Networking - For People Who Hate Networking

A presentation from the Bill and Susan Lhota Office of Alumni Career Management
The Ohio State University Alumni Association
go.osu.edu/alumnicareermanagement
Your Career Management Team

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Career Management

• Programs/Resources
  ▫ Web resources, job board, webinars, programs, career fairs, individual career advising (in-person and remotely). Visit: go.osu.edu/alumnicareermanagement for more info.

• Career Changes
  ▫ Launching
  ▫ Transition
  ▫ Underemployment
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  ▫ Encore Career

• A Lifelong Process
  ▫ Assessment
  ▫ Exploration/Research
  ▫ Personal Branding
  ▫ Networking/Job Search
  ▫ Professional Development
Today’s Agenda

• Myth-busting – 4 Common Networking Myths
• Extroversion vs. Introversion in networking
• Authentically connecting with others
• Quality vs. Quantity in your network
• Building relationships
• Q&A
“Extroverts make the best networkers”
“Extroverts make the best networkers”

The Truth: Even though networking can be challenging, the best strategy is to play to your own strengths:

• Do some research ahead of time
• Focus on having 1:1 conversations
• Come armed with questions (and follow-ups)
• Plant “hooks” in your responses
Researching ahead of a networking meeting

• Know who you plan to meet up with - and do some research on them ahead of time

• Use LinkedIn, AlumniFire, and other resources to seek out share connections or other commonalities

Focus on having 1:1 conversations

• Don’t feel pressured to “work the room” – identify 3-4 individuals to make a meaningful connection with

• Capitalize on personal referrals from people they already know
• Offer a handshake and introduce yourself as an ice-breaker (and have your 30-second commercial on standby)

• Start small, with a question about the event or about his or her industry

• Avoid giving one-word answers to questions. Instead, say something that will “hook” the other person

Example: “Where are you from?”

Your Response: “Minneapolis – and yes, it’s as cold and snowy as people say it is. We don’t mess around with winter!”
“Networking is an obligation – sometimes it will feel forced”
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The Truth: Networking requires you to authentically connect with others

• Ask questions that build positive energy

• Listen with full attention

• Be willing to be vulnerable
The Truth: With networking, QUALITY > quantity, always

• Avoid pointless name (or business card) collecting and focus on developing high-quality connections with long-term value

• Build a diverse group of contacts across industries and with varied backgrounds/levels of experience

• Most successful connections are through acquaintances — look to connect with the well-connected

“[I Need as Many Connections as Possible — The Bigger the Better]”

DEBUNKED
Building a Network: Identifying Your Insiders

• Spend 15-20 minutes per day seeking out and interacting with connections via email or social media

• Be consistent in making yourself stand out by interacting on posts from those in your network, sharing original content, and commenting on information specific to your industry

• Invite contacts to coffee chats or lunch when possible to make a personal connection and conduct informational interviews

• Avoid asking for a job outright when meeting someone face to face – instead, ask for advice or introductions to decision makers in their networks
“Networking is just a business strategy to grow a client base or engage with potential employers.”

Myth or Fact: Networking is about building relationships.
Networking is all about relationship building – focus on connecting authentically with those in your network.

Networking is something that takes time – remember, the quality of the connection trumps quantity.

While networking is good for your career or business, it should not just be looked at as a “business activity”.

Though it is essential for a healthy career, changing your mindset about networking activities will help you be more comfortable and successful overall.
Questions?

To access our online resources, visit: u.osu.edu/alumnicareermanagement (Coach’s Corner blog & podcast)
go.osu.edu/alumnicareermanagement (office website)