



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Networking to Communicate Your Value

Rebecca Dirnfeld (SHE/HER)
Career Educator

UBC CAREER CENTRE



To Consider:

- ☐ The first session this morning noted that finding a job includes networking.
- ☐ The connection is important, because employers want to know why they are hiring you, and what value you bring.
- ☐ Many employers know what initiatives they want to pursue and problems they need solved .
- ☐ Employers can hire based on desired outcomes, expected constraints, and useful collaboration.
- ☐ When networking, it is important to uncover what matters to an employer and signal where your experience, strengths, and interests align.



Have Your Own Career Story Ready

- ☐ The first session this morning noted how important it is to keep your CV up-to-date, and to think of it as a living document.
- ☐ Everything you've accomplished counts, and you don't necessarily know what part of your career story will be most attractive to your network.
- ☐ Your CV can help you tell your story – you can use it to think about what you want to showcase, what can matter most to your network, and what the full picture of your portfolio says about you as an emerging professional.
- ☐ The more you know and discover from your network, the more you can analyze your CV and decide what is most useful for tailored job applications.



Effective Networking is Responsive

Networking can help you uncover what may not be obvious when comparing two different contexts.

- ☐ What is the team focused on right now?
Where have you encountered similar priorities, questions, or problems?
- ☐ What challenges are they navigating?
What skills, knowledge, or experiences might you draw on in response?
- ☐ What tends to make someone effective in their environment?
What qualities or ways of working have you demonstrated in your own contexts?

Where is the relevant evidence in your own experiences?

It is not about a predetermined pitch. What you learn helps you decide what is relevant to share.

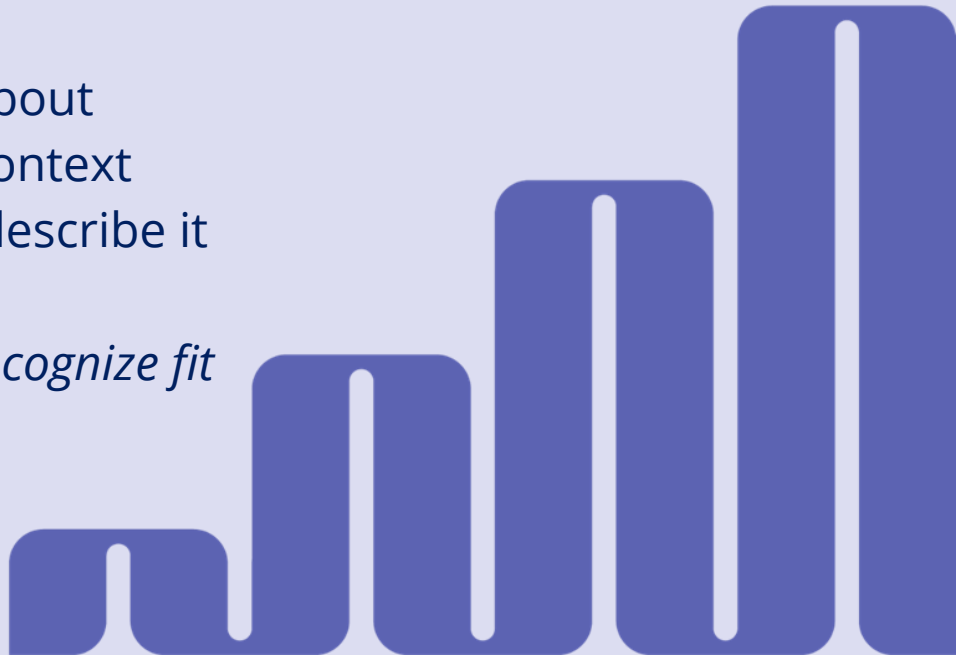


Match what you hear

Mirror network contact priorities when you describe your experiences.

- ☐ Use their verbs, not academic ones
- ☐ Emphasize the outcomes they care about
- ☐ Frame your experience within their context
- ☐ Highlight collaboration in ways they describe it

➡ *Shared language helps your network recognize fit quickly.*



Demonstrating Readiness

Outcomes

- ☐ What has been improved because of the work you've accomplished?
- ☐ What problems did you help solve and/or what decisions did you inform?
- ☐ What evidence shows results, impact, or progress?

