

OTTAWA CONNECTOR

Building an inclusive Ottawa community
one professional connection at a time

CONNECTEE TOOLKIT



embracing diversity / apprécier la diversité
building community / forger la communauté

**national
CONNECTOR
program**

Fondation
Trillium
de l'Ontario



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WELCOME

Congratulations! You have been selected to participate in the Ottawa Connector Program.

The Connector Program is a formalized networking initiative to help internationally educated professionals broaden their network through meeting one-on-one with established business leaders who work in the same field. This meeting is an opportunity to discuss how your education and skills can be applied in Ottawa, and to learn more about the Ottawa labour market.

The goal of the Connector Program is to enhance your networking skills and current job search strategy. **There is no guarantee you will find employment through the program;** however, it is important to consider that each connection could lead to a job interview. You are encouraged to continue your job search while participating in the program as this will improve the chances of finding employment.

You will be matched with a “Connector” through a screening process based on your experience and qualifications typically within 2-3 weeks’ time. Once a match has been made, the project coordinator will introduce you (the Connectee) and the Connector via email. You are expected to follow up with the Connector to determine a time and location to meet. Connectors are people in our community who have extensive networks and are willing to make introductions. Connectors know people through social, cultural, professional, and economic circles, and have a special gift for bringing people together who work or live in different circles.

During your meeting, the Connector should be able to provide you with a minimum of **three referrals** within their network. Those referrals are encouraged to provide you with another one to three referrals, and so on and a basic network of business leaders will be created.



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CONNECTEES



For the purposes of our program, after two rounds of referrals, that should be sufficient to have broadened your contacts officially through Connector. However, the potential contacts are limitless, so it is up to you to maintain your networks, continue meeting new people, and make the most of your informational meetings.

CONNECTOR PROGRAM CONNECTEE CHECKLIST

BEFORE BEING MATCHED WITH A CONNECTOR

- Discuss your expectations and goals of the Ottawa Connector Program with the Project Coordinator
- Read the Connectee Toolkit and prepare for your initial meeting with your connection
- Contact an Employment counsellor for a resume critique and discuss other career related needs – A resume is an important communication piece when talking with people about career development. You should consider sending your resume to your Connector so that the Connector has a better understanding of you and your background
- Prepare your job ready resume and attain a LinkedIn account

Please note, if Connectees have not updated their resume and uploaded it onto the Ottawa Connector Program Online Platform, they will not be introduced to a Connector.

BEFORE THE CONNECTOR MEETING

- Complete your career goals worksheet to the best of your ability
- Make initial contact with your Connector via email or telephone



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CONNECTEES

- Schedule your Connector Meeting on Ottawa Connector Program Online Platform. Please enter the meeting date and time.
- Research the Connector and the company they work for
- Create a list of questions to ask the Connector
- Consider printing business cards
- Ensure your LinkedIn profile is up to date

AFTER THE CONNECTOR MEETING

- Send a thank-you note/email to the Connector
- Complete the meeting on the Connector Program User Platform
- Perform the participation survey a maximum of two days after meeting with your connection
- Add your Connector on LinkedIn (optional, but highly recommended)
- Conduct any necessary follow-ups as needed (e.g. follow-up with referrals provided)

ON-GOING

- Take the initiative and be **proactive** in contacting and following up your connections.
- Make sure you also have an employment counsellor for job leads and to assist with employment questions. This is outside of the scope of our program.
- Stay abreast with and attend Connector Program workshops and events



CONNECTOR MEETING TIPS FOR CONNECTEES

MAKING INITIAL CONTACT WITH YOUR CONNECTOR

- Research the company the Connector works for and check out the location on a map.
- Consider some locations near their office that may be an appropriate meeting place.
- Provide a time, date, and location that might work for the meeting. Providing specific dates and times allow the Connector to look at their calendar and either agrees or provides alternative times and dates that work for them.

