

# Networking Tips During Your Internship

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Securing a good investment banking internship is not an easy task. However, an even more difficult task is to either convert this internship into a full-time offer, or, if you decide that the job is not for you, to effectively use your time to better position yourself for your dream job or next internship. Performing well is typically not sufficient, as you'll be competing with other smart and ambitious graduates from top schools, and it is difficult to stand out.

To maximise your chances and get ahead of the masses, you'll have to learn how to network effectively. Networking is really just a fancy word for meeting and talking to people, but building strong networking skills will be of tremendous help throughout your career. Why does networking pay off? A few reasons:

- The more people know you inside and outside the team, the more chances that somebody will stand up for you when they decide whom to hire. Also, there may not be a spot for you in the specific team you interned with, but there might be a spot in this other team you happened to talk to!
- If people remember you, they will be willing to give you more advice and contacts when you'll be looking for your next internship or full-time job.
- Talking to as many professionals as you can in different areas will increase your financial knowledge, open up some potential cool job ideas you hadn't thought about (leverage finance? principal investment?) and prepare you for future interviews!
- London is a small world. You never know who is going to end up where, and how you will bump into them, their friends, ex-colleagues, or need their help or advice some day.

Here are a few good habits to take:

## 1. Be proactive in approaching people early on

This is stating the obvious, but most people tend to stick with their immediate colleagues and do not dare introduce themselves to people they don't know. Know this: there is no downside for asking people for a coffee or for introducing yourself (even if they are in a different team - there is no rule that says you can't talk to other teams), but there is unlimited upside! Especially if you are new or show interest in people's work, they tend to be receptive and willing to help and discuss. In the worst case, they will just ignore you or say that they don't have time. Your boss won't view you talking to other teams as something negative, after all, you are there to learn! You just have to force yourself to do it.

A few tips to make things easier: try to get to know the junior people first, because they'll be able to give you an overview of the team and identify the more senior "cool guys" who will have time to talk to you. You can ask junior colleagues in your team for an introduction to people in other teams or departments (i.e. "I'm interested to understand how team XXX works, do you know anybody there?"). You can ask other interns in other teams to ask you to join them for coffee next time they go with the people in their team. You can approach recent alumni, friends of friends, people from your own country if you are from overseas, etc.

## **2. Don't be a nerd**

It's fine to ask some technical questions of people. But don't overdo it, otherwise they'll view you as an annoying pest. Try to be more casual and personable sometimes. Sport is a safe topic, and there is plenty to say over the summer with football and tennis.

## **3. After you've settled in, talk about your future plans and ask for advice**

If you are passionate or curious about a specific area, share this with people around you. Most professionals will realise that your goals are not set in stone yet, and that you are still trying to find your way. For example, if you say that you are interested in working for a private equity firm in the future, they will be able to tell you the best team for joining in the bank (i.e. leverage finance, financial sponsors, Consumer M&A).

## **4. Nurture your relationships**

Stay in touch with people – having coffee or saying hello when you walk across their desk goes a long way toward making people remember you. When your internship is over, send an email with your contact detail to each person you've met. Ideally, you should try to meet each of them and say goodbye in person. This will leave a nice last impression. A few other tips: note down the names/email addresses of the key people you've met for future potential emails. If you haven't done so yet, create a LinkedIn account and invite those people in your network so you'll be able to track them if they move to another bank.

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