



WHEATON
COLLEGE
For Christ & His Kingdom

NET- WORK -ING 101



Have you heard the old saying, “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know”? It’s as true as ever.

Developing and continuously expanding your professional network is a crucial aspect of exploring, launching, and advancing your career.

Here are five steps to take as you consider expanding your network:

- 1 Determine your Why** Before you begin networking you need to know why you are doing it. Potential starting points for your *why*: wanting to learn about an industry, a role, a company culture, a skillset, or a location. Ultimately, networking is about learning.

2 Tap into Wheaton's Alumni Network

New to networking? No worries. Wheaton has thousands of alumni on Wheaton in Network (WiN) who have volunteered to connect and share their career insights. WiN lets you search for alumni by major, race/ethnicity, employer, and even Wheaton-specific groups on campus (like Honduras Project, HNGR, Diakonoii, etc.) so you can connect with alumni relevant to you. It's easy to join— visit win.wheaton.edu to learn more.

3 Schedule Career Conversations

[Career conversations](#) can be an incredibly productive, no-pressure way to learn about a field, explore career paths, and build your network of contacts.

4 Set Up a LinkedIn Account

LinkedIn is the premier professional networking site, with nearly 700 million members in 200+ countries, including over 23,000 Wheaton alumni! It's a perfect place to tell your brand story, connect with others and research career pathways and employers. In addition, hiring managers and recruiters are increasingly using this platform to source talent, so take the time to showcase your skills and experience on your profile.

5 Rev Up your Social Media

Social media is another venue for building your brand and professional network. Research the social media platform your industry is most active on, join the conversation, develop industry contacts, connect with employers, and get the word out about your job search.

NETWORKING for INTROVERTS

FOR SOME PEOPLE, the idea of reaching out to a stranger for a career conversation sounds painful or even impossible. If this describes you, don't worry! Successful networking does not require you to pretend to be someone other than yourself. Try these strategies out:

- Practice with a trusted friend to gain confidence.
- Prepare strong open-ended questions and be an active listener. That will provide content for much of a networking conversation.
- Ask mutual contacts to introduce you to others. Give your mutual contact a clear sense of what you hope to get out of a conversation.
- Find common ground with anyone (e.g. same major and mutual interests) and you instantly have something to break the ice with.

If you're authentic and move out of your comfort zone in baby steps, you'll build confidence and comfort in networking environments.