

Networking Like a Leader: Building Authentic Connections That Create Opportunities

October 14, 2026

Notes and Reminders



Attendees are muted: Due to the number of attendees, all participant microphones and cameras are automatically muted.



Webinar Recording: This webinar and the engagement tools will be recorded. An archive will be available at www.nist.gov/nice/webinars.



Submitting Questions: Please enter questions and comments for presenters in the Zoom for Government Q&A. Chat is available for this event. Please be respectful and keep all comments professional and appropriate.



CE/CPE credits: The CEU form will be available on the event page after the event.



CYBERSECURITY CAREER WEEK

OCTOBER 19 – 24, 2026

#CyberCareerWeek #MyCyberJob #ChooseCyber



www.nist.gov/nice/ccw

CCW is supported by the NICE Program Office at NIST.

NETWORKING LIKE A LEADER: BUILDING AUTHENTIC CONNECTIONS THAT CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

**DR. CHRISTOPHER CURRENS
NIST CHIEF LEARNING OFFICER
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TODAY'S TOPICS

- Benefits of Networking
- Why It Feels So Hard?
- Strategies
- Stages of Networking





LET'S
NETWORK!!

Please type the following in the Chat:

1. Name
2. Where you work
3. What you do
4. Contact information

From Chat, copy down at least 2-3 people that you think you would be a good resource for you in the future

Example:

Chris Currens, NIST, leadership development,
currens@nist.gov

WHAT IS IT?

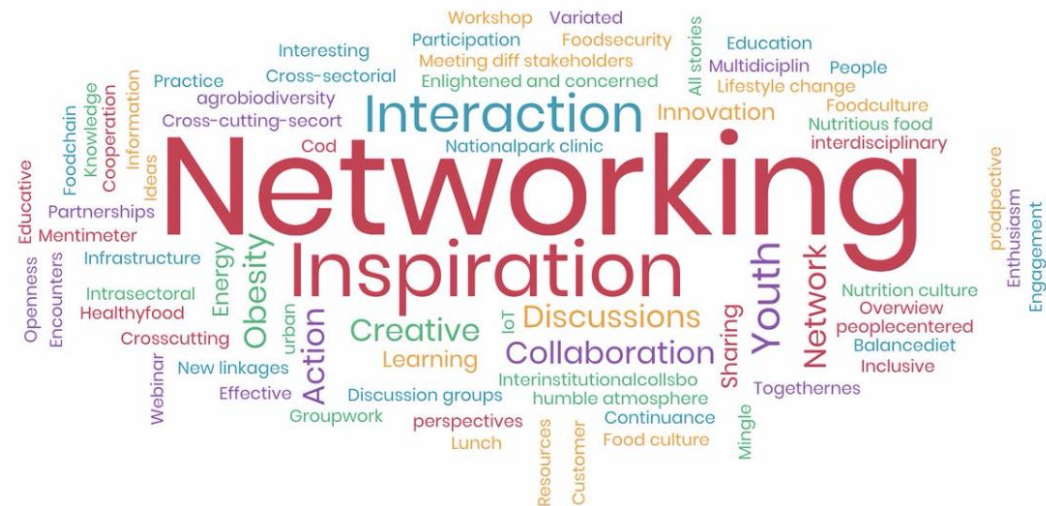
NETWORKING IS...

The exchange of information and ideas among people with a common profession or special interest.

IT IS NOT...

Meeting as many people as possible.

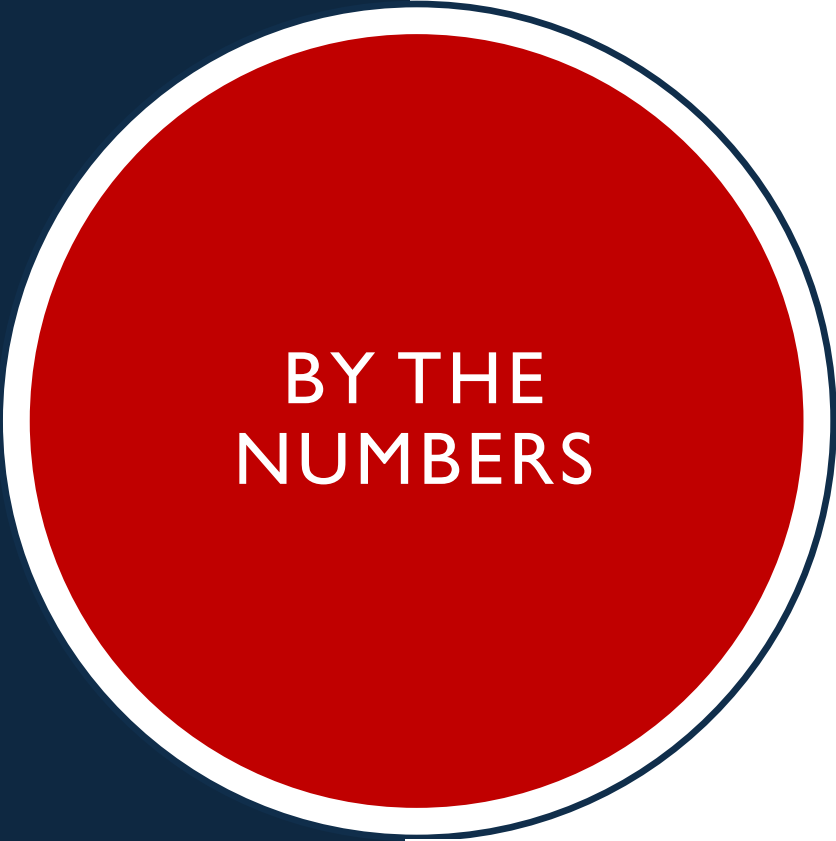
QUALITY OVER QUANTITY!!



