Networking for Grad Students & Postdocs

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Networking

• 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
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
What is networking?
Networking is...

• A mutual exchange of information
  • 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
  • Leveraging 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
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?
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
  • 30-60 second introduction

• 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

YOU

Someone working at that company you want to know about
Networking as a process

Relationship building and follow-up

List of people to connect with:
- Prof. Henry
- Dr. Oman
- Ms. Jacques

Strategic approach
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 field or 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 neighbour 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?
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)
Upcoming 2014 Career Fairs:

International Opportunities Fair
Friday, November 7th,

Nursing Career Day
Friday, December 5th,

NGO, Non-Profit and Government Career Forum (Washington, DC)
Friday, December 5th,
Penn Alumni Online Community - QuakerNet

QuakerNet Login

There are a few different ways to access QuakerNet. Please select one of the statements below to login or to get started.

I have a QuakerNet or WhartonConnect account  GO>>
If you have used QuakerNet in the past or are a member of WhartonConnect, you have an Alumni account and may select this option. If you have forgotten your password, please use the Password Reset Form. If you have any other trouble accessing QuakerNet with your alumni account, contact Alumni Records at record@ben.dev.upenn.edu or (215) 898-8136 Monday-Friday during normal business hours (EST).

I have a PennKey  GO>>
You already have a PennKey if any of the following parameters apply to you: you are a current student, you graduated after 2005, you currently volunteer for the Penn Alumni Interview Program (PAIP), or you have access to the Mobile Volunteer Portal (MVP). If you have forgotten your PennKey or would like to test your PennKey visit the PennKey site.

I am a new QuakerNet user  GO>>
If you never had a QuakerNet or WhartonConnect account, you will need to create a PennKey to access QuakerNet. Please select this option to begin the PennKey process.
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
28,000 members in the Penn alumni group – postdocs can join too!
Growing Your Network

• “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

• “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. Be sure to budget for networking.
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 beneficial
  - Review conference schedule to plan activities
  - Attend panels, discussions, workshops, and social events, and use this time wisely. Be strategic. Don’t just hang out with your friends.
  - 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

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
  • See them as people in your network that need cultivating over time
  • 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 & 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
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.

• 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.
During the Informational Interview

• Respect the advisor’s time – don’t wear out your welcome. The average time for an information interview is about 20 minutes.

• Be familiar with the industry and organization before your meeting. Trade journals, blogs, etc.

• 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.
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