Constraints

- ☐ How have you worked successfully within constraints?
- ☐ How have you navigated limits in time, scope, funding, or information?
- ☐ How you prioritized, adapted, or made trade-offs

Collaboration

- ☐ Who have you worked with and what was your role?
- ☐ How did you communicate ideas to different audiences effectively?
- ☐ How have you incorporated feedback, and adapted, to work toward shared goals?

➔ *Fit isn't only about similarity — it's about demonstrated readiness.*



Where to Find Network Connections

Start with the network you already have

- ☐ Supervisors, PIs, committee members, and research collaborators
- ☐ Current and former lab members
- ☐ Fellow grad students and postdocs
- ☐ Visiting researchers and guest speakers
- ☐ Attendees at conferences, workshops, seminars

Expand beyond your own network in academia

- ☐ Researchers at other universities and research institutions
- ☐ Conference presenters, organizers, and attendees
- ☐ Members of professional and industry associations (academics do work in industry and are part of these associations)
- ☐ Journal editors and journal reviewers

Expand beyond your own network in industry

- ☐ Alumni who have moved from research into industry, government, consulting, etc.
- ☐ Industry partners connected to your lab, faculty, or institution
- ☐ Professional associations and industry groups



Social Media Presence

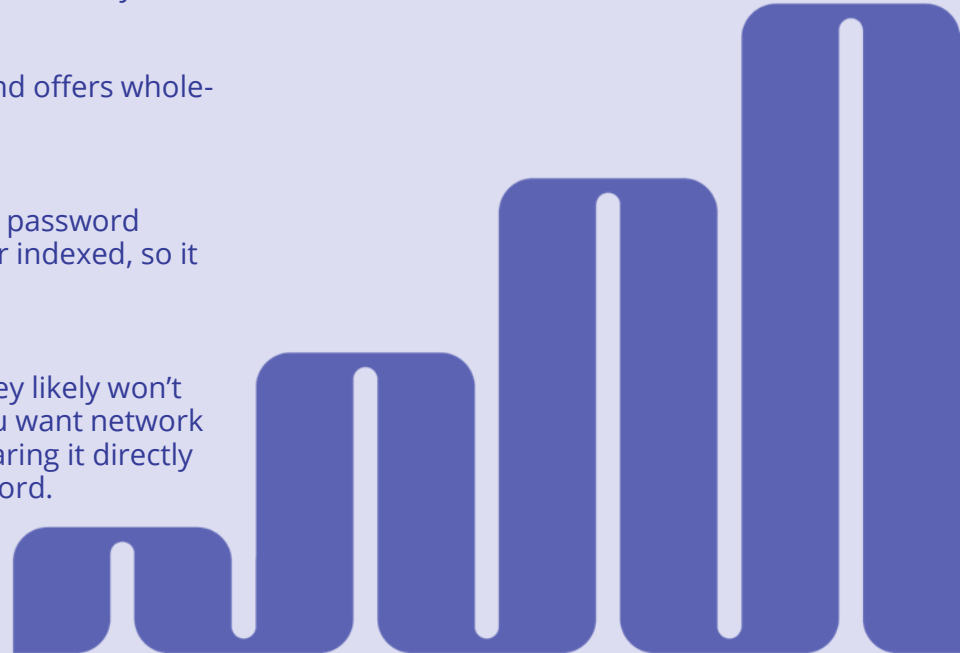
- ☐ As the morning session noted, a social media presence is not necessary. However, people are curious and may look you up online.
- ☐ Having a professional online presence can give you more control over what people find and how you present your work.
- ☐ LinkedIn is a well-established platform for building a professional presence, but it is not the only option.
- ☐ Many people create a professional website or webpage to showcase research, publications, projects, conference presentations, a CV, or other examples of their work.
- ☐ Some website platforms allow you to create password-protected or restricted-access pages, giving you more control over who can view your work.



