

# Developing, using, and maintaining your professional network

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# Today

- We have an hour and a half, which includes time for questions. Don't be shy.
- You may take phone photos and tweet or post about the session
- The slides will be available after the session on the Faculty website as part of the symposium's resources

# Agenda

1. What is a network?
2. Academic and non-academic networks
3. Build, use, and maintain your network
4. Further resources

# What is a network?

- It is a collection of people whom you can engage professionally:
  - Ask questions about your current field and specialty
  - Ask questions outside your current field and specialty
  - Ask questions about jobs and other opportunities
  - Ask questions about your career
  - Offer advice about what you know

*A network is an annotated list of professional contacts that can be used for exchanging information throughout your professional career*

# Academic and non-academic networks

- Academic
  - What graduate work does to you
  - Your graduate-school network
- Non-academic
  - My career “path” so far
  - How I made the big changes
  - Non-academic networking lessons from my transitions
- How your network can help you

# What graduate work does to you

- You take classes with fellow grad students and some faculty
- You then prepare for exams with a faculty committee and perhaps your peers
- You then work on a thesis with a supervisor and advice of a committee

*As you progress, grad school teaches you to listen to a smaller and smaller pool of authorities*

# Your graduate-school network

- It includes people who can help you get a job: your supervisor and your other referees, a small pool of authorities
- It includes other people working in your specialty and in your broader field, a larger pool, but still identifiable
- It includes people you meet at events within your field, such as conferences

*The small pool of grad-school authorities are also the ones who can help you get academic jobs; the rest of your network is well-defined, largely by your field*

# My career “path” so far

- Native of Ithaca, NY, Cornell faculty brat: high school => college => grad school
- University of Michigan asst. prof.
- Bartender
- Amazon.com: many roles over 13 years
- Mindbloom: VP operations at a start-up
- Synapse: VP operations at a medium-sized product design engineering firm
- Chair, Board of Directors, Lambda Legal (nonprofit) [current]
- Consultant, author [current]

# How I made the big changes

- Grad student => faculty member
  - **Recommendations from my supervisor and committee members**
- Faculty member => bartender
  - Denied tenure: needed a job! @#\$%!
  - **Got a job tending bar from bartending teacher by hearing about a gig posted at a local restaurant**
- Bartender => Amazon.com
  - **Chatted with fellow former member of grad student softball team, an early adopter of the internet, who told me about Amazon (1996)**
  - Interviewed with them and discussed my skills (not much about my previous jobs)
  - Got new skills on the job and used them to take on new roles
- Chair, Board of Directors, Lambda Legal
  - **Invited by a work colleague to become a donor**
  - Consulted with them about improving their web properties
  - Invited to join Board of Directors; recently elected to chair the board

# Non-academic networking lessons from my transitions

- Academics has relatively few jobs but straightforward paths to learn where they are and how to apply for them
- Non-academic work has many more jobs but with relatively unknown paths to them
- Only a few people can help you get an academic job; many people can help you get a non-academic job
- You will need people outside your graduate-school networks to help you find and understand non-academic jobs, bosses, and workplaces

# How your network can help you

- Personal contacts help you reach out to people you know and expand your reach to people you do not know you do not know to help you learn
  - about jobs that are new to you
  - what a particular job advertisement really means
  - what a particular boss is like
  - what a particular workplace is like
- Personal contacts help résumés not get lost in a pile

***Use your network as a research tool that you develop and tailor to yourself and that you engage for job-searches and career development***

# Build, use, and maintain your network

- Adapt your networking mindset
- Build your network
  - LinkedIn is the current tool
  - Create your pool of contacts (2)
- Use your network
  - The basic process of finding a job
  - How to use your LinkedIn contacts
  - Researching job descriptions (3)
  - Researching the hiring manager (2)
  - Researching organizations
- Maintain your network
  - Contacts are a core professional asset
  - Bias in networks
  - Professional courtesies

# Adapt your networking mindset

- Only a few people can help you get an academic job, but many people can lead you to and help you get a nonacademic job
- Your network is as much for leads to information as it is for leads to jobs
- Broaden the range of people whom you add to your network
- Treat everyone you meet along the way as a colleague

# LinkedIn is the current tool

- LinkedIn provides a database of companies, jobs, and people and deploys you into that pool
  - Companies and jobs: It helps you research organizations and their job listings
  - People: It helps you ask for introductions to people you don't know through people you do know
  - You: It makes your résumé available online
- Use LinkedIn to create a group of people you know through whom you reach out to others

# Create your pool of contacts

- Invite people you know to connect on LinkedIn
  - People in your own address book / contacts
  - People LinkedIn recommends, if you know them
  - People with whom you have interacted well
- Join groups that make sense for you: alumni orgs, professional societies, clubs, interest groups
- You should not add people you don't know or whom you do not respect
  - Ask yourself “would I introduce her to someone I respect?” “would I do him a favor?”

