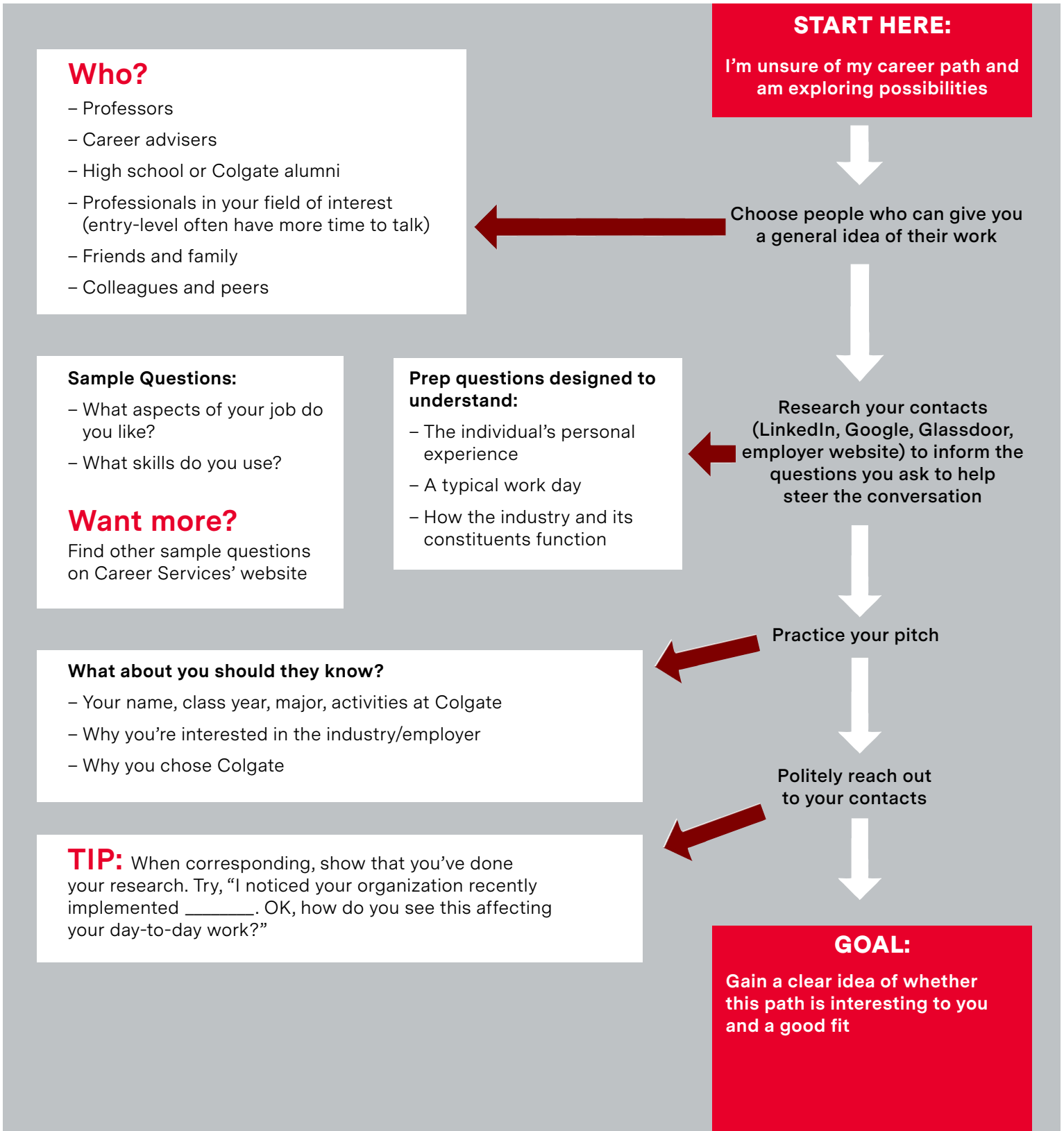# Networking Guide

Effective strategies to cultivate and maintain your professional network

NETWORKING

is cultivating relationships over time to learn about a field of work, employer, or place. There are two main purposes for networking: information and strategy. How, with whom, when, and for what goal all depend on your purpose.

