



MAGNER CAREER CENTER

# Building Professional Relationships Presentation

## *How to Gain a Mentor*

*"I mentor and serve as a speaker because I would not have had an opportunity to be where I am today if it were not for the generous advice and time of mentors."*

*- Vice President, Citigroup,*

*Farjana Rohman '09*

# Importance of Mentorship and Networking

**Networking can take many forms and mentorship is one of them!**

- Networking accounts for **69%** of all annual hires. (Based on Department of Labor survey)
- Our ability to get and keep a job often depends on our relationships.
- Networking gives you “inside” information on:
  - Job/Internship opportunities
  - Career/Job/Interview Preparation
  - Marketable Skills
  - Company/Organization
  - Industry/Career Fields
  - Career Success
  - Job Search Process

By the end of this presentation, you will be ready to reach out to alumni to build professional relationships and expand your network!

## The Role of a Mentor

A mentor may share with a mentee (or protege) information about their own career path, as well as **potentially** provide guidance, motivation, emotional support, and role modeling.

- They may help with exploring careers, setting goals, developing contacts, and identifying resources.

## Advantages of Connecting with a BC Mentor:

- Often times, Brooklyn College alumni have been through a similar experience as you while attending BC and that is priceless!
- BC alumni may have interviewed with the same companies in the past, through BC's On-Campus recruiting program, and are able to share specific tips and strategies.

## Advantages of All Mentors (BC and outside of BC):

- Ask your specific career related questions to
- “insiders” in the industry.
- Develop your skills in building professional relationships. ***This is a lifetime skill!***

# How Can You Find a Mentor?

## ➤ LinkedIn

- This is an excellent resource to find alumni and industry professionals as potential mentors!
- Once you create a profile, it will automatically populate with BC alums!
- Before you outreach to anyone on LinkedIn, update your profile and ensure you are marketing yourself in the best way possible.
- Find professionals through LinkedIn groups such as the [Magner LinkedIn Group](#).
- Visit the [Brooklyn College Alumni Page](#) on LinkedIn to search for potential mentors.

## ➤ Outreach to Alumni and other Professionals Participating in **Career Exploration Zoom Sessions** and **Alumni Mentor Luncheons**.

- **Other Panels and Career Events at Magner Center** - all of our events are posted here: [www.tinyurl.com/magnerservices](http://www.tinyurl.com/magnerservices)

## ➤ **Industry meetups** through [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com) (check out the CUNY- specific meetup groups!).

# How to Outreach to Potential Mentors

Send an email or a LinkedIn message and ask someone to meet with you for an initial meeting.

- Clearly describe the guidance you are seeking.
- Confirm your willingness to do the necessary work and follow-through.
- Acknowledge and respect the individual's time.

## Mentors You Have No Connection To:

- Send an email/message introducing yourself along with any commonalities. Try to make a quick connection to pique their curiosity.
- Meet them via phone call, online (e.g., zoom) for a brief meeting so you both can get to know each other (~30 minutes).
- **Do not ask someone to be your mentor in your introductory email or in your first meeting.**
  - Like all relationships building trust takes time.

Check out our [Sample Introductory emails](#) for reaching out to mentors you have no connection to and the ones you already know.

## Appropriate Behavior and Expectations When Interacting With a Mentor

- When meeting with your Mentor, do not drink alcohol before or during meeting.
- Meet during the hours of 8am - 4pm (business hours). This may not be possible based on Mentor's schedule; however it is encouraged.
- Meet at a public place.
  - Do not meet at the Mentor's home
- Contact [careernews@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:careernews@brooklyn.cuny.edu) IMMEDIATELY if you feel uncomfortable with your mentor's behavior in any way (sexual or otherwise).

Review this policy document fully for more detailed information regarding program policies: <https://tinyurl.com/mentorpolicy>

## What to Do When a Potential Mentor Doesn't Respond to Your Email?

**Wait at least one to two weeks before sending them another email or message.**

- The follow up email should be brief and reiterate how interested you are in learning more about their career journey. Mention again that you are flexible and can work with their schedule - whether via phone, Zoom or in person.

**If they still don't respond:**

- Follow up a third time; however wait one to two weeks after the second attempt.

**If no response after third time:**

- It is time to move on and do not take it personally.
- Remember that you shouldn't just have one egg in your basket. Try reaching out to several potential mentors at the same time, so you are not relying so heavily on just one person.

# How to Represent Yourself as a Stellar Mentee

## Self-Reflection & Goals

Reflect on the type of information that is most important for you to learn. This is important to know BEFORE you begin conversation with your mentor.

