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 don’t know anybody in ____ field.
- 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.

Agenda

- 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?
    - Being strategic, developing your “pitch”
  - Establishing and expanding networks
    - Resources at hand – in person and online
  - The ultimate networking tool - informational interviews
  - A final perspective, and Q & A
Structure your job search - 3 steps

ASSESS your work related values, skills, abilities, interests and personality

RESEARCH and explore market conditions, occupations, industries, and employers

IDENTIFY your target job and long term career goals and TAKE ACTION in a job search

NETWORKING

Where are you in your job search?

I am not currently looking for a job, but want to identify suitable future career options that I can investigate

I know what some of my career options are, but I still have lots of questions that my online research does not answer

I have made contacts, asked questions, made more contacts, and I am now seeking to gain experience or applying for opportunities

Take a moment to write down some information that would help you in your career planning or job search. What is a question you have? Are you looking for a specific job, information on career paths, new contacts, or to learn about industry trends?

What is networking?

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Networking is...

A mutual exchange of information
- It can be used to obtain or share information about career paths, industries, and interests
- 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

2-minute Icebreaker

- Find a partner
- Introduce yourselves
- Share with each other a favorite hobby or interest, past or present. How did you get into that hobby? What’s exciting or fun about it for you?

How did you try to structure your introduction?
- What about yourself did you reveal, while sharing information about your hobby?
- What were your thoughts while being the listener during these introductions? Do you know anyone who shares your partner’s hobby?
- Were you able to establish a commonality or connection with your partner?
- Did you exchange any ideas, resources or names?
How to Network?

Networking is an active pursuit – you can’t wait for networking to happen to you

Networking as a process

Relationship building and follow-up

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
- 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
60 second introductions - the “elevator pitch”

- 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 is a particular strength or stand out accomplishment?
  - 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)
Expanding networks – Q u a k e r N e t, P enn A lumn i O nline C o m m u n i t y

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
LinkedIn has more than 30,000 members in the Penn alumni group – postdocs can join too!

Networking on LinkedIn
Be active

1. Keep your profile updated
2. Ask for people to give you recommendations/share information with your contacts
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

Expanding networks - 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/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 to…
- Person you most wanted to meet
- 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
  - Send thank you emails 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

Capitalize 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
- A way to gather 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
- A type of networking that you can use to make a good impression
- Not the place to ask “Can you help me get a job?”
- See Career Services website:
  http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/undergrad/infointerviews.php
Networking is a process that works in ways that may not be immediately apparent to you. All contacts that result in new information and additional contacts are worthwhile.

Through networking, you will learn to focus your search on the right opportunities, develop a more definite career path for yourself and be more confident about pursuing it.

The more you network, the clearer you will be about how your strengths match the requirements of a particular job.

The confidence that you develop will give you a firm foundation for upcoming job interviews.

Both short- and long-term strategies are needed for job searching.

Networking is an effective way to access jobs.

Where employers ask colleagues to “spread the word” through connections or recommend qualified candidates.

Employee referral programs.

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.

The job of job-searching

How do I know I’ve made progress?