PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING
TO SECURE EMPLOYMENT

Engineering Career Services
Iowa State University
Outline

• Networking Defined
• Networking to Find Employment
• Benefits to Job Seekers
• Benefits to Employers
• Face-to-Face
• Using Social Networks
• Prospecting for Positions
• Engineering Career Services
Networking

Networking is the process of:
• Making connections
• Collecting information
• Building relationships

**Used socially** to meet people and make new friends

**Used professionally** to make connections and develop business relationships...and make new friends.
• Sales
• Getting work done
• Finding employment
Networking to Find Employment

Networking is used by the job seeker to connect with the person trying to fill an employment position and visa versa.

• Face-to-Face
• Social Media
• Prospecting for Positions
Networking Provides the Employer Opportunities to...

• Get answers to questions about skill sets.
• Evaluate personalities.
• Evaluate networking and interpersonal relationship skills.

Personality Rates High
• 40% to 60% of a decision to hire is based on personality fit.
• The balance is skill set and academic performance.

Comment from a recruiter
“I can often tell more about a person from a two-minute conversation than I can by looking at their resume all day.”
Networking – The Employer’s Perspective

Employers are looking to see if you:
• Have the skill sets that they are looking for.
• Are passionate about your chosen field.
• Have confidence in yourself.
• Have good interpersonal relationship skills.
• Are capable of listening and formulating a response.
• Are a goal oriented person that has realistic career goals.
• Are interested enough in working for their company to have researched the company and their industry.
Networking to Evaluate Skills and Personality

From an employers perspective it removes a bit of the unknown about a prospective employee.

If an employer has interacted with a person or if someone else has recommended a person, the employer has probably learned a few things that would make them more comfortable hiring the person.
Networking Provides the Job Seeker Opportunities to...

• Highlight education, skills and work experience.
• Make memorable positive impressions.
• Get questions about companies answered.
• Begin relationships that could lead to something in the future.
Networking to Find Employment

Face-to-Face Is Best!

Look for opportunities to engage with employers.
Networking at Career Fairs

• Career fairs provide opportunities to network directly with a number of employers.

• You don’t need to spend a lot of time trying to link up with an employer; the employers are there.

• Employers use the brief encounters that occur at the career fair to make decisions about who they should interview.

• Job seekers have an opportunity to make a professional impression, expand their knowledge about the participating companies, and develop professional relationships.
Networking With Upperclassmen

• Employers sometimes use their internal alums to network back into a school.
• Therefore, knowing upperclassmen from clubs or group design classes can be important to potentially having your name passed around in a company.
• Keep in touch.
Networking Through Student Organizations and Professional Societies

Part of the purpose of these organizations is networking

– Participate in meetings
– Attend trade shows
– Attend conferences
– Participate in society special projects
– Invite companies to present to the society
– Hold joint society meetings (Student/Student, Student/Corporate)
– Network through the faculty advisor
Face-to-Face Networking Best Practices

• Have your pitch prepared.
• Make a good impression.
• Be confident, relaxed and respectful.
• Have a firm handshake and make eye contact.
• Introduce yourself and indicate what type of job you are seeking and explain why you are interested in their company or industry.
Face-to-Face Networking Best Practices (Cont.)

• Discuss your qualifications in a short and focused manner.
• Be prepared to discuss your career goals.
• Be honest and be yourself.
• Be prepared to ask thoughtful questions about the company to show your interest in the company but also to determine if you really want to work for the company.
Job Prospecting

Over 80% of job opportunities are not advertised in print or public job boards. 

CNNMoney.com

This is especially true for entry level positions. Most companies work directly with colleges or get enough applicants through internal referring without need for advertising.
Job Prospecting Using Your Network
(Family, Friends, Acquaintances, Recruiters and Their Networks)

• Talk about your search with anyone you have an opportunity to engage.
• A relationship or a referral is much more effective than cold calling.
• An immediate connection is unlikely, so you need to get to the next person in the network.
• Remove any tension by saying something like, “you might not be hiring a person with my skills, but I was hoping that you might know someone who is.”
• If they’re interested in hiring you they’ll let you know and if they’re not, hopefully, they’ll give you a good lead.
Job Searching for Graduate Students

• Network at conferences, with visiting professors, former colleagues, monitor publication hotspots

• Academic Sites:
  – Chronclevitae.com
  – ASEE + your professional association (ASME, IEEE, etc)
  – HigherEdJobs.com
  – University’s Job Board (for targeted schools)
Job Searching for Graduate Students, pt.2

• Industry Jobs:
  – LinkedIn contacts and job board
  – Job aggregators and creative online research (stocks?)
  – Trade magazines, blogs, communities
  – Vendors at conferences
  – Business news about start-ups
  – Research Parks at Universities
Who uses LinkedIn?

- 260 million+ professionals
- 30 million+ students and recent college grads
- 3 million+ companies
- People are joining LinkedIn at a rate faster than 2 new members per second!
Name and Photo

• Name
  – Use the same form of your name for all social media.
  – If you have a common name, you may also want to use your middle name, middle initial, or unique nickname.

• Profile Photo
  – A photo is expected to accompany social media profiles; its absence may raise questions.
  – Choose a picture that fits the positions you aspire to fill.
  – Use the same picture across social media platforms.
  – Professional head shot where you are alone. Complimentary background.
Maximize your LinkedIn Brand

• Move around sections that show your best features higher on page.

• Great Headline, “IT Security Specialist for Big Data Storage” or “Pioneering Vehicle Designer”

• Complete profile thoughtfully and completely with industry specific words—Summary, Skills, Experience, Projects

• Make sure information on LinkedIn matches your resume
Maximize your LinkedIn Brand

• Summary example!
  – An inquisitive engineering student seeking technological innovations in the areas of alternative energy commercialization. Currently studying the science of energy conversion in order to further my ability to design machines and processes that will allow for affordable and sustainable energy source solutions. When I am not using AutoDesk or Solidworks to design the next energy conversion machines, I encourage public awareness and action in the areas of recycling and carbon footprint reduction.
Maximize your LinkedIn Brand

• Take advantage of the Projects area!
  – Schematics, layouts, flowcharts, sections of code, designs, data analysis
  – Project management: reports, feedback from teammates, milestone tracking
  – Can highlight teammates and update newsfeeds

• Organizations are a rich source of connections
  – Further demonstrate professional ambitions and skills
  – Natural connections with alumni who participated in these groups

• Education area advantages
  – Can highlight grades in particular interest areas (careful of privacy issues)
  – Can add keywords through titles of technical electives
Maximize your Connections
• Connect with people that emphasize your network
• Don’t just follow companies, engage with their pages
  – Like posts/videos, discuss topics, network with their people, etc
• Ask your connections for recommendations and introductions
Thanks for Viewing!