MULTIPLE BENEFITS

- Access to decision makers
- Deeper knowledge, diverse perspectives
- Career advice/support
- Stature, confidence, authority
- Development of long-lasting relationships
- Reality check
- Less isolation, psycholog





BY THE NUMBERS

- 70% hired at organizations through a connection
- 80% consider networking important to career success
- 35% casual LinkedIn conversation has led to new opportunity
- 60% agree regular online network interaction leads to jobs



NETWORK TYPES

- Personal Board of Directors
- Professional and Workplace
- Operational or Strategic
- Formal vs Informal





LEVELS OF CONTACTS

- **Acquaintances** – minimal interaction, willing to do small favors
- **Allies** – know your talents and aspirations, go out of their way to help
- **Advocates** – know you well and believe in you, will put their name on the line for you

METHODS TO NETWORK

Subtle Networking

- Basic contact information as you come across people

Intentional Networking

- Pro-active approach:
 - ✓ LinkedIn Profile and QR
 - ✓ Email introductions
 - ✓ Seeking out mentors
 - ✓ Asking/requesting and/or providing information
 - ✓ Building a “network”



WHY IT FEELS SO HARD?

- Schmoozing, sleezy, not authentic
- Can feel distinctly negative
- Beyond dislike or discomfort
- Don't like to bother people
- Are you open to input?
- Impostor Syndrome



4 MINDSET STRATEGIES

- Focus on learning
- Identify common interests
- Think about what you can give
- Find a higher purpose



A photograph of a wooden surface with a red wooden pin on the left and a group of yellow wooden pins on the right. The pins are arranged in a line, with the red pin standing alone and the yellow pins standing together. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

FOCUS ON LEARNING

- Get Curious
- Growth Mindset
- Can Learn From Everyone
- Source of Innovation
- Commit to Action

IDENTIFY COMMON INTERESTS

- Align goals, values, and interests
- Seek authenticity and quality
- When driven by substantive shared interests, it will feel more authentic
- More likely build relationships





Power



Gratitude, recognition,
enhanced reputation



Focus on helping others
achieve their goals!

THINK
ABOUT WHAT
YOU BRING

FIND A HIGHER PURPOSE

- Motivation
- Helping others, come from a place of generosity, service
- Authenticity



RESEARCH AND PLANNING

Networking: Kicking it off right!

- Start a networking contact spreadsheet to capture information and organize
- Develop clear objectives for networking
- Develop your greeting/introduction when meeting people (your personal elevator speech)



Name	Organization	Contact Informaton	Where We Met	Notes	Follow-up date	Done	Notes from Follow-up Conversation
John Smith	DoC	Project Manager j.smith@email.gov xxx-xxx-xxxx	Big A Conference (May 5, 2022)	Interested in discussing coaching program	15-Jun-22	No	n/a
Jane Doe	The Training Connection	Trainer j.doe@email.com xxx-xxx-xxxx	Seminar at GWU (May 10, 2022)	May be able to teach a class for us in August	1-Jun-22	Yes	J. Doe will send a proposal.
Mary Jones	ANSI	Senior VP-Intl.Affairs m.jones@email.org xxx-xxx-xxxx	Sent her an email on April 4, 2022	Has great contacts in the standards community	15-Jul-22	No	n/a

NETWORKING CONTACT SPREADSHEET

Bing Chen's "Three Rules of Networking"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGECmrA6qeU>

THE APPROACH

Develop Your Introduction or Tag Line

- Tell who you are, what you do, and what you want to achieve – share your expertise

Keep it to about 30-60 seconds.

- Think skills, credentials, and a summary of what you do...your **Personal Brand**.