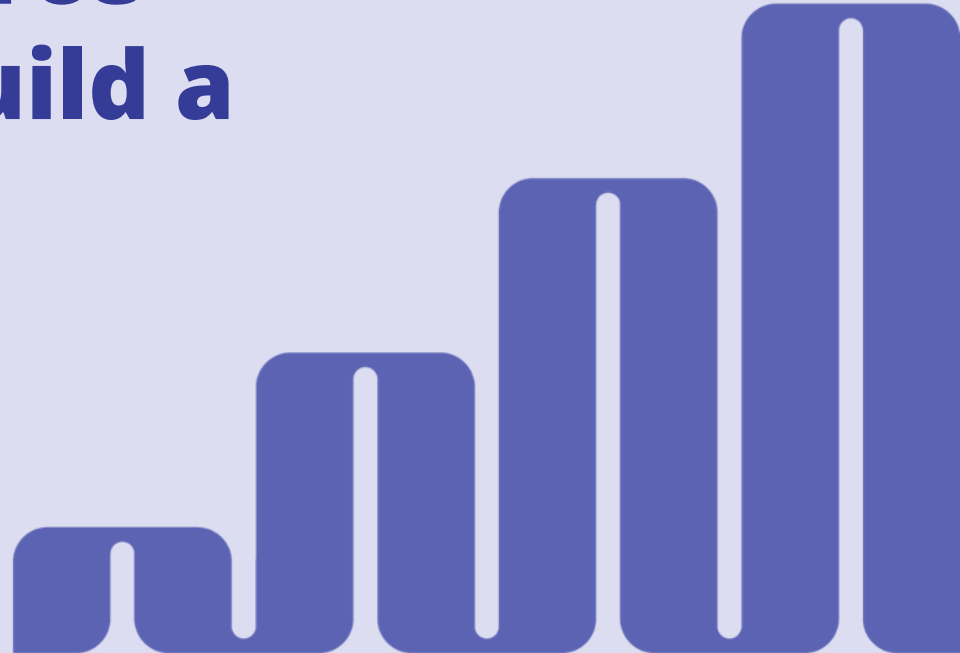
Examples of Password Protected Webpages/Websites

- ☐ **Squarespace** allows individual page or entire website password protection. You send the webpage/website URL and password to your network contact.
- ☐ **Wix** allows individual pages to be password protected and offers whole-site password protection.
- ☐ **WordPress** – allows pages/posts to be public, private, or password protected. However, media files may still be accessible or indexed, so it may not provide fully confidential material options.

Note: If a website or webpages are password protected, they likely won't appear via search engines. You need to consider whether you want network contacts to be able to find your profile if public facing, or sharing it directly with contacts and employers via a URL and password.



Resources To Source Information To Build a Connection



Job Postings

What do they reveal?

- ☐ Desired outcomes (what success looks like)
- ☐ Key constraints (time, scope, environment)
- ☐ Required collaboration (teams, clients, stakeholders)

How can you use them?

- ☐ Highlight repeated verbs and phrases
- ☐ Mirror this language in resumes and interviews
- ☐ Treat postings as *employer signals*, not checklists



Job postings are communication tools, not checklists.

- ☐ They signal what an employer is prioritizing and trying to solve
- ☐ They are not a list of requirements you must meet perfectly

If you treat postings like a checklist...	If you treat postings like signals...
▪ You focus on <i>matching every requirement</i> ▪ You disqualify yourself too early ▪ You explain why you <i>don't</i> meet certain criteria ▪ You miss what the employer actually cares about most	▪ You look for patterns and priorities ▪ You understand what success looks like in the role ▪ You identify what problems the employer needs to solve ▪ You see where they are facing constraints ▪ You understand how the role interacts with other parties

This helps you to decide on what to emphasize in your application



Informational Interviews

What they reveal

- ☐ What actually matters *day to day*
- ☐ Which skills are critical vs. trainable
- ☐ How collaboration really works in the role

How to use them

- ☐ Ask *outcome-focused* questions
- ☐ Listen for *constraints and trade-offs*
- ☐ Adjust your *language to match* what you hear



Outcome Focused Questions

“What does success look like in this role after 6–12 months?”

“What kinds of problems does this role exist to solve?”

