NETWORKING BUSINESS CARDS

Information selected from *Networking Business Cards: An Essential Job-Search Tool for Career Changers and College Students When A Resume Just Won't Do* by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D.
www.quintcareers.com/networking_business_cards.html

Networking business cards, which have the look and feel of a traditional business card, give you the opportunity to provide critical career and contact information to people you meet in social and professional situations where it is not appropriate to hand out resumes. For a minimal investment you can print networking cards and then revise them as your situation changes. For example, the networking business card you use for a summer job search will be different than one you use in your final year when you attend employer information sessions. Keep your networking cards clean and crisp and bring them EVERYWHERE you go -- to networking events (obviously), career and job fairs, professional meetings, social gatherings, parties, weddings, and anywhere else you may run into potential contacts…everywhere. If you are building a network for work following graduation in 1-2 years, your networking card is often more appropriate than a resume.

Designing and Printing Networking Cards

Networking cards are the same size and shape of business cards (3-1/2" wide and 2" high), contain key contact information like business cards, but instead of listing a company and job title, a networking card focuses on your career/job goals and/or your key skills and qualifications that would be of interest to those with whom you are networking. Make it easy for someone to contact you by providing your name and email address (your UT address is ideal as it is professional and you check it regularly). It's up to you—but it is likely wiser to omit your phone or cell number and postal mail address as you begin general networking. You can provide this information to contacts when it seems appropriate and comfortable.

Different cards for different occasions The samples below show how you might use cards that identify your program, skills and experience as you meet contacts for information interviews. Other samples include a specific job search goal e.g. a summer position, internship, which *could* be better suited to a networking event like an employer information session. Ordering only a small number of cards makes it affordable to craft cards best suited to the occasion.

You can get your networking cards printed at a local print shop and even print them yourself using special business card paper and a template that most word processing programs supply. (Word instructions at end of article.) When designing your networking cards, remember to keep the design and layout clean and simple, use "normal" fonts, use font sizes of 10-11 points, and stay with traditional colors of ink and paper.

Once your cards are printed, be sure to use a business card holder to protect your cards and keep them clean and crisp. What's the point of going to all the trouble of designing and printing great networking cards if you let them become soiled or dog-eared? Remember that people are *always* making assumptions and that in networking and job-hunting, impression management is critical.

Final Thoughts Remember that your networking business cards should not replace your resume -- but in situations where a resume is not suitable, networking cards are a great self-marketing and networking tool. Always carry a stash of your networking cards; you simply never know when you're going to meet someone who may be able to help you in your career development or job search.
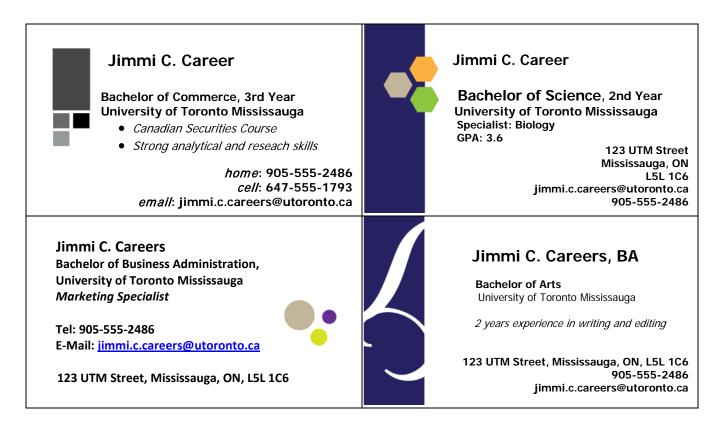
Networking Card Printing Details

Some print shops send out business cards for printing (which takes 3-5+ days) and you must buy 250 cards. Because you're going to be making changes in your cards, it makes more sense just to order a few at a time. Typically they are printed 8-10 on a page. You want them printed on card stock, but it doesn't have to be the most expensive grade.

To have your business card professionally printed, you need to provide your "ready to print" designed card to the print shop. To do that:

On your Computer, in MS Word:

- Go to the "Tools" menu from the top row.

- Choose "Letters & Mailings" and then "Envelopes and Labels"

- Under "Options," find the name of the paper manufacturer (Avery) and then select 3612 Business card..

- Type in the information you want on your card in the text box and hit "New Document."

- You can then format the cards exactly as you want them to print.

Getting your cards printed:
Various office supply stores can provide business cards, starting at approximately $23-$25 (and up) for a batch of either your own design or from a template. Timeframes may vary, so please contact the store for more info.

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