



Talent
MATCH

Tourism and Hospitality Networking Guide for Students in British Columbia

Building connections in your field of study is a great way to find a work term—and to prepare for graduation.

Talent MATCH's [How to Find Your Own Work Placement](#) guide outlines some of the most effective ways to begin building these connections: *Networking, Volunteering, Informational Interviews, Mentorship, Work Proposals, and Job Shadowing*. This guide takes a closer look at the basics of networking specific to students who are interested in working in the Tourism and Hospitality sector in BC.

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Tips for Effective Networking

Networking involves meeting and building relationships with others who share your profession, industry, or interests to exchange ideas, information, and resources. It can take place in a variety of in-person or online spaces. A great network can be useful in your job search, connect you to trends and opportunities in your field, and introduce you to like-minded people who may be future colleagues or supervisors. A few things to remember as you begin building your network:

Authenticity is best

At its core, networking is about building relationships. Take a sincere interest in the people you talk to and the work they are doing.

Talk to everyone

If you are an event coordinator, don't just talk to other event coordinators. If you're interested in tourism marketing, look beyond other tourism marketing professionals. Opportunities for collaboration and referrals down the line are often found where you least expect them. As you build your network, don't just reach out to established professionals. It's worth networking with peers as well as those you admire—and those who may admire you!

Have your networking tools ready to go

Practice your pitch so you can easily explain who you are, what you are studying, and what type of work you would like to do. Prepare your portfolio and make it convenient for new connections to see examples of your work.

Do your research

Always prepare for a networking meeting, even if it's informal. Know about the audience of the event or the specific person you want to meet.

Networking is a two-way street

The relationships that you build should be positive and mutually beneficial. Invite others in and share what you know!

Follow up

Send a message to your new contacts. Thank them for any time, advice, or referrals they have offered.

Networking Online

Online networking is an increasingly significant avenue for making connections. Social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and other platforms have made it easier than ever to meet new people. A few things to consider as you begin building your network online:



Polish your profile

Establish a professional presence online by updating your social media and other online profiles with relevant details. Adding a picture puts a face to your name and helps personalize your profile. Delete any past posts which may be construed as controversial.



Build your network

Find people to connect with by joining groups. Follow people whose work you admire or who share similar professional interests. There are many private Facebook groups for women, non-binary, LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC professionals in tourism. If you are a member of an equity-seeking community, ask around in general groups to be added to these private groups.



Engage with your content

Actively post and share relevant information, articles, and events with your online network. Show them your passion for working in the tourism and hospitality field.



Attend online events

These days, there is no shortage of virtual networking events. Familiarize yourself with Zoom and other online conferencing platforms. If you feel comfortable, keep your camera on, ask questions, and engage in the chat.

Where to Network

Joining a professional association is a great way to expand your networking opportunities. Many offer student memberships, which include access to online networking sessions and conferences. They also send industry publications and regular newsletters to promote professional events. Most also maintain public-facing online groups, allowing for plenty of digital networking as well.

Key tip: Have fun! Professional associations can also point you in the direction of informal industry gatherings. Go to the parties. Mingle after events. Discover where people in your industry like to hang out and start socializing!

Below is a compilation of some of the provincial associations affiliated with tourism and hospitality that may be worth checking out.



General

- [go2HR](#)
- [Tourism Industry Association of BC](#)
- [Tourism Industry Association of Canada](#)
- [Travel British Columbia](#)



Food and Beverage

- [Alliance of Beverage Licensees \(ABLE\) of BC](#)
- [BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association](#)
- [British Columbia Chefs' Association](#)
- [Food Service Professionals Network](#)
- [International Association of Culinary Professionals](#)
- [International Food Service Executives Association](#)
- [National Restaurant Association](#)
- [Restaurants Canada](#)

Accommodation



- [British Columbia Hotel Association](#)
- [British Columbia Lodging and Campgrounds Association](#)



Special Interest

- [Colour the Trails](#)
- [WORTH Association \(Women of Recreation, Tourism, and Hospitality\)](#)

Adventure and Cultural Tourism, Recreation, and Attractions



- [Association of Canadian Mountain Guides](#)
- [BC Snowmobile Federation](#)
- [Boating BC Association](#)
- [Canada West Ski Areas Association](#)
- [Canadian Avalanche Association](#)
- [Canadian Recreational Yachting Association](#)
- [Canoe Kayak BC](#)
- [Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC](#)
- [HeliCat Canada](#)
- [Wilderness Alert](#)

Talent MATCH and go2HR

Visit [Talent MATCH for Students](#) for additional resources that will help you with your networking efforts, including our [How to Find Your Own Work Placement Guide](#) which features scripts for reaching out to new contacts and funding information for potential employers.

Talent MATCH partner, [go2HR](#), also regularly updates their event calendar with additional networking opportunities for students looking to make new professional contacts online and in-person.