“How do you know someone is doing well in this position?”

➡ *Outcomes reveal what employers actually value.*



Listening For Constraints And Trade-Offs

Pay attention to what limits, shapes, or complicates the work.

- ☐ Time pressure and deadlines
- ☐ Budget, staffing, or resource limits
- ☐ Regulations, approvals, or risk
- ☐ Competing priorities or imperfect information

➡ *Constraints explain why certain skills matter more than others.*



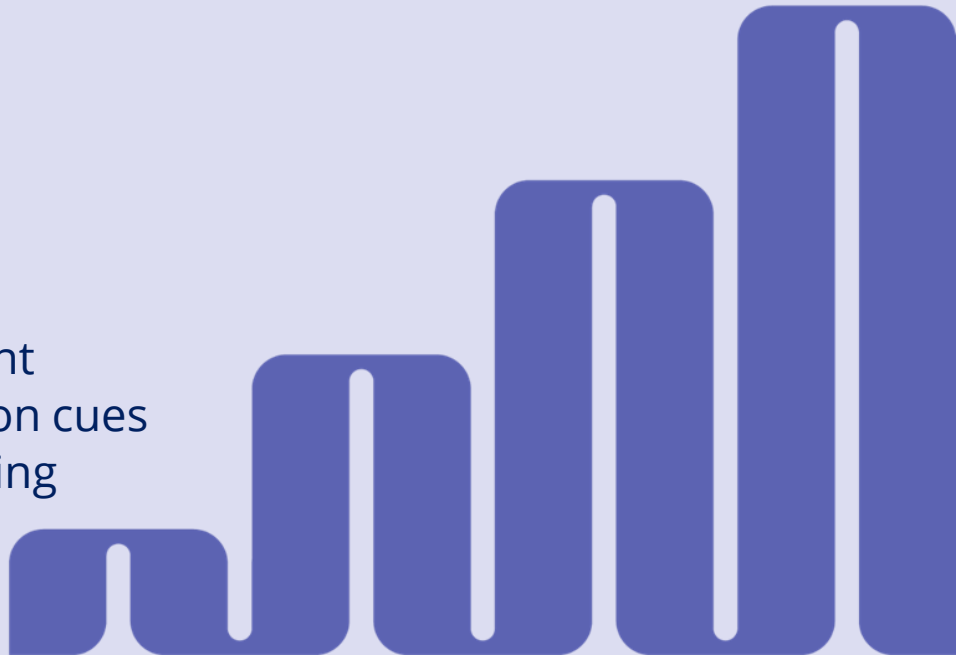
LinkedIn

What it reveals

- ☐ How professionals *describe themselves*
- ☐ Common role titles and career paths
- ☐ Sector-specific language and priorities

How to use it

- ☐ Compare 5–10 profiles in roles you want
- ☐ Note verbs, outcomes, and collaboration cues
- ☐ Rewrite your profile using similar framing



