

WORK CENTRAL AB

Networking Strategies

Build Genuine Connections That Open Career Doors

A Career Resource from Work Central AB

Why Networking Still Drives Hiring

A significant share of jobs are filled through referrals and personal connections before they're ever posted publicly - this is especially true in a tight-knit regional economy like Central Alberta, where employers, industry groups, and community organizations often overlap. Building genuine professional relationships opens doors that job boards alone can't.

1. Networking Locally

- Attend local job fairs, chamber of commerce events, and industry meetups across Red Deer, Lacombe, Sylvan Lake, and surrounding communities.
- Join regional professional associations related to your field.
- Volunteer with community organizations - it's a natural way to meet people while giving back.
- Attend workshops or training sessions hosted by local colleges or economic development offices.

2. Networking Online

- Use LinkedIn to connect with professionals in your target industry and region.
- Join Facebook or LinkedIn groups focused on Central Alberta jobs, industries, or community life.
- Engage thoughtfully with posts from companies or people you'd like to work with, rather than only reaching out when you need something.

3. The Informational Interview

An informational interview is a short, low-pressure conversation with someone in a role or industry you're interested in - not a job pitch. It's one of the most effective and underused networking tools.

How to Request One

Reach out with a brief, polite message: introduce yourself, explain your interest in their field, and ask for 15-20 minutes of their time.

Prepare thoughtful questions about their career path, industry trends, and advice for someone in your position.

Always follow up with a thank-you message afterward.

4. Making a Strong First Impression

- Prepare a short, natural introduction - who you are, what you do, and what you're looking for.
- Ask genuine questions and listen more than you talk.
- Bring business cards or be ready to connect on LinkedIn on the spot.
- Follow up within a few days of meeting someone new to keep the connection warm.

5. Maintaining Your Network Over Time

- Check in periodically with contacts, even when you don't need anything - congratulate them on new roles or milestones.
- Offer help or introductions to others in your network when you can; networking works both ways.
- Keep a simple list of key contacts and when you last connected, so relationships don't go cold.

Networking Checklist

- ✓ Identified 2-3 local events or associations to attend this quarter
- ✓ LinkedIn profile updated and ready to share
- ✓ Prepared a short, natural self-introduction
- ✓ Requested at least one informational interview
- ✓ System in place for following up with new contacts

Keep Building Your Career With Work Central AB

Strong networking works best alongside a polished resume and LinkedIn profile. Explore more free guides at workcentralab.ca/resources.