



# Students: Communicating with Volunteer Mentors through Marshall Mentor Network

The initial contact with your mentor will most likely be by email but may be on the phone. Be very specific about the information or assistance you are seeking.

**By using the Marshall Mentor Network (MMN), you agree to use it only for the legitimate purpose of contacting MMN volunteer mentors about career development. You understand and hereby agree that all contacts with MMN volunteer mentors are at your sole discretion and risk. You further understand and hereby agree to accept all the risk and to release Marshall University from any and all liability relating to your use of the Marshall Mentor Network and/or your contacts with MMN volunteer mentors.**

## **Be Prepared with your "elevator speech" or your "30-second commercial:"**

The 30-second networking commercial is a sales promotion for yourself. This commercial can be considered to be your personal marketing tool. It is used continually in the job search and must be practiced. Take the time to develop and memorize your script so that you are comfortable talking with any employer. Remember to:

- Summarize your relevant experiences.
- Quickly and concisely state your reason for connecting with the mentor.
- Show how you have demonstrated a genuine interest in the career field you are pursuing (give specific examples of things you've done, if applicable)
- Discuss your relevant skills.
- Explain what makes you stand out from the crowd (e.g., any leadership experience or special recognitions).
- Give the Volunteer two options on how s/he can assist you.

Networking doesn't have to be uncomfortable. By applying the above suggestions, you can confidently network your way into a new opportunity. How can you tweak your 30-second introduction to be a conversation starter?

## **Writing Professional Email Messages:**

Write a concise initial email. This first email will be an invitation to connect. Once you and the mentor have made a connection and would like to connect again for a more in-depth conversation, you can then reply with more specific information and offer to send attachments (such as your resume) as needed. Keep your emails and interactions with your Marshall Mentor Network volunteer on a Professional Level.

Many of us have become accustomed to the shorthand used in texting and instant messages. However, networking emails, particularly in the business setting, still demand a higher level of professionalism. For example, "Plz send info 2moro" is simply not appropriate.

- Spell words out and use correct grammar.
- Use an appropriate email address. If you wouldn't use it when applying for a job, don't use it when corresponding with your mentor.
- Think professionally. Avoid the smiley faces :- ) and jargon.
- Your communication should be friendly, but formal.
- Use abbreviations only as necessary.
- Don't forget to use the spell check, but don't rely only on the spell check.
- Mind your manners. Remember that someone is setting aside time for you; don't forget to say please and thank you.

**Here are some suggested topics for conversation to get you started:**

- What professional associations are recommended for your industry?
- What is the best way to interact with professionals in your industry or field of interest?
- How can I best establish professional contacts in your industry?
- What types of professional development activities would best compliment my professional aspirations?
- Can you provide insight into your career field and industry by providing information on career options for my specific degree?
- Can you review my resume for industry appropriate information?
- Can you help me by conducting a site visit/shadow day or informational interview?

For additional information, questions, and/or concerns, please contact MU Career Services at 304-696-2370.

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