Professional Networking: The Art of Schmoozing

- “The more people you know the more you can influence”

- “It’s not what you know or who you know but who knows you”

Jeremy Rickli
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First, and above all

GET OUT!!

Cannot network sitting at home or in office
Key networking concepts

• What is networking (schmoozing)
• Network Society
• Informal vs Deliberate
• Networking Jitters
• How to Network
  – Preparation
  – Introduction
  – Topics
  – Follow up
• Ethical Networking
• Tips/Hints & Don’ts
What is schmoozing?

• It is: the act of building relationships and connections to advance professionally
• Not: quickly collecting names of people
  a substitute for quality work
• Places of schmoozing
  – Speed dating
  – Airplanes
  – Conversing at social events (bars, lunch, etc)
  – Conferences
  – Workshops
  – Classes
  – ANYWHERE!
How can networking help you!

• From a world network to small town Houghton
• How does it help
  – Get you known
  – Work known
  – Ideas
  – Collaboration
  – Feedback
  – Recommendations
  – Potential jobs
  – Known among reviewers
A diverse network population

What people make up a good network

- “Elders”
  - Experts in your related fields
- “Diversity’s”
  - Bring breadth and perspective
- “Uniformity’s”
  - Similar research and goals, collaboration
- “Average Joe’s”
  - Always ask Why?
  - Help communicate research
Levels of a network

• Three levels
  – Initial contacts
    • People you personally know
  – Secondary list
    • Know people who know people
  – Key contacts
    • People who could help but don’t really know
Two main types of networking

- **Informal**
  - Personal style/hangouts
  - Serendipity (it was meant to be)
  - During normal life and work
  - Chance

- **Deliberate**
  - Universities
  - Conferences
  - Established researchers
  - Seeking out contacts

- **Which way is better, will result in a better network**
The Dreaded Networking “Jitters”

- First time, alone at a conference
- Remember
  - People are usually willing to give advice
  - People enjoy talking about their work
  - Save people at top of list for last
  - Be ready to talk about yourself
  - Learn to ENJOY it and have fun
Now, how to Schmooze

• Split into various steps
  – Preparation
  – The introduction
  – Conversation
  – The follow up
Pre-schmoozing

• Know your goals
  – Obtain information
  – Know who you want to talk with
  – Different goals depending on the person

• Prepare yourself
  – Memorize description of research
  – 1-minute conversation
  – 3-minute conversation
  – Practice, Practice, Practice
    • Anything to make you more comfortable talking to people
  – Ready to meet anyone
  – Remember, NOBODY is a NOBODY!
The dreadful introduction

• How not to freak people out!
  – SMILE!!!
    • Talking to sad or pissed off people is not fun
  – A good handshake
    • Nothing to soft but nice and firm, sense purpose
    • Don’t crush someone’s hand
  – Quick intro
    • Name
    • Why interested
    • Lead into conversation
  – First impression are extremely important
Weather, family, business, pop culture, etc.

• Conversing: Easy for some impossible for others
  – Just need practice
• Some helpful advice
  – Curiosity (ask questions)
  – Undivided attention
    • Look the person in the eye
  – Body language
  – Be genuine
  – Use people’s names
  – Say thank-you
  – Not limited to business
• Not that you can talk a lot but that you can get people to talk a lot
You’re boring me, goodbye!

- Not a good end
  - Rude
  - Word travels fast
- A polite ending
  - Business card, if interested
  - I saw someone I would like to meet, please excuse me

*Final impressions are just as important as first impressions!*

- Not the end (Follow-up)
What now?

• Obtained valuable information
  – How to use it?

• The follow-up
  – Jot notes on business card
  – Short email of interest
  – Send, receive papers (actually read them)
  – Hear good news, congratulate them
  – Result in future work/collaboration
  – Be sure you want person in your network

• Making contact is first step, relationship needs to be maintained and grown
Ethics, but I’m just talking

• BE GENUINE
  – Anyone can spot a fake
• 200 business cards?
  – Don’t just get them for sake of having them
  – If you ask be sure to use
• Don’t abuse
  – If you receive help be prepared to give it
Specifically, conference networking

- Speak, it will get you known
- Stay for question/discussion time
- Talk to person next to you
- Lunch/dinner plans
- Have friends/advisor introduce you
What not to do!

• Hang only with friends
  – Make a time to meet later and schmooze
• Interrupt heavy or private conversations
• By negative
  – Nobody likes a sourpuss
• Beat a dead horse
  – If conversation is dead move on
• Get discouraged
  – Some people won’t like you, its OK
• Take to much stock in a short conversation
Random Tips/Hints/Facts

• Have FUN!
• 70% of jobs found through networks
• Build relationships & get information, don’t go hunting
• Join organizations
• Keep professional nature even in emails
• Keep log of contacts along with impressions
• Open to new ideas
• Treat everyone as equals
• Give without expectation
• Communication doesn’t start/stop with work day
• Information is major currency of networking
Random Tips/Hints/Facts cont:

• Drinking
  – If don’t drink then don’t drink
  – If do don’t be the least soberest person, impressions

• Talk about your passions, interests, hobbies

• Read a lot about a lot

• Networking with peers is much easier than with experts
  – Both contribute differently to network

• Grad students/young professionals
  – Focus on key, deep relationships

• Build trust

• Remember, have to be where people are to network