BEFORE THE MEETING

- **Research the company and Connector in advance.** Go to the company website and read about what they do. Be ready to ask questions. LinkedIn is also a great tool for this research.
- **Prepare a list of questions to ask.** It is important to bring enough questions to fill a 1 hour meeting. Sometimes, it is helpful to practice asking these questions to friends or family members. Also make sure you start with questions that allow you and your Connector to get to know each other and lead up to questions asking about job opportunities.
- **Be realistic.** It is unlikely you will receive all the information wanted from one person in the span of one hour. Limit the number of questions to five or six and ensure that they are focused and cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”.
- **Know yourself better.** Take some time to understand who you are and where you want to go.
- **Practice your elevator speech.** Do you know what you are going to say if asked “Tell me about yourself?” See Appendix C: Appendix C – Top 5 Suggestions for Introducing Yourself)
- **Confirm the meeting time, place and date.** It is always a good habit to confirm the meeting a few days beforehand.



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CONNECTEES



- **Be on time.** Be conscious of the Connector's time, as they are taking time out of their schedule to meet with you.
- **Turn off all electronic devices:** It is easy to forget this if your cell is usually on so please do remember to put it on silent before you meet the connector.
- **Spell check every single correspondence and remember a bit more formal is preferred.** You will be corresponding with the Connector to set the time and place. Take as much care in this correspondence as you did with previous cover letters for your job search. Remember to use proper titles and closing (Best Regards, Sincerely) and then adjust formality slightly as needed.

DURING THE MEETING

- **Dress professional and bring a copy of your resume.** Part of marketing yourself is looking professional, so dress as if you were going to an interview (suit, blazer, tie, etc.).
- **Take notes.** Bring a notebook and pen with you, to write down any important information or referrals given.
- **Maintain eye-contact and be appreciative.** Be sure to shake hands in the beginning and at the end of the meeting. If your religion forbids shaking hands with the opposite gender, then please mention that point. After the meeting, be sure to thank your Connector for their time and advice.
- **Be professional.** While there are no promises, this connector could be a potential employer so make sure to keep a positive, professional attitude. You may have had a difficult time making connections and/or finding work, but a connector meeting works best when you are upbeat and you focus on the present and future opportunities. Also it is only natural



OTTAWA CONNECTOR

CONNECTEES



that discussing general information about your personal lives may cross over a little bit; however, the focus should be on industry information and finding networking opportunities.

- **Give the Connector time:** Make the first part of the interview solely about the Connector.
- **Be respectful of their time:** Unless suggested by the Connector, it is important to keep to the time frame agreed upon for the meeting.
- **The most important part of the process**

*****Could you provide me with three other industry contacts that I could meet?**

If your connector does not suggest this by the end of the meeting, please remember to make this important request. They may provide referrals right away or choose to return to their office to send you those names. If two weeks pass with no referrals, contact your Project Coordinator to discuss!

SAMPLE QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK

- I have done a bit of research on your organization by looking over the website, but I am wondering if you can explain in more detail what your role is within the organization?
- About the work culture within their organization, and in this industry in Ottawa. (i.e., do people work in teams or more individually? Is the office formal or informal?)
- How can I learn more about workplace policies and corporate expectations of employee's performance?
- What do employers look for in a successful candidate in this industry?
- What is the training process normally like in this industry once I get a job?
- What do you think my biggest challenges are in my job search, and how can I overcome these challenges?



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CONNECTEES

- What kind of training or background is necessary for this type of work?
- What skills are most valued in this profession?
- What do you like most/ least about this job? What kind of stress do you deal with?
- For you, what part of this job is most satisfying?
- What advice would you have for someone like me, who is considering this field?
- Can you recommend any professional journals I could read about this field?
- What organizations would you recommend I join?
- With what you know about my education, skills, and experience, what other fields or jobs would you suggest I research further?

AFTER THE MEETING

- **Thank you note.** After the meeting, it is essential to send a thank you email within 24 hours, thanking the connector for their time and commitment to passing on referrals to you, and summarize one key take away.
- **Follow up with the Referrals.** It is important to contact your referrals within 1-3 business days of receiving them so the idea is still fresh in their minds.
- **Follow up with the Connector.** Add them on LinkedIn. Either send a personalized message with the invitation, or in the Thank -you note, indicating that you will be sending a LinkedIn request. Let the Connector know how and when you intend on contacting those referrals.
- **Online platform.** Make sure to fill out the program survey within 2 days of meeting with your Connector. Also make sure to update the system with any new connections you have made.
- **Keep in touch.** Keep us updated on your networking and job search process and do let us know when you find work.



OTTAWA CONNECTOR

CONNECTEES



NETWORKING EVENT TIPS FOR CONNECTEES

The Connector Program offers opportunities to meet with other Participants and Connectors in the program via various networking events. After attending such a networking event, you may have three or four cards of people you met.

- At the end of the event, make a few notes on the back of the card to help you remember the person; what you talked about, and what resonated with you about them.
- Be a Connector! Look at this new contact as someone that you could introduce to your other contacts. That being said, it is important to get permission from the new contact prior to introducing them to someone else.
- Try and follow up with the new contact within 48 hours of the event. Send them an email, give them a call, or invite them on LinkedIn.
- When following up, be clear about what you want. If you would like to hold a face-to-face meeting or informational interview, be clear as to why.
- Be prepared to hear NO to an invitation to connect further. People are busy. Listen to the reasons they are saying no.
- If they say YES, like the initial connector meeting, show genuine interest in who they are and what they do. Remember that not everyone you meet will end up as an ongoing relationship. Sometimes people become just contacts. Do not expect everyone met to become a mentor or friend.



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SUGGESTED EMAIL SAMPLES FOR CONNECTEES IN CONNECTOR PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION TO YOUR CONNECTOR

Hello Jane,

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me for an Information Interview.

As an International Finance Professional, I have obtained a Masters of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Economics. I worked for more than four years in the retail industry as a Financial Assistant and Marketing Manager. Over the past months, I have conducted research into the labour market within Ottawa and have identified the banking industry as my focus for employment.

I believe that meeting with you will help me better understand the career paths available to me in the banking sector here in Ottawa.

Would you be able to meet me at the location of ###, on MM-DD, at ## o'clock?

I look forward to meeting with you.

Best Regards,





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Hello Ryan,

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me for an Information Interview.

I arrived in Ottawa 6 months ago and have been trying to build my professional network. My background is in teaching and curriculum development. I have a Master's Degree in Education and am fluently bilingual. I have 10 years of experience in course development and e-learning. I have never worked in corporate training, but I am curious to learn more about it.

I am certain that meeting with you will help me better understand the career paths available in the education and training sectors here in Ottawa.

Would you be able to meet me at the location of ###, on MM-DD, at ## o'clock?

I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

ON THANKING YOUR CONNECTOR FOR MEETING WITH YOU

Thank the person for taking time to meet with you, tell them specifically what you enjoyed about your discussion and some things that you learned. Let them know it was a great opportunity and thank them again for the contacts they provided you with.



OTTAWA CONNECTOR

CONNECTEES

Dear _____,

I would like to thank you for taking time out of your day to meet with me; I really enjoyed our conversation about your organization and experiences within this industry. I learned more about what it takes to be successful in a career such as this and how to move forward to network with others in this field. Speaking with you was such a great opportunity, and I appreciate the additional contacts that you shared with me.

Sincerely,

ON REACHING THE CONTACTS YOUR CONNECTOR GAVE YOU

Email them first, to tell them who you are and what your profession is and that you are with the Ottawa Connector Program. If you have any relevant experience list that as well. Let them know who gave you their contact information, tell them why you're contacting them and let them know you would like to meet with them briefly if they are interested. If so, set a date and time to meet, make sure to verify with them beforehand.

Dear _____,

I'm a participant in the Ottawa Connector Program and a recent (place field of study here) graduate from (place school here). And/or I have experience with _____ and _____. I met with _____ recently and he/she gave me your contact information as (name of Connector) thought you'd be someone I should meet with. I'm trying to



OTTAWA
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build my professional network with people in my field and I was wondering if you would have thirty minutes to meet with me in the next few weeks so I could learn more about your organization. The opportunity to expand my industry contacts in Ottawa is greatly appreciated. Thank you very much and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely, _____

ON THANKING SUBSEQUENT REFERRALS

Dear _____,

It was a great pleasure meeting you yesterday for an information meeting. Thank you very much. Your insights were truly helpful. Our meeting was informative and extremely useful in helping me clarify various concerns regarding the xxx sector. Your experience and knowledge in this field is most impressive and encouraging.