- Are you questioning whether this industry is the right fit? Educational Requirements? Skill set for entry?
- Be clear about your goals as a mentee.

## Be Prepared

Do your research and learn about your mentor's background (use LinkedIn).

Before any phone call or meeting, know the following:

- Be clear on the day/time of call/or meeting place. If unsure, clarify with mentor.
- Have appropriate materials - notebook with questions, take notes if necessary.
- Always understand and clarify the agreed upon next steps.

## Communicate Effectively

- This means listening and not interrupting when your Mentor is speaking.
- Clarifying and asking questions if something is unclear.
- Following up in a timely manner, if appropriate.
- Be aware of your non verbal communication skills .
  - Use good eye contact
- Stay engaged and connected during interactions.
  - Put away your cell phone and silence it.

# Typical Topic and Questions to Discuss with Your Mentor

## Topics

- Career/Industry Exploration - if you may be confused about your path.
- How do you learn about Company Culture?
- How to Build Your Network.
- How to Successfully Conduct a Job or Internship Search.
- Review of a Resume or Cover Letter.
- How to Successfully Prepare for Your Interview.
- How to Negotiate Salary.

## Questions

- How did you get your start in this field?
- What is it like working at your company?
- What's the most rewarding thing about working in this industry? The most challenging?
- My background is in ..., how do you think I can best leverage my previous experience for this field?
- What experiences, skills, or personality traits does your company look for in new hires?

Remember, this is not an exhaustive list. Come up with topics and questions that are unique and right for you! For more sample questions and how to conduct an informational interview visit:

- <https://www.themuse.com/advice/3-steps-to-a-perfect-informational-interview>
- <http://tinyurl.com/informationalthemuse>



# Following up and Maintaining the Relationship with Your Mentor

Once you have spoken to your Mentor, always **follow up and send a thank you note**. Ideally send it within 1-2 days after your conversation.

Include:

- **Specific Details** - mentioning something SPECIFIC about your conversation that made a great impact on you. Avoid generic phrases.
- **Show You Want to Give Back** - offer to help them with a work project, etc., whatever seems appropriate. Often times, they will not accept the offer, however, it shows that you understand that networking is a reciprocal exchange.
- **Be Sincere.**
- **Include next steps** regarding meeting again (if appropriate) or how you will stay in touch.

Check out our [Sample Thank You emails here](#).

Be aware that your relationships **may or may not be ongoing**. You can try to stay in touch; however the professional you outreached to may only have time and energy for just one discussion. Respect that your Mentor may be busy and not have the time to continue the conversation or relationship. This is okay and don't take it personally.

***If the mentor is interested, you may:***

- Update them on your career progress and show your appreciation for their help.
- Follow up with them when you have career value to share.
- Ask to connect with your Mentor on LinkedIn.
- Share relevant professional articles or information that may be valuable to them.

# Pausing or Ending a Mentorship

Sometimes things don't work out quite how we would like them to.

- Maybe your connection with your mentor is not what you expected it to be.
- Or you became busy with school and have not responded to your mentor in a long time after being paired, but want to reach out now.
- Or maybe you have realized this is not the right time for you to connect with a mentor.

We have compiled a few sample emails to help you navigate these situations.

[Sample emails on how to professionally pause/end a mentorship.](#)

**If you are falling behind on deliverables, etc. please connect with the Magner Career Center as we can help make things more manageable!**

# Next Steps

## REMEMBER:

- YOU create the experience that you want to have with your Mentor. We are here to provide all the resources **but you must make the effort to research, reach out, and to maintain the mentor/mentee relationship.**
- Even if you are not part of a formal mentoring program, remember you are always representing yourself, the Magner Career Center and Brooklyn College:
  - Conduct yourself professionally at all times (i.e. be prepared, show up on time, write professional emails, and send a thank you note at the end of the meeting(s).
  - When communicating with your mentor via email, it is recommended to respond within 2 days.
  - The more prepared and communicative you are, the more beneficial your experience will be!
  - Review this [video playlist](#) for additional mentoring tips.
- **A more detailed version of this presentation** can be found [here](#).

**Please make sure to complete our [Completion Form](#) so we know that you are ready to reach out to a potential mentor.** (For PCs press Ctrl and click link / for Macs press Command and click link)

Reach out to the Magner Career Center if you have any questions or if you would like to share your successful mentor/mentee story - [careenews@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:careenews@brooklyn.cuny.edu).