

Networking Opener

“Elevator Pitch”/ “30 Second Commercial”

What is a Networking Opener and Why Do I Need One?

A networking opener, sometimes referred to as an elevator pitch or 30-second commercial, is just a conversation! It consists of a personal introduction, as well as additional elements that convey your interests, unique talents, skills, and what you are looking for (information, internship opportunity, full-time position, etc.). Having a well-defined and rehearsed networking opener enables you to communicate your professional brand and what you are looking for in the future.

Elements to include in your networking opener may address the following:

- Who are you?
- What is your career goal or next step in your career search?
- What are your accomplishments?
- What do you know about the company?
- Why are you interested in the company or industry?
- What skills can you bring to the company?
- Why should a person/recruiter/company be interested in your skill set?

When is a Networking Opener Used?

Your networking opener can be used in any networking situation!

This includes:

- informational interviews
- during employer events on campus
- meetings with guest speakers
- internship fairs
- interviews
- job fairs

Because your networking opener can be used in many situations it is important to **tailor your message to fit your audience**. For example, you may not necessarily say the same thing to a guest speaker that you would to a recruiter at a job fair. Regardless of the networking situation it is important that your talking points are clearly articulated – that means practice, practice, practice!

A great resource to practice your networking opener is the **UT Center for Public Speaking**

<https://www.ut.edu/speakingcenter/>

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Networking Opener Tips

- Convey enthusiasm by using dynamic and engaging language, voice inflection, and tone
- Smile and make eye contact during your networking conversation
- Tailor your speaking points to the audience – showcase you have done research!
- Conclude with an open-ended question or two so the conversation can continue

Sample Networking Openers

JOB/INTERNSHIP FAIR NETWORKING:

(I am) “Hi, I am Mary Smith. Thank you so much for coming to UT today! I’ll be graduating in May with a degree in marketing and I have a real passion for the environment.

(Interests) I love creating outside-the-box marketing strategies for new products, especially environmentally-sensitive ones.

(I know you) I understand that your company has produced some new products that aren’t on the market yet.

(My skills / accomplishments) Last semester, while interning for a local firm I created an aggressive marketing campaign for a new product, which improved their sales.

(Benefits to Company) I’d love to learn more about your company and to discuss various ways in which my skills in creative marketing can help to benefit your company’s global image. What skills and experiences are you looking for in the creative marketing department?”

GENERAL/EXPLORATORY NETWORKING:

“Good morning, my name is Kate and I am a sophomore at the University of Tampa. Thank you for taking the time to visit our class today. I really enjoyed hearing about your career path and how you took advantage of internship and research opportunities when you were in college. I’m still deciding on the type of job I want to pursue after graduation and I would love to learn more about your role and discuss how to best utilize my remaining two years at UT to position myself for a job after graduation. If your schedule permits, I welcome the opportunity to speak with you to learn more.”

ALUMNI NETWORKING (WRITTEN COMMUNICATION):

“Hello, Jaclene. My name is Sam and I am a first year MBA student at UT and searching for summer opportunities in the marketing field. I see from your LinkedIn profile that you graduated from the MBA program a few years ago and now work in the marketing field in Boston. I wanted to know if you may have time to share any tips or advice with me on conducting a job search in the Boston area – specifically what resources you found most useful. I’m happy to call you at a time that works best for your schedule. Thanks in advance for any insight you can provide!”