- ✓ Do not write all in capitals. It is the email equivalent of shouting.
- ✓ Do not attach your resume to a request letter; you can share it later.
- ✓ Re-read the email before sending; check the message and tone and ensure that it is error-free.

## The Meeting

Show respect for your contact's time by being prompt and prepared and by sticking with the allotted time (usually about 20 minutes) you agreed on. Prepare yourself by researching the company to impress your contact as well as to avoid wasting time asking the obvious. Write out a list of well thought-out questions and refer to them during your meeting, even if you are meeting in person. It is fine to take notes, and useful to obtain a business card. Thank the contact at the end of your discussion and leave promptly.

## Follow Up

Write a personalized thank you note, referring to specific advice or information you particularly appreciated and send it promptly. This can be by email or on notepaper or a note card. It is appropriate to update contacts about your progress from time to time, and even to ask further advice. Don't forget to notify all of your contacts when you accept a new job, and thank them again for their help.

## Sample Letters

Ms. Holly Golightly  
Account Executive  
AdSource, Inc.  
222 Washington Street  
Boston, MA 12345

Dear Ms. Golightly:

I found your name on Northeastern University's Online Alumni Directory. I am a recent graduate of Northeastern, where I majored in Communications. After completing a coop placement with a small advertising agency, I decided to pursue advertising as a career.

Your agency has a wonderful reputation and is one of the largest in New England. I would very much appreciate the opportunity to ask you some questions about life in a large advertising firm and to solicit your advice about entering the field.

I will call you at your office during the week of January 19 to see if a brief meeting or telephone conversation can be arranged. I would appreciate any time you could spend sharing your expertise.

Sincerely,

Your signature

Mr. Enrico Fermi  
V.P. Sales and Marketing  
Plasma Pharmaceuticals  
000 Huntington Ave.  
Boston, MA 98765

Dear Mr. Fermi:

As a fellow Northeastern graduate, I am hoping you might be willing to share some advice with me. For many years I have been a successful sales manager in the telecommunications industry, but currently find myself job hunting in this very tough market.

According to N.U.'s Online Alumni Directory, you work in the pharmaceuticals industry, which is an area I am exploring. I won't deny that I am looking for job leads; however, my purpose in contacting you is to ask your help in learning how to sell my skills most effectively in this industry. I can appreciate how busy you must be, so my questions to you will be well thought-out and to the point.

I will call you next week to see if you are able to schedule a time for us to speak in person or by phone for 20 minutes or so. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Your signature