# Create your pool of contacts

- “I don’t know anyone.” Yes, you do. You may not know who among them will be relevant to your future professional life
- “I don’t know anyone who can help me with a job search.” It’s not primarily who you know; it’s who they know, too
- “A lot of people I know have jobs that I don’t know anything about.” Feature, not a bug!

# The basic process of finding a job

- Find a job listing
- *Research the organization*
- *Find a contact there, if you can, and discuss the job*
- Apply, with a résumé and a letter
- Have a phone or video interview (sometimes)
- Have an in-person interview
- Submit references, supporting material for verification
- Receive offer, possibly negotiate its terms

*People who send out many résumés and get no response have usually omitted the research and job investigation*

# How to use your LinkedIn contacts

- Find a job description or workplace you want to know more about
- Look in your LinkedIn contacts for someone who has that kind of job, who works or has worked at that workplace, or who is connected to someone who has
- Ask “Hello, Anne, I see [you/someone you know] worked at [job type/organization]. Would you be willing to [answer some questions about [job/company] / introduce me to [that person]]?” (Of course, this approach also works for anyone not on LinkedIn.)

# Researching job descriptions

- Read a lot of them (100+) to [learn their jargon](#) before you apply to anything
- Learn [academic nearest equivalents](#) for required and requested skills
- Ask friends in those types of work to help you understand the job descriptions: a personal contact will also help you find other people to ask

*If you ask specific questions and respect people's time, most people are glad to help you learn about a job, a workplace, and a hiring manager*

# Researching job descriptions

Job descriptions may be written by

- the hiring manager and / or
- someone in Human Resources and / or
- the last person to hold the job, especially if that person succeeded at the job

*The person you will be directly working for has not always written the job description. **A personal contact at the organization is your best source of information about what the job description really means***

# Researching job descriptions

Job descriptions have many audiences:

- External and internal candidates
- The hiring manager's boss and Finance, to prove the position is needed

*Applicants are not the only audience for the job description. **A personal contact at the organization is your best source of information about what the job description really means***

# Researching the hiring manager

- A hiring manager has an idea of the person and skills they want but can be persuaded otherwise. *You can make the case that you are the right person with the right skills – if you know what the job description really means.*
- A hiring manager trusts someone who has worked at their company to refer job candidates more than anyone else. *Finding someone you have a connection with where you are applying gets you information from a source a hiring manager is likely to trust.*

# Researching the hiring manager

- When you get an interview, here's what the hiring manager usually does:
  - Looks at your LinkedIn profile and see if you know anyone in common
  - Googles your name
  - Asks around to find out if anyone they know knows you personally
  - Asks if you have questions for them

***You need to conduct at least the same level of research about the hiring manager as the hiring manager does about you***

# Researching the organization

- Learn about the organization's work
- Try to learn how the job you are interested in fits into the organization's work
- Learn how the organization describes itself to the public
- Learn about how the organization views its community

# Contacts are a core professional asset

- Bring your contacts up to date: name, an email address, and (usually) a mobile phone number
- Keep your contacts updated
- LinkedIn connection suffices for purely professional contacts
- Set a calendar reminder to invite new LinkedIn connections every week: your network is never “done” or “good enough”
- ***Back them up, following the rule of 3: create a local, a cloud, and an external-device backup for your own contact repository***

# Bias in networks

- Investigate your contacts from time to time:
  - What percentage are men? women?
  - What percentage are from outside your own racial group?
  - What percentage come from within your current institution?
  - Do you have contacts from your secondary education?
- Keep a mental list of people you have decided not to include and the reasons you didn't add them

*Your goal is the network with a rich range of experience and points of view. Don't exclude people you know and respect just because you don't know how their work could ever be relevant to yours.*

# Professional courtesies

- One day you will be offering the advice
  - When possible, say yes to someone who asks for your time politely and professionally
- You never know whom you may work for one day
  - Treat everyone courteously and professionally at all times
  - Treat everyone as someone who can contribute to your organization
- Everyone you interact with may be or refer your next great employee
  - Treat everyone courteously and professionally at all times
  - Treat everyone as someone who can contribute to your organization

# Further resources

[www.annekrook.com](http://www.annekrook.com) grad students and  
postdocs tab

Ferrazzi, *Never Eat Alone*

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