

HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR CONNECTIONS WITHOUT BEING ANNOYING

In a world where at least 70% of job openings are never publicly advertised, moving forward in your career comes down to networking, and you've already started – think of your peers, classmates, professors, coworkers, etc. But with an ever-growing network, it becomes tricky to stay in touch with everyone in a genuine way – that's where business cards and LinkedIn can come in handy.

FOLLOW THEM ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Use LinkedIn to pursue an ongoing relationship with people who believe in your talent, potential to succeed, and career goals – and be that person. Keep an eye out for profile updates or posts from your connections as you scroll down your feed. Don't hesitate to congratulate a former colleague or client on their achievements.

KEEP THEM IN THE LOOP

Staying engaged with your connections is beneficial for both sides. Although online networking is very effective, some people are not keen on social media; take the initiative to send them an email or message every now and then.

PLAN SMALL GET-TOGETHERS

There's no better way to catch up than face-to-face. If time allows, set up a small get-together with former coworkers at a coffee shop, or invite them for lunch or happy-hour.

BE GRATEFUL

Acknowledge the people who have helped you and show them your appreciation whether they taught you an invaluable career lesson or helped you resolve a tricky issue. While a handwritten thank-you note will translate your gratitude, in today's digital world an email or social media post may be appropriate as well. Now, if someone went above and beyond, for example, to help you land a new job, consider sending them an actual gift in appreciation to their time and consideration.

KNOW WHEN TO BACK OFF

If you've tried to reach out several times but continue to hear crickets, only try again if it's extremely necessary. People are usually busy, and if you don't hear back from them once or twice, it could be that they're travelling or going through something that's making it difficult for them to respond. However, remember that LinkedIn and networking events are gateways to other new connections you can find and build if one door closes.

NORTH CAMPUS
Academic & Career Success Centre,
Learning Resource Commons, First Floor
416-675-6622 ext. 5030
www.careers.humber.ca

LAKESHORE CAMPUS
Academic & Career Success Centre,
Student Welcome & Resource Centre, First Floor
416-675-6622 ext. 5028
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