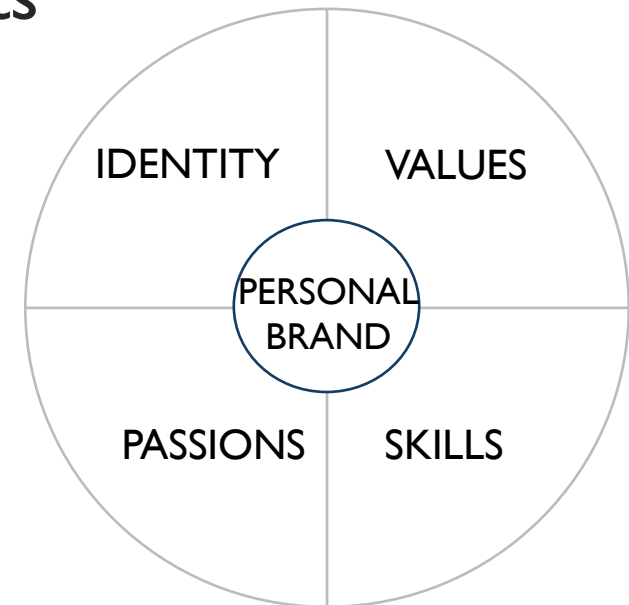


THE APPROACH

Personal Brand

Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room. – Jeff Bezos

- Self reflection, check in with family/friends/colleagues
- Personality assessments
- Stay true to your brand
- Revise as you grow



Source:
Dr. Jeanita Pritchett, NIST
Personal Branding

WHERE AND WHEN

Seek Networking Opportunities

- Meetings
- Informal gatherings
- Team building events
- Classes/Seminars
- Professional organizations, networking groups



NEXT LEVEL

Informational Interviews

- I-on-I
- You initiate or allies, advocates, mentors
- Information only, not asking for anything
- Low stress, enjoyable conversation





MAINTAIN

Maintain Your Network For Years:

- Use all your communication tools, including email, phone, coffee dates, social gatherings, and handwritten notes
- Look for ways you can help your contacts with professional and personal challenges

Don't:

- Go overboard on social media. Be strategic.
- Brag about your accomplishments
- Kill yourself trying to network with everyone you've ever met

**ACTION PLANNING
FOR NETWORKING**

- 
- ACTION PLANNING
FOR NETWORKING**





Submit an event survey!

https://survey.nist.gov/jfe/form/SV_4JIS3BchoaRvkrQ



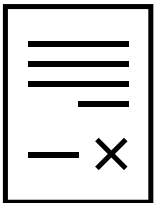
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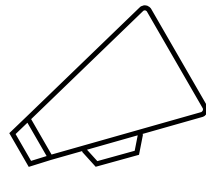


Call for Commitments



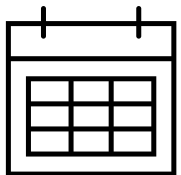
Submit a Proclamation

Official statements from governments, leadership, or schools.



Spread Awareness

Share career kits, NICE Framework tools, & engage via social media platforms.



Host an Event

Career fairs, open houses, webinars, workshops, or job shadowing.



Classroom Speaking

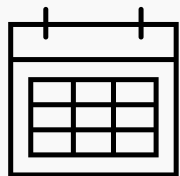
Present at panels or guest lecture on cyber career pathways.

Pledge Your Support!

Add your activity to the event map and help spark the future cybersecurity workforce!

nist.gov/ccw-event-activity-portal

CCW Events & Activities



2026 Cybersecurity Career Week event held by SANS in coordination with NICE

Tuesday, September 22, 2026 | 2:30 - 6:00 PM ET
Location: U.S. Capitol Visitors Center, SVC 212-10
**Register by Sept 18*

Networking Like a Leader: Building Authentic Connections That Create Opportunities
October 14, 2026 | 1:00 - 2:00 PM ET



Challenge: Six Day #mycyberjob Media Challenge

October 19-24, 2026

X, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and other
Tag: @NISTCyber



**X Chat: NIST Chat #CyberCareerChat
#CyberCareerWeek #MyCyberJob**

October 19, 2026 | 12:00 - 12:30 PM ET



Breaking Into Cybersecurity: Real Stories from Recent Graduates (Webinar)

October 20, 2026 | 1:00 - 2:00 PM ET



NICE Webinar: Helping to Chart the Course - Unlocking Student Pathways into Cybersecurity Careers

October 21, 2026 | 1:00 - 2:00 PM ET



Cyber Career Realities Revealed: Panel Across NICE Framework Work Role Categories

October 22, 2026 | 1:00 - 2:00 PM ET

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NICE Webinar Series

- ❖ Helping to Chart the Course - Unlocking Student Pathways into Cybersecurity Careers

October 21, 2026, 1:00-2:00PM ET

- ❖ Breaking into Cyber: Gateway Roles and the Skills that Matter

December 2, 2026, 2:00-3:00PM ET



