



# **Networking** – a.k.a. Making Connections

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## Networking... is always important

**~ More business decisions occur over lunch and dinner than at any other time, yet no MBA courses are given on the subject. ~**

*Peter Drucker*

- Most sources agree that at least 60% of all jobs are found directly or indirectly by networking
- The job search is just one of MANY reasons to network

## Networking... is essential in a bad market

**~ It occurs to me that our survival may depend upon our talking to one another. ~**

*Dan Simmons*

- Essential no matter what your current situation

## Networking... a valuable career tool

- Career networking builds contacts that will help you:
  - Stay tuned to what is happening in your company/industry/profession
  - Find opportunities to develop useful skills
  - Choose/change a career direction
  - Update your resume and portfolio
  - Assist with job possibilities/contacts
    - Hidden job market

## Networking... the dreaded n word

- Unpleasant if not down-right frightening for many people

- No one wants to talk to me
- I've always had trouble meeting people; it's just the way I am
- These people are too busy; I shouldn't waste their time
- I can never remember names



## Networking... **redefined**

- Simply put, it's just connections with people
  - A web of friends, family, associates, etc. from whom you can seek assistance and advice
  - Built continuously over your entire career; not just when you need them
  - Personal and professional
  - **Networking = two-way street**



## Personal connections

- Contact with family, friends, etc.
- Not necessarily engineering related
- Join clubs, teams, etc.
  - Even solo activities (like running) can be done in a group setting to create relationship opportunities
- Build relationships with people you meet in every day settings
  - Waiting in lines
    - EX: ski lifts, bus stops, planes, etc.

## Personal connections... **example**

- Who would like to travel to Australia someday?
  - Who knows someone who has traveled, worked or lived in Australia?
- With the people sitting around you, in groups of 3-5
  - Introductions
    - Employer, job, hometown, hobbies, favorite ice cream, tv show, movie, music, sports, books, etc.
  - **Find one thing you all have in common**

## Formal connections

- Attend professional events
  - AIAA!
- Appointments/informational interviewing (a.k.a. take a colleague for coffee 😊)
  - Set up an appointment
  - Have an agenda – focus on what you want out of the meeting
  - Prepare questions in advance
  - Ask for 2 more referrals

## Connections... social networking **on-line**

- **Social network sites**
  - Make sure your personal information stays personal – use privacy filters for any such memberships
  - Use a professional site such as LinkedIn for your professional connections
- **Blog on professional topics**
  - Can be a useful way to increase your presence and reputation but make sure you are within your employer's guidelines

## Network... **even** if you are employed

- Stay visible at work
- Regularly meet with your boss to set goals and discuss progress
- Expand and maintain your network
- Use social media sites (ex. LinkedIn) and join aero and engineering related groups
- Develop a career action plan
- Perpetually update your master resume – keep track of your accomplishments on a weekly basis
- Prepare personal pitches for colleagues and those outside

Source: *The Importance of Networking in a Down Economy*, Bonnie Marcus, *Women on Business*

## Network... **especially** if you are unemployed

- Write down 3-5 positive characteristics with examples of how they've helped you in past positions
- Make contact with everyone in your network – both professional and personal
- Work the social media sites and industry/professional groups
- Stay on top of industry news/developments
- Be clear in what you want and communicate that to your network
- Prepare for each job interview – research the company and use your network contacts for information/referrals

Source: *The Importance of Networking in a Down Economy*, Bonnie Marcus, *Women on Business*

## Networking... **practice!**

- Final assignment:
  - Pick a state/country you have never lived or visited
  - Find someone in the room who has traveled or lived there and can give you tips



*The World's Forum for Aerospace Leadership*