Mix & Mingle Networking

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Career Services www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices

http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/
Networking

- 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

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.

Structure your job search - 3 steps

1. ASSESS your work related values, skills, abilities, interests and personality
2. RESEARCH and explore market conditions, occupations, industries, and employers
3. IDENTIFY your target job and long term career goals and TAKE ACTION in a job search
Networking is...
Not a specific act or action, but a consequence
- 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
- Looking for people who can help provide you with the missing piece of your career puzzle
- Using their knowledge, contacts, connections, or recommendations about you
- The way to access jobs
  - Where employers ask colleagues to “spread the word” through connections or recommend qualified candidates
  - Employee referral programs

Networking is...
- ... A mutual exchange of information
  - It can be used to obtain or share information about career paths, industries, and interests
- ... Both a formal and an informal process
  - It is about building AND maintaining relationships
- ... Very beneficial
  - Many jobs are found through connections
  - The bigger your network and the better informed they are about you, the better your odds of being in the right place at the right time

How to Network?
Networking is an active pursuit – you can’t wait for networking to happen to you.

Scenarios
- As you watch and listen, note which conversation strategies worked well and which ones didn’t work so well.
- What advice would you give these aspiring networkers?
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

Networking as a process

- 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?
60 second introductions

• 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

How did it go?

• Did it go well?
• What issues did you encounter?
• How might you address these issues?
The most important question to ask

- “Is there anyone else that you know who you think would be good for me to talk 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

Where to Network?

Geographic Considerations

- Where do you want to establish your career? The answer may affect your networking strategies.
- For those who plan to return to their home countries, remember to cultivate, maintain, and grow your networks there.
  - Penn alumni live and work all over the world!
- For those who wish to stay in the US, networking can be a powerful tool for establishing connections and relationships that will benefit you in the future.

Who is already in your 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)
6 degrees of separation
2 people on Earth can be linked through a chain of personal relationships no more than 6 people long

YOU

Someone working at that company you want to know about

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 also join the Penn Alumni Group to help you 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

Career Services on LinkedIn
Join Us.

If you’re on LinkedIn, you can join the University of Pennsylvania Alumni group. There are over 800 members in the group already. Membership can be an excellent networking tool and resource for your career. Look for instructions on how to join once you register for LinkedIn.

New! Subgroups by industry. Join any and all groups that appeal to your interests! More groups will be added in the future based on industry level and response, please check back for updates.

Quakers in Communications
Quakers in Education
Quakers in Finance + Accounting
Quakers in Government
Quakers in Health + Sciences
Quakers in Law
Quakers in Media + Entertainment
Quakers in Non-Profit + Public Interest
Quakers in Real Estate

Don’t miss Spring 2014 workshops on Social Media for Graduate Students and Postdocs

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 to meet the person you most wanted to meet AND...
...whenever you leave the restroom

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 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

Informational Interviews

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 & networking

- An informational interview is:
  - A meeting with someone who does something you may like to do
  - 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?"
- 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

Where Can I Practice My English?

- English Chats at the Graduate Student Center
  → gsc.upenn.edu
- Programs at International Student and Scholar Services
  → global.upenn.edu/iss
- Penn Graduate Christian Fellowship "Intercultural Friends" Chats – not all chats are religious in nature
  → interculturalfriends.blogspot.com
- Participate in activities! The more you participate, the more interactions you’ll have with native English speakers.

How to set up an informational interview

- Make your appointment with a potential contact 2 or 3 weeks in advance. Be flexible and have a variety of times you can be available. The average time for an information interview is about 30 minutes.
- If you are not able to meet with the individual in person, try to schedule a convenient time to speak on the phone.
- Many advisors are also happy to offer advice via e-mail.
- Research the industry and organization before your meeting. Come prepared with questions. See Career Services website:
  http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/undergrad/infointerviews.php
- You may want to bring a copy of your resume but only provide it if asked.

Sample Request for an Informational Interview

Dear Mr. or Ms. __________:

In the first paragraph explain how you learned about the person to whom you’re writing and what you want from him or her. Do not ask for "an informational interview," which sounds stuffy and formal. Instead, use a phrase such as "a brief meeting with you to discuss _______" or "a chance to meet with you briefly to learn from you about _______.

In the second paragraph explain something of your background and why you have developed the interests which you wish to discuss with this person. This paragraph can be brief and low key. You're asking to meet with someone for an informal conversation; this is not the place to try to overwhelm the person with your qualifications.

In the final paragraph, give a few specific examples of the kinds of questions you have. Make it clear that you will make good use of this person's time. Offer to call within the next few days to try to arrange an appointment.

Sincerely,
Your Name
During the Informational Interview

- Respect the advisor’s time – don’t wear out your welcome. The average time for an information interview is about 30 minutes.
- Be familiar with the industry and organization before your meeting. Read relevant trade journals to find out what is going on in the industry.
- Arrive on time. If you know you will be late, call and let the individual know.
- Come prepared with questions. This will help you organize your thoughts on what you want to learn.
  **Do NOT ask for a job.** You can be clear that you are looking by asking for general advice about the best places to look or how to best market yourself.
- Be prepared to answer questions concerning your interests, values, skills and where you would like to use them. You may want to bring a copy of your resume but only provide it if asked.

Questions You Might Ask

- How do you spend your time during a typical workweek?
- What do you find most rewarding about the work?
- What are the toughest problems you must deal with?
- How does your organization distinguish itself from other organizations doing similar work?
- How would you describe the “culture” of the organization?
- What special advice would you give a person entering this field?
- Whom do you know who also might be willing to speak with me? May I use your name when contacting him/her?

After the Informational Interview

- Send a thank you note/email
  - Refer to anything that was particularly helpful, “I really appreciated your summary of trends in the industry”
- Stay in touch, and follow up with your contacts
  - They can be part of your network now
  - You can let your original contact know if you have followed up with their suggested contacts, “I have just met with Bob Jimpel, and as you suggested, he was a great help with understanding on the job training”
  - Set up Google news alerts using person’s name as a way to keep informed and find excuses to contact them
- Keep records of your networking efforts:
  - Who, when, what

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