



Career Resources

Kickstart Your Networking Guide 2025



This material is designed as supplementary reading material for New Arrivals from Ireland.

New Arrivals have a broad range of qualifications, knowledge and experience in many functional disciplines. Certain guidelines may fit your profile, others may not. Ultimately, it is your choice to select the guidelines that best fit your situation and design interview answers that best represent you in the marketplace. Note that employment processes in Canada may be different than what you have experienced in the past.

Acknowledgements: This guide has been developed by Rhonda McDowell, I/CAN Career Resources.

www.irishcanadianimmigrationcentre.org
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NETWORKING: THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF YOUR JOB SEARCH PROCESS

Networking will be one of the most significant things you do to gain employment in Canada.

In Canada 80-85% of positions are filled through the 'hidden job market'.

This means job opportunities are routinely shared with existing contacts, through mutual connections with positions filled by internal candidates, those recommended by current/past employees and mutual connections as well as candidates put forward by recruiters.

Networking is a proven way for employers and recruiters to minimize the risks involved in hiring. It enables them to attract and screen applicants whose skills and work ethic can be more easily vouched through their existing professional or personal networks.

Your **willingness** and your **ability** to network is often the key to determining your level of success in getting work and growing your career in Canada. There is a direct link between networking and accessing the hidden job market that sets you up for opportunities that would not ordinarily be available to you.

Networking is a must in Canada and your job search activities should reflect this. The Irish Community is well established in Canada. There are many ways to kickstart your networking.



HOW DO I KICKSTART MY NETWORKING?

- Join the [Ireland-Canada Chamber of Commerce](#) if there is a branch in your city.
- Open a Linked-In Profile – keep it relevant and up to date.
- [Join our Linked-In Employment Mentorship Group.](#)
- Attend Irish community events—tell people the kind of job you are interested in. Let them know you want to expand your network in your city/province and are open to introductions they can make on your behalf.
- Join a 'Meet-Up' in your sector, e.g. Accounting Meetups of Toronto, Engineers without Borders Vancouver. At these events you will meet people in your field. They may know of companies that are hiring (don't discount the hidden/internal job market).
- Listen to our employment podcasts including:
 - [PODCAST: You want me to what?!? Networking basics: what you need to know](#)
 - [PODCAST: The Irish Advantage—building your network in Canada: Ian Kinsella, Morgan McKinley](#)
- Attend our FREE weekly, career resources webinar. Follow us on social for registration link.

- Consider if volunteering might open up opportunities for you and expand your network. Check out our [Volunteering in Canada Guide](#) for tips.
- LinkedIn is widely used in Canada by recruiters, hiring teams and job seekers, check out [Moving2Canada Being Successful with LinkedIn Article](#)
- Go for Coffee: Irish who have themselves moved before you, want to help. Offer to take someone out for coffee or better still ask if you can bring coffee to their office to pick their brain for 15 minutes. What the Irish call picking your brain is sometimes called an **information interview or information meeting** in Canada. Don't let the name put you off, chances are you have done similar in Ireland through your professional network or personal circle.

WHERE CAN I NETWORK?

Places to get you started include:

<u>Toronto</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irish in Toronto social WhatsApp group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girlies in the 6ix - follow the group on Facebook and on Instagram 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce Toronto (ICCTO) - New arrivals' membership just \$25. Visit Here 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetup Toronto - meetups for just about every sector, Visit Here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toronto Public Library - Newcomer Services, Visit Here
<u>Vancouver</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ireland – Canada Chamber of Commerce Vancouver (ICCCV) Individual membership \$50.00 	Visit Here Visit - Membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulate General of Ireland Vancouver. Usually the 1st Thursday of each month the consulate is the location for ICCCV breakfast networking event. 	Visit Here Visit news and events Here
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetup Vancouver 	Visit Here
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vancouver Public Library 	Visit Here
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled Immigrant Info Centre 	Visit Here

Calgary		Edmonton	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Irish Cultural Society of Calgary Visit Here 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irish Sports and Social Society Visit Here 	
Ottawa			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce in Ottawa, Visit Here 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irish in Ottawa Guide – Moving2Canada, Visit Here 	
Montreal			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ireland Canada Chamber of Commerce in Montreal, Visit Here 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irish in Montreal Guide – Moving2Canada, Visit Here 	
Sector Specific Links and Events			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Navigate the food and hospitality industry, Visit Here 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), National voice of Nursing in Canada for regulated Nurses, Visit Here 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Morgan McKinley, Visit Here 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canada Ireland Foundation “network Ireland’ events, Visit Here 	

WHAT IS AN INFORMATION MEETING/INTERVIEW?

An information meeting is a networking activity you should use as a newcomer. Although not a job interview it is a prime opportunity to make an impression on someone who is already established in a company, profession, or a community of interest to you. Initiating requests for information meetings, setting up mutually agreeable logistics, and following through are avenues for you to demonstrate your professionalism and actively showcase your skills. Make it easy for the person to meet you.