Employer Websites & Annual Reports

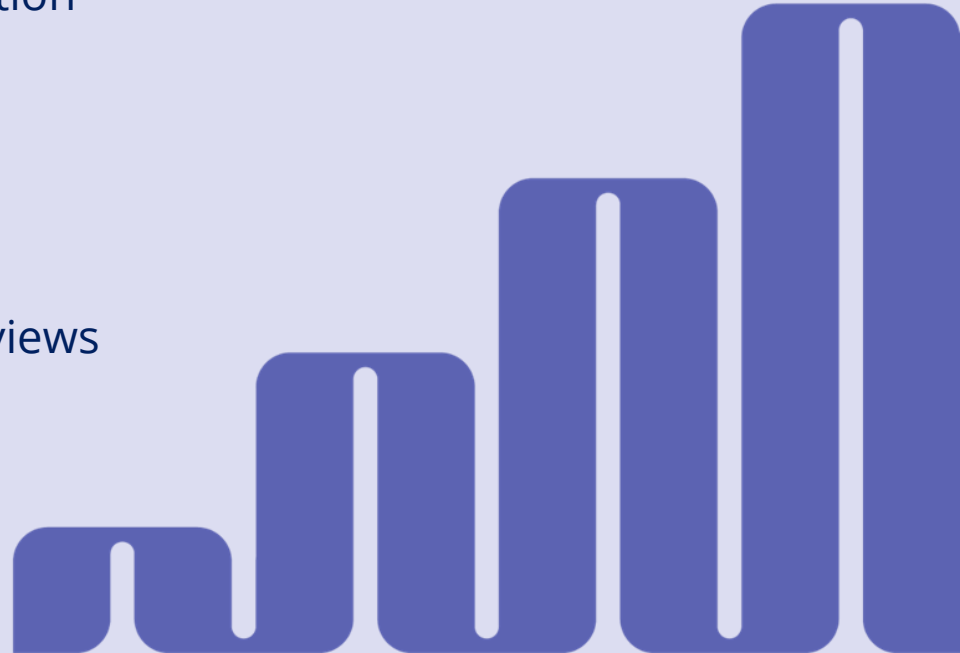


What they reveal

- ☐ Organizational priorities and values
- ☐ Current challenges and strategic direction
- ☐ How success is defined internally

How to use them

- ☐ Align your examples with stated goals
- ☐ Reference employer priorities in interviews
- ☐ Signal cultural and mission fit



Professional Associations & Sector Reports

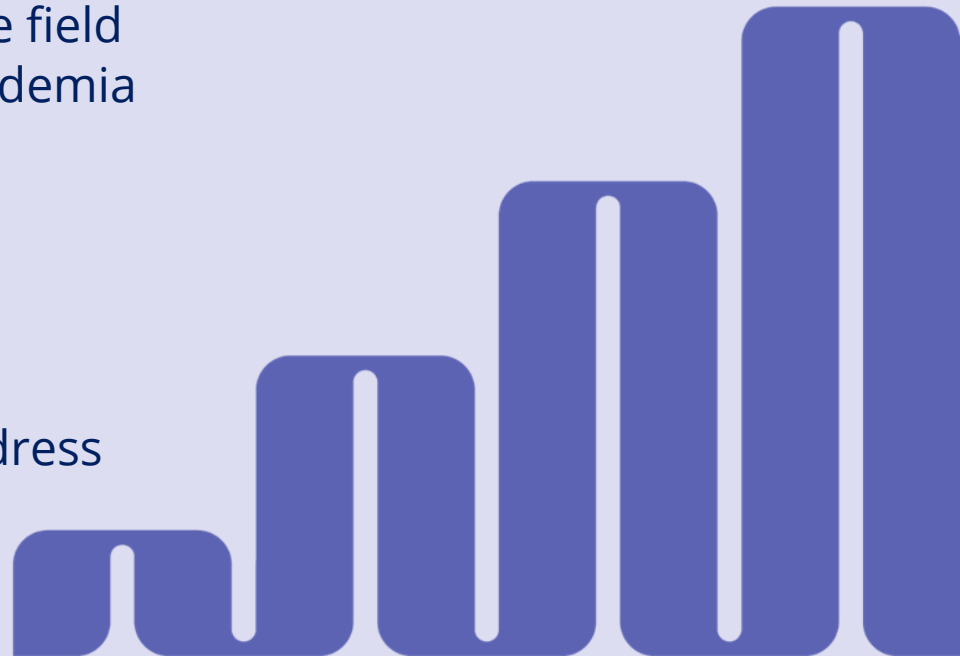


What they reveal

- ☐ Shared standards and expectations
- ☐ Emerging skills and constraints in the field
- ☐ How expertise is framed beyond academia

How to use them

- ☐ Validate which skills are in demand
- ☐ Learn sector-specific language
- ☐ Identify gaps you can proactively address



Making Intentional Decisions About Your Applications

The more you learn from your network, the better equipped you are to tailor your applications and gain referrals.

☐ **Tailor with context**

Use what you've learned about their priorities, challenges, and ways of working – not just focusing on the job posting.

☐ **Choose relevant evidence**

Decide which experiences best demonstrate that you can contribute to the outcomes that matter to them.

☐ **Use AI as a tool, not the source of application creation**

AI can help you compare, review, organize, or refine application materials, but you have sourced the context from your network.

