Networking for Penn graduate students and postdocs

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Overview of career planning – where does networking fit in a job search?
What is networking and what are the benefits?
How do you network effectively?
Establishing and expanding networks
The ultimate networking tool - informational interviews
Q & A

Networking

Structure your job search - 3 steps

IDENTIFY your target job and long term career goals and TAKE ACTION in a job search
RESEARCH and explore market conditions, occupations, industries, and employers
ASSESS your work related values, skills, abilities, interests and personality

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What is networking?

Networking Fears and Myths

- I do not want to impose.
- I do not know what to say on the phone or in person.
- I do not feel comfortable asking others for help.
- I have nothing to offer in return.
- I will look bad because I don’t know what I want to do.
- I am shy and don’t like to approach people I don’t know.
- If it doesn’t result in a job prospect right away, it is not useful.

2-minute Icebreaker

- Find a partner
- Introduce yourselves
- Share with each other the most famous person that you know or with whom you have a connection. What is that connection?
2-minute Icebreaker

- How did you try to structure your introduction?
- What were your thoughts while being the listener during these introductions?
- What is the benefit of knowing about the most famous person your partner knows?

Networking is...

A mutual exchange of information
- It can be used to obtain or share information about career paths, industries, and fields
  - Looking for people who can help provide you with the missing piece of your career puzzle
  - Using their knowledge, contacts, connections, or recommendations
- Both a formal and an informal process
  - It is about building and maintaining relationships
  - If you have cultivated many friends, colleagues, clients, or collaborators, you are networking
  - If you have strategically used contacts to find information or new opportunities, you have already networked
- An effective way to access jobs
  - Where employers ask colleagues to “spread the word” through connections or recommend qualified candidates
  - Employee referral programs

How to Network?

Networking is an active pursuit—you can’t wait for networking to happen to you.
Effective networking includes:

- A **goal**
  - Looking for a specific job, information on career paths, new contacts, or to learn about industry trends?
- A cohesive and optimistic narrative about yourself
- A 30-60 second introduction, "Elevator Pitch"
- A structured plan for networking that you can build into your daily/weekly schedule
  - May not need this if you are "natural" networker.
  - Definitely need this if you are a hesitant networker.
  - It will help whatever type of networker you are.
  - Natural networkers tend to be good at finding what they have in common with others.

6 degrees of separation:

≥ 2 people on Earth can be linked through a chain of personal relationships no more than 6 people long.

Networking as a process:

- List of people to connect with
  - Prof. Henry
  - Mr. Chang
  - Ms. Rogers

  *Strategic approach*

  *Relationship building and follow-up*
Try to answer the "tell me about yourself" question
Your introduction should usually cover:
- Who are you?
- What is your background?
- What can/do you do? What makes you unique?
- Where are you headed or where are you right now?
- Some overall idea of your networking goals (so the person can help you)

Have an outline in mind so that you can structure your introduction effectively
- Practice with someone
- Be flexible and adaptable depending on the situation

Sample introduction

"My name is _____, I am currently completing my Master's program at the University of Pennsylvania, in ______. One of my recent projects was ______, using techniques such as ______. I have seen that your organization uses a similar approach for ______. I am very interested in applying my skills in this field. As I am nearing the end of my program, I am now actively looking for opportunities in ______. I found some information on your website, but I was wondering if you could tell me about the types of roles in your company that you think could best utilize my expertise."

Let's practice... again

- Turn to another neighbor and give a 60-second introduction about yourself

- Have your neighbor give their 60-second introduction to you
How did it go?

- Did it go well?
- What issues did you encounter?
- How might you address these issues?

Where to Network?

- Neighbors, friends and family
- Professors, graduate students
- Campus administrators
- Alumni
- Work supervisors and former colleagues
- Professional association members
- Student organization members or other clubs
- People you meet in social networking sites
- LinkedIn
- People you can meet in the “real world” (e.g., at conferences, seminars, volunteer activities, hairdressers)
Upcoming 2015 Career Fairs:

International Opportunities Fair  
Thursday, November 5th

NGO, Non-Profit and Government Career Forum  
(Washington, DC)  
Friday, November 13th

Nursing Career Day  
Friday, December 4th

Penn Alumni Online Community - QuakerNet

This database of Penn alumni allows for a really granular search including categories such as industry, major, degree, student groups, geographically, hobby or keyword

http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/networking/wheretolook.php
What Should You Say?

