

Introduction to Networking

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Helping you navigate your graduate and postdoctoral career



Agenda

- Introduction to Networking
- Turning small talk into meaningful conversations
- Review elevator pitch videos
- Elevator pitch exercise
- Speed networking exercise



Most people hate networking

- They **aren't comfortable** with it
- They're **fearful** of rejection
- They don't know **what to talk about**
- They don't think **anyