Building your network

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Important lesson!

- Careers don't just happen.
- You must work at, and cultivate, your career.
- Networking is an important aspect of career cultivation.

Some scientists, like the chemist I was counseling, erroneously think that networking is a side activity that won't lead to anything solid, like a job. But that's simply not true. The sooner you recognise that networking is actually a strategic tool in finding a job and even defining a career path, the sooner you will set yourself up for success.

Networking: outline

• What is it?

• Why do you need it?

• How do you get it?

• How do you use it?
Networking: what is it?
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Networking: what is it?

Your network is a group of people who;

Know you & your work.

Will comment on you.

Will mentor & advise you.

Note: different people in your network will take on different roles.
Why do you need it?
Why do you need it?

• In the good-old-days, you could be a gentleman scientist, working away in your private laboratory.

• But now you have a career, and you need a global view, an understanding of the career process, and advocates.
Why do you need it?

- References (both official and unofficial).
- Expanding collaborations & opportunities.
- Advice and mentoring.
- To work behind the scenes.
How do you get it?
How do you get it?

- Be visible
  - Publish!
  - Conferences
  - Talk tours
  - Committee work
- Collaborators
- Referees and examiners
Conferences

• Don't be passive.
• Work the reception!
• Ask questions & make points.
• Establish collaborations.
Collaborators

• Collaborators are often friends.

• You should work on broadening your collaborations.

• Be on top of the literature, and know your skills.

• What can you bring to a project?

• Don't be afraid about coming forward!
Other people

• Cultivate the people behind the scenes.

• This can include positive PhD examiners.

• Or positive paper reviewers.

• Good for unofficial references.
How do use it?
How do use it?

- Reference letters
- Advice & mentoring
- Tip-offs
How do use it?

• Your network should work without you.

• Your name & reputation is your currency.

• Your network should sell you "behind the scenes".
The Anti-Network

• It's important to remember that at "professional" events, you are on show.

• A person who sees you drunk, dirty dancing, telling dodgy jokes or bagging out people may be asked their opinion of you.

• Just remember this!

The food is nice, but you are there to meet people, connect with them, and look for opportunities that are mutually beneficial to you and other scientists. So skip the multiple trips to the food line, and save the pints for Friday night with your pals.
• http://www.academics.com/science/networking_for_a_successful_career_in_academia_30577.html

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• http://theresearchwhisperer.wordpress.com/2011/06/13/networking/

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• http://ask.metafilter.com/215460/Make-me-less-of-an-academic-island

• http://www.abqla.qc.ca/networking-sites-academics-whats-stake

• http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/1643/Networking-at-conferences.html