Imagine you are writing an email to a Penn contact through QuakerNet.

- They are in an organization that interests you, but not a career field that does.
- They are in a career field that interests you, but have a different background to yours.
- They have the same degree, same career field and are in an organization you are excited to join.
- MODIFY YOUR "ELEVATOR PITCH" to be a short email format.

Networking on LinkedIn:

Be active

1. Keep your profile updated.
2. Ask for people to give you recommendations.
   - These are mini 'reference letter style' highlights of your skills.
   - Ask for them directly, or by recommending others.
3. Join some groups.
   - You can all join the Penn Alumni Group to help you to link with more people.
   - Participate actively in group discussions – that will encourage people to visit your page (including recruiters).
4. Link with appropriate people – that's the point.
   - You can then see who they are connected with, and ask to be introduced to people of interest.

LinkedIn:

- more than 28,000 members in the Penn alumni group – postdocs can join too!
The most important question to ask

- "Is there anyone else that you know who you think would be good for me to connect with?"

- Ask contact if they can introduce you to new contacts
  - Linking with someone on LinkedIn allows you to see many of their contacts

- If not, ask "Can I mention that you referred me?"
  - This can increase the success of your referral experience

- Research new contacts so that you can identify mutual interests or other points for discussion

BUT....

Don't spend all of your time online, as this is a poor substitute for actual relationship building

Networking at academic and professional conferences

"We'd now like to open the floor to shorter speeches disguised as questions."
Conferences and seminars

- Priceless (for networking)...
- Consider a structured approach to getting the most out of them
- Speaking or poster presenting is obviously beneficial
- Look at conference schedule to plan activities
- Attend as many panels, discussions, workshops, and social events as possible, and use this time wisely
- Have networking goals

Sample goals for conferences

Being an active participant:
- Presenting your research via poster, presentation, panel
- Chatting with people from universities/organizations where you might want to work, to get some insight
- Introducing yourself to 5-10 new people (e.g., peers)
- Ask to join your prof/advisor/supervisor/mentor during social events/dinners
- Speaking with presenters in sessions you attend
  - Golden rule: try to ask one (thoughtful!) question at any research talk you attend – introduce yourself when asking it
  - Chat with organizing committee members during social events
  - Attending and volunteering to serve a role in national committees and groups - there are always committees!

Where you will meet important people

Where you would most expect

Then there's the coffee queue
After the conference

- Contact people whose presentations you could not attend and ask for any materials
- Follow-up with people you chatted with
  - See them as people in your network that need cultivating over time
  - Send thank you e-mails to anyone who specifically met with you or provided you with important information
  - Identify what was most helpful, and how you will use this information
  - DON'T FORGET: ask them if they can think of anyone else you should contact

Capitalizing on contacts:

now that you’ve found them, what are you supposed to do?

Hello…, so tell me about your work

Do we have to use these cans?

Informational Interviews

An informational interview is:

- A meeting with someone who does something you may like to do
- Not the place to ask “Can you help me get a job?”
- Can be a VERY effective component of the job search for graduate students
- Provides information needed to identify new possibilities and rule out others
- Learn about career paths, industries, organizations [and share your interests/qualifications/goals]
- Learning to speak the language of different industries and career fields
- Increasing number of contacts
- Speaking with professionals to learn more about possibilities, and what skills and experiences you will need to be successful
- See Career Services website:
  http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/undergrad/infointerviews.php

Informational Interviews & networking

- DON'T FORGET: ask them if they can think of anyone else you should contact
The job of job-searching

- Both short- and long-term strategies are needed for job searching.
  - Few of you will be lucky enough to be handed a job without looking or applying for one.
  - If you are, networking will have played a big role.

- You will find (or have found) that...
  - Job searching takes a lot of thought and time.
  - Job searching needs to be done in a structured way.
  - There is no single way to search for jobs effectively.
  - Job searching usually can’t be done just on the Internet.
  - Luck can play a role in job searching.
  - Finding new people to meet will always be rewarding.