PRACTICAL TIPS TO MAKE A POSITIVE IMPRESSION BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER AN INFORMATION MEETING

1. Contact people in your profession or in a workplace of interest. Remember, starting with those from or affiliated to the Irish community will ease you into this type of networking activity.
2. Expand your networking beyond the immediate Irish Community to include those in your industry of interest, those with similar interests etc.
3. Initiate contact asking for 15 – 20 minutes of their time for example: *I am new to Canada and welcome getting your input on the [industry ABC or Irish community in City/Province].*

4. Keep the time circumscribed so that the individual knows you are asking for just a fraction their time. Respect their time and schedule.
5. If you have mutual connections or companies in common it is good to generally mention that. Example: *I see we have some mutual connections in common.*
6. If a mutual connection is willing to make an introduction take them up on it and have them copy you into the intro.
7. Have a few sentences ready to share with your mutual connection to make it easy for them to copy and paste into the email introduction. They will more readily help if they know you can provide this.
8. You pick up the introduction once it has been made, thank your mutual connection and take it from there.
9. If using a platform such as LinkedIn, ask for the person's email address then correspond by email.
10. Ask for information meetings with those that you've met at networking events, get their contact details and follow up. Prioritize who you want to meet yet do not be closed off to meeting only those with the same role title as you – expand those who you meet with and it will widen options for you.
11. Before reaching out get clear on what will work for you logistically e.g. timings, **meeting in-person can make a more long-lasting positive impression.**
12. Be flexible, they may have a full schedule. Make it easy for them to meet you.
13. Offer 2-3 concrete dates, ask if any are available yet mention you are open to alternatives as per their schedule.
14. If you are offering a video call option, be prepared to follow through with the meeting link and invitation but give them the option of setting it up if that's what they want.
15. As the person who initiated the meeting, consider you are the host, be professional, courteous and prepared to direct the flow of conversation.
16. If they ask for it share your resume with them, take a copy with you when meeting in-person and if online send a copy by email.
17. If you are new to information meetings the person you meet with likely has experience. It's ok to mention this is one of your first information meetings and networking activities in [City/Province].
18. Be conversational and professional – be clear and concise.
19. **Ask questions—don't ask for a job.** Ask specific questions about your shared sector, ask for opinions on your resume, ask about upcoming networking events. You could ask if they know anyone who would be good for you to connect with and if you build a rapport, perhaps they will be open to introducing you to some

of their contacts. Ask them how do you find [Irish/Role Title] in your city in your sector?

20. Be prepared and ready to sharing about yourself. Be friendly and professional, make appropriate disclosure.
21. Do you have a specific ask beyond the 15 minutes? e.g. connect on LinkedIn, introduction to person XYZ, guest invite to event ABC.
22. Thank them for their time in a follow up email. If you promised information provide it and if they were to take any steps say you look forward to hearing from them on A, B, C in your follow up email.

Useful tip: Send a thank you note. It speaks to your professionalism. It is courteous and respectful, someone who when introduced to their network would reflect well on them. An email is a great option, better yet send the person a thank you card in the mail. You will stand out from the crowd and make a lasting impression!

Useful tip: An information meeting is typically 1:1 although it is not limited to this. As long as the person you are meeting with agrees, a group meeting could be a good option if you know one or two other people with a similar interest in the industry. This is a great way to build your confidence if you are new to networking. If opting to meet as a group be sure to prepare, know what you are looking to get out of the conversation as a group, take the space you need individually to share your skills and job targets. Show up and collaborate.

CONSIDER REFERRAL PROGRAMS WHEN YOU NETWORK

In Canada employee referral programs are widely used to source credible candidates. These programs form part of the 'hidden job market', the networking toolkit, and provide a 'trust mark' that is central to being successful in Canada. If you don't know they exist, you are missing out on job opportunities.

Tap into hidden opportunities often and early by:

- asking those you network and socialize with if there is a referral program in their workplace and learn how they operate.
- being proactive, ask professional and personal contacts to refer you for positions they think you could be a good match for.
- following through, if those you speak to do not know whether there is a referral program, ask if they could find out. It will benefit YOU AND THEM to know this!
- research companies that operate in Europe and North America, the referral process could be set up to accept suggestions from employees based abroad.

KNOW YOUR VALUE

As a newcomer it is easy to position those already established in your new city as being a more valuable connection than you. Yes, they may have more contacts than you, more Canadian experience and local knowledge. This is why they are a great person to connect with. BUT it is just as important to remember your value.

- Get used to telling your story.
- Know what your job targets are and share them with those you meet.
- Have a call to action – what are you asking from the person?
- Know what you can offer to the person you are meeting with e.g. a fresh international perspective, knowledge, connections outside of Canada, questions that spark ideas for them, someone they can reach out to in the future.

Remember – networking is the art of connecting, holding conversation, listening, and being reciprocal. It is important to practice these skills as a newcomer and to continue networking once established in Canada. A good networker is someone who is consistent, who follows up, and who can build rapport with those they meet.

Know that not everyone will be a connection for you. Choose how to prioritize, initiate and recognize where you sit in the circle of others. Importantly who is in your core circle/network? Who is your ally? Who is an acquaintance? Who is a prospective connection? Who is a possible future employer?

Consider using '**Networking Circles**' as a concrete approach to networking in a way that is manageable and sustainable in the short-term and long-term. If networking circles is a new term for you do an online search for more information.

Network, network, network!