

The Connection Playbook

Most job opportunities don't come from cold applications – they come through connections. Networking isn't about asking for favors; it's about building authentic, professional relationships that grow over time.

When you reach out, be intentional:

- Respect the other person's time.
- Be clear about what you're asking.
- Offer value where you can.

A Clear Framework for Reaching Out

Here's a straightforward structure to follow:

1. Acknowledge Their Expertise

Start by explaining why you're reaching out to them specifically. Demonstrate that you've done your research and that you respect their experience.

 **Example:**

"Hi Alex, I heard you on a panel about accessible design, and your perspective on inclusive onboarding really stuck with me."

2. Offer Something Useful

Networking is a two-way street. Find a small, thoughtful way to contribute – whether it's sharing a relevant article, offering help at an event, or simply showing support.

 **Example:**

"I recently came across a case study on onboarding accessibility. Let me know if you'd like the link – it made me think of your talk."

3. Ask a Focused Question

Avoid vague requests like "Can I pick your brain?" Be specific about what you want to learn. Clear questions make it easier for someone to give meaningful advice.

 **Example:**

"I'm working on my first UX portfolio and would love your advice on how to frame non-UX work in a case study. How did you approach this early in your career?"


4. Make It Easy to Respond


Offer flexible options – like responding by email or setting up a brief call – so they can choose what works best for them.


 **Example:**

"If it's easier, I can send a short summary of my background and three questions over email. Or I'd be happy to schedule a quick call if you prefer."

After They Respond: How to Build the Relationship

 **Thank them with specifics** – show how their advice helped you take action.

 **Follow up thoughtfully** – keep them updated if relevant, but avoid bombarding them with messages.

 **Focus on value** – relationships built on respect can lead to mentorship, referrals, or future opportunities.

A single thoughtful conversation can unlock unexpected opportunities. Show up with clarity, respect, and a genuine curiosity to learn.

Email Networking Template

Hi [Name],

I recently [*heard you speak / read your article / saw your work*] [*brief description of where and why it stood out*]. I really appreciated [*specific insight or takeaway you found valuable*].

If it's helpful, I [*mention something small you can offer – e.g., share a resource, support an event, offer relevant help*].

I'm [*short sentence about your situation – e.g., transitioning into UX design*] and would love your advice on [*specific topic you're seeking guidance on – e.g., building case studies with non-UX work*].

If you're open to it, I'm happy to [*give options: send a quick email summary, schedule a 15-minute call, or whatever is easiest for you*].

Thanks so much for considering it – I truly appreciate your time.

Best,

[Your Name]

[*Your LinkedIn profile link or portfolio link if relevant*]

Example: Using the Email Template in Action

Subject: Quick Question on UX Portfolio Framing

Hi Alex,

I recently heard you speak at the Pivot UX Careers panel, and your advice on building a portfolio with real-world, imperfect projects really stuck with me. It made the whole process feel more approachable.

I just read an article on showcasing non-traditional UX work that reminded me of your talk – happy to send it over if you're interested.

I'm currently transitioning into UX from a background in nonprofit operations and would love your advice on framing non-UX work in early case studies.

If you're open to it, I'm happy to send a quick email summary or schedule a 15-minute call, whichever is easier for you.

Thanks so much for considering it – I really appreciate your time and insights.

Best,
Denisa Vlasache



LinkedIn Connection Request Template

Hi [Name], I'm [Your Name], a [your current role or transition info]. I really enjoyed your [talk/article/etc.] on [specific topic]. Would love to connect and learn more about your insights on [specific topic].

Example: Using the LinkedIn Template in Action

Hi Alex, I'm Denisa, a UX newbie. I really enjoyed your talk on building portfolios. Would love to connect and learn more about your approach to showcasing non-UX work.