Networking for Information

START HERE:

I'm unsure of my career path and am exploring possibilities

Who?
– Professors
– Career advisers
– High school or Colgate alumni
– Professionals in your field of interest (entry-level often have more time to talk)
– Friends and family
– Colleagues and peers

Choose people who can give you a general idea of their work

Sample Questions:
– What aspects of your job do you like?
– What skills do you use?

Want more?
Find other sample questions on Career Services' website

Prep questions designed to understand:
– The individual's personal experience
– A typical work day
– How the industry and its constituents function

Research your contacts (LinkedIn, Google, Glassdoor, employer website) to inform the questions you ask to help steer the conversation

What about you should they know?
– Your name, class year, major, activities at Colgate
– Why you're interested in the industry/employer
– Why you chose Colgate

Practice your pitch

TIP: When corresponding, show that you've done your research. Try, "I noticed your organization recently implemented _____. OK, how do you see this affecting your day-to-day work?"

Politely reach out to your contacts

GOAL:

Gain a clear idea of whether this path is interesting to you and a good fit

NETWORKING

Networking for Strategy

START HERE:

I'm ready to apply

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Research your contacts (LinkedIn, Google, Glassdoor, employer website) to inform the questions you ask and help steer the conversation

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Reach out to contacts →

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Entry-level employees (0–3 years) →

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Now you should be able to talk confidently about the employer and industry, and articulate why you're interested and a good fit

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Higher level employees (5+ years)/ people involved in recruiting/ those who influence hiring →

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Sample outreach email:

Hello Mr./Ms./Dr._____,

I am a junior at Colgate University, and I found your contact information through the LinkedIn/referral/etc. After my experience in volunteering with local children, I am strongly considering a career in social advocacy. I was hoping I could set up a 20-minute phone call with you to discuss your experiences in this field. Please let me know if you might be willing to talk with me, and I will follow up to schedule a call.

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you,

Your Name

Prep questions designed to understand:

– Information about the employer not found on the website

– Résumé feedback, details about the application process, and advice to strengthen your application (opportunities to mock interview)

– Classes or activities to prepare you for a career in the field

– Referrals to others

TIP:

– Mention others who you spoke to

– Be straightforward but not demanding about your objectives

– Ask for but don't expect a call or meeting

– Be ready to reiterate your interest with specificity

Prep questions designed to understand:

- How to be the best possible candidate

- How to expand your network

GOAL:

– Become a stronger, more informed, and confident candidate

– Develop an intimate knowledge of the application process

– Gain advocates within the employer

TIP: Remember you become an extension of your contact's reputation when your contact advocates for you. This is more likely to happen when you make a consistently good impression. See tips on reverse.

MAINTAIN/CULTIVATE YOUR NETWORK

Networking is not a "one and done" interaction. Having consistent contact is crucial to maintain and build your network.

- Keep your connections up-to-date with your professional and academic accomplishments
- Circle back to your contacts with additional questions or thoughts that demonstrate your expanding knowledge or focus
- Don't wait until you have a question or personal update before you get back in touch; reach out to share interesting articles, Colgate news, or holiday wishes

Our career advisers can strategize with you to draft emails and questions, and keep your dialogue active.

Louis Altman	Laura Chrissley	Jillian LaRussa	David Loveless	James Reed

RESOURCES FOR NETWORKING

ONLINE

Linked in™

The world's largest professional networking platform and a great resource for job searching.

- Create a complete LinkedIn profile (see our guide for more info)
- Find and connect with Colgate alumni and other contacts
- Join these groups and others that interest you:
  - The Official Colgate University Group
  - Colgate's Professional Networks (colgate.edu/networks)

IN-PERSON

- Networking receptions
  - Colgate provides many
- Events through Alumni Relations or professional organizations
- On your daily commute, the airport, waiting for coffee, etc.

Tips for networking (in-person and online):

- Display proper body language, make eye contact, and provide a firm handshake
- Be prepared for conversations
- Treat alumni volunteers and other contacts with the utmost respect
- Ask for contact information to stay in touch
- Be respectful of people's time
- Send thank you notes (e-mail is fine)
- Spell check and proofread your messages
- Be aware of your digital presence on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, etc.)