I want to thank you again for taking the time from your busy schedule to meet with me. I will regularly follow up the websites you suggested for job leads and I hope to have a chance to meet with you again sometime.

I wish you good luck in your new plans to help the community.

Best regards,



USEFUL WEB LINKS

JOB SEARCH RESOURCES

-  [City of Ottawa](#)
-  [Immigration Ottawa](#)
-  [Employment Ontario 01 /
Employment Ontario 02](#)
-  [Employment Ontario Ottawa Network](#)
-  [Ottawa Services Provider](#)
-  [Hire Immigrants Ottawa](#)
-  [Ottawa Community Immigrant
Services Organization](#)
-  [Quintessential Careers](#)
-  [Business Insider](#)
-  [Labour Market Ottawa](#)
-  [Ottawa Public Library Career Services](#)
-  [Other](#)

LOCAL NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

-  [Ottawa Chamber of Commerce](#)
-  [Invest Ottawa](#)
-  [The Ottawa Network](#)
-  [Meetup](#)
-  [Women's Business Network](#)
-  [The Network of Black Business & Professional Women](#)
-  [Business Breakfast Club](#)
-  [Femprofessionals Ottawa](#)
-  [RockUrBiz](#)
-  [Business Network International](#)
-  [Eventbrite](#)



INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW



Link 01



Link 02



Link 03

NETWORKING TIPS

Keith Ferrazzi: Networking Tips



Video 01



Video 02



Video 03

ON-LINE NETWORKING



LinkedIn



EOLIO (online portfolio)

RESUMES, COVER LETTER, INTERVIEW PRACTICE, OR EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING



Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization



World Skills



Job skills workshop



The YMCA-YWCA National Capital Region



Community Employment Resource Center



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APPENDIXES

Appendix A – Deciding What Questions to Ask

To be effective in an informational interview, you need to be clear about the kind of information you are seeking. Below are some examples of questions that can be asked, and tips on how to focus the conversation.

○ If you want to gather information about a specific professional role/positon, consider asking:

- What are some of day to day tasks associated with the role/position?
- What are the top three skills needed for the role/position?
- Is this role/position specific to the company, or is a similar role/position found in different organizations?
- How is this role similar/different from comparable roles/positions in other organizations?
- What should I study, or where should studies be focused to enable moving into a similar role/position?
- Is there an entry level role/position that could be a stepping stone to this type of role/position?
- What have you learned from this role/position?
- What are some of the challenges associated with this role/position?

○ If you want to gather information about a specific industry, consider asking:

- Are there shared values among those individuals moving into this industry?
- What motivates you to stay in this industry?
- Is there additional training required of those individuals who enter into this industry?



- What experience and expertise is expected within this industry?
- Are there any unspoken expectations of people working in this industry?
- How does one remain current with industry specific information?
- How does one typically find employment in this industry?
- Are there any unique ways that people find roles within this industry?

○ If you want to gather information about a specific company, consider asking:

- Why did you decide to work for _____?
- In your opinion, how is this company different from its competitors?
- Do you feel optimistic about the future of _____?
- Have there been any recent changes to processes, business practices, or values at the company?
- What is the atmosphere within company/ department?
- How do you interact with your coworkers? Are you allowed to work autonomously?

○ If you want to gather information about someone's career or career progression/ path, consider asking:

- What interests and keeps you engaged about the work that you do?
- How/where did you start your career?
- What was a key point in your career path that brought you to where you are today?
- Looking back on your career, would you change anything?
- What do you foresee as the next step in your career progression?
- If you were to have taken an alternative path, what would it have been and what would you have been prepared to take on?
- What parts of your previous education and experience have helped you the most in your present position?



APPENDIX B – Setting Your Career Goals and Objectives: The First Step to Getting the Most Out of the Connector Program

The following document was designed to assist Connectees in the Connector Program to prepare for their meeting with the Project Coordinator and the initial informational meeting with a Connector.

○ Defining career goals

Defining career goals is an important activity as it assists in establishing direction for your career and helps to focus on what you hope to achieve. Writing concrete goals will:

- Clarify your needs, wants and priorities;
- Provide direction and reference;
- Encourage the power of commitment and accountability;
- Increase motivation; and
- Celebrate your successes.

While very few people have clearly defined careers goals, doing so is an integral step of the profession's Connector Program's intake process. A well written goal will:

- Assist in identifying a potential Connector, one better matched to address your career aspirations;
- Provide focus for conversations and assist in communicating what information is being sought from the discussion;
- Create a great first impression with the Connector; and
- Provide a benchmark to help monitor success, growth and development.



The most important elements when setting your goals is that they are **specific, concrete** and **realistic!** For example, while the goal of “I want to find a fulfilling accounting job in three months” is definitely actionable and time bound, it does not provide the core details needed to help us pair you with the most suitable Connector. Additional information is required, such as:

- What type of job are you looking for?
- What position?
- What industry?
- What companies?

Below are some examples of poorly written goals and objectives that have been rewritten:

POORLY WRITTEN GOALS/OBJECTIVES	WELL WRITTEN GOALS/OBJECTIVES
To find a job	I am uncertain of the best career path to pursue. In the next month, I would like to obtain information on types of careers available as an ABC professional, specifically within [industry, not-for-profit and government].
Be a great ABC professional	Within three months, identify at least one operational inefficiency associated with my current position.
Expand my network/ network more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within three months, improve my networking skills to the point that I am comfortable and confident introducing myself to at least five different people at the next networking event attended. • Over the next six month, expand my network to include three professionals work in [specific industry] so that I can better understand the opportunities, demands, and career potential of that sector.



POORLY WRITTEN GOALS/OBJECTIVES	WELL WRITTEN GOALS/OBJECTIVES
Gain industry knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the next year, develop a greater understanding of business acumen within the ABC sector in order to improve XYZ for the organization. Discover the competencies are required to progress from a (lower level position) into a (higher level position) with a small public company within five years?
Improve my communication and interpersonal skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within the three months of holding the informational interview, discover three tools or resources that will improve my communication skills

Worksheet – Setting Your Professional Career Goals

The following worksheets have been provided to not only help draft more robust goals and objectives, but allow better evaluation of the results.

STEP 01

Self-awareness – Know Yourself

There are many factors to consider when setting out a career plan or goal, and the foundation starts with self-awareness. Self-awareness will help you understand your skills, interests, strengths, values, motivators, competency gaps and work environment preferences. It involves answering questions such as:

- What are my interests?



- What kind of skills do I have?
- What are my work-related values?
- What is my work style?
- What are my ambitions?
- What would I like to be able to do that I can't do now?
- Why do I want to do it?
- What do I find difficult or challenging?
- What do I worry about?
- How would I like to be different six months from now?

STEP 02

Career Awareness – Understand Your Options

Understanding what options are available in the areas you are most interested in involves conducting research to expand your understanding and knowledge of potential career options. This research can be done through the Connector Program, the meetings you have with the Connector and through other network contacts.

Consider the following questions when trying to analyze the realities of a specific career path:

- What are the day-to-day activities and tasks?
- What qualifications are required for entry?
- What skills are required?
- What are the work environment and/or conditions?



- Are the values of this position aligned with my own?
- How will be position impact my current lifestyle?
- What are the financial realities and potential associated with the position?
- What are the future trends or outlook of the industry?
- Who are successful individuals within the industry?

STEP 03

Attainment – Understand What Success Looks Like

Recognizing not only what your goal will look like once it's attained, but also how you will feel when it is achieved, will provide greater insight into which goals are most important and why. Understanding how success will be defined will help set the framework for your goals. It involves answering questions such as:

- How will you know when the goal has been achieved?
- What evidence of progress toward achieving the goal can be collected?
- What are the emotional drivers behind the goal?
- How do you feel when you think about achieving the outcome?
- Do you believe in the goal?
- Do you have doubts? Can they be replaced with positive outlooks?
- What milestones should be celebrated along the way?
- On achieving the goal, what will you be able to do that you can't do now?
- What will you accomplish?
- After reaching your goal, what will you do differently?



Additional Tips and Resources:

- Talk to others who will provide honest feedback on your skills, strengths and weaknesses.
- Meet with an Employment Counsellor.
- Take personality assessments and/or interest inventories.
- Review job postings.
- Share your goals with someone.
- Review past performance reviews and evaluations.

Worksheet – Working with Your Connector to Develop Action Steps to Attain Your Goals

Answer the following questions to discover specific action steps that can be taken to assist in the achievement of goals, or to reaffirm actions already identified.

1. My goal is:
2. Where am I now?
3. What needs to be done to reach this goal?
4. What obstacles need to be overcome?
5. What solutions are available?
6. Action steps I can take to achieve the goal:
7. What can I do now that I couldn't do before?
8. How do I feel today regarding my goal?

APPENDIX C – Top 5 Suggestions for Introducing Yourself

By Eric Pye, Career Advisor

Whether interviewing or networking for a job or developing business or personal connections, sooner or later you have to introduce yourself. Self-introduction can be stressful as it creates a lasting first impression. As with other elements of interviews and meetings, preparation is key, and will help you avoid telling a rambling life story, doing a resume walk-through, or fumbling verbally as if this is the first time you've been asked to "Tell me about yourself."



Fortunately there's a simple formula for self-introduction, sometimes referred to as an elevator pitch. Imagine you're in an elevator, one-on-one with a senior executive of a company you'd like to do work for. You have 30-45 seconds to sell yourself, as the elevator ascends from the 1st to 30th floor. In that time, you want to succinctly and credibly present your background, unique skills and desired outcome, before the elevator doors open and your captive audience is lost. Here is one suggestion on how you could accomplish this for a job interview:

1 FORMULA: Elevator Pitch = Past + Present + Value Proposition + Future < 200 words

- **Past:** a sentence or two about where you grew up, your academic history, and past employment.

"I grew up in Africa and moved to Canada in my early teens. I went to high school and university in Ontario, and graduated with an Economics Degree from McMaster University. In my early career I worked as a consumer loans advisor in a bank."

- **Present:** a couple of sentences about your current work, education and accomplishments.

"Four years ago I transitioned into accounting, and now I'm a Cost Control Analyst with the City of Ottawa. "

- **Value Proposition:** describe a relevant project or set of skills that show you can make a difference. Your value proposition, or unique selling point (USP), should outline your capability and impact.

"In my role with the City, I recently helped create a new process for recording and reporting Recreation Department income that reduced input times for facility staff by 50%."



OTTAWA CONNECTOR

CONNECTEES



- **Future:** tell about the desired outcome from your meeting.

"I'm interested in advancing my career as a process accountant, broadening my organizational and analytical skills and using my CPA learning, while working towards a more senior accounting role."

Two common fears around elevator pitches are that they're too short, and that scripting makes you sound unnatural; however, keep in mind that a short introduction shows the ability to distill a lot of information into a manageable package, and "scripted" is better than "unprepared." For maximum impact.

2 Know what makes you credible. The building blocks of credibility are: Presence (eye contact, posture, composure), Dynamism (expression, voice, enthusiasm), Authenticity (natural language, trustworthiness) and Expertise (skill, knowledge, experience). Authenticity and Expertise are built into your script.

3 Practice. Deliver your pitch to a friend or in a mirror. Memorize the script, and focus on making a positive impact through your Presence and Dynamism.

4 Tailor your message. While it pays to have a script, be prepared to adjust to the situation and context. For example, your personal history may not be relevant, your desired outcome might change, or you may want to emphasize different skills and accomplishments from your work experience. Practice different scenarios, and be ready to change your delivery and message (or cut it completely if body language tells you your "executive" is unreceptive), eg. "I have an Economics Degree from McMaster University and have lived in Ottawa for six years.



OTTAWA CONNECTOR

CONNECTEES

I'm a Cost Control Analyst with the City of Ottawa. I recently created a process for recording and reporting Recreation income that reduced input times for facility staff by 50%. I wonder if we could meet for coffee so I can get your ideas and input on moving my career forward as a process accountant, while working towards a more senior accounting role."

5 **When you're done, stop talking.** After you've made your pitch, stop, smile, and let the person you're meeting decide whether to move the conversation forward or probe with a follow-up question.

As your introduction, prepared and delivered in a confident manner, will undoubtedly set you apart in networking and interviewing situations, begin working on your script and delivery today. You won't regret it!

If you have any questions please contact,
Jasmine Qi Project Coordinator, Connector
Program at (613) 725-5671 X 307
or jqi@ociso.org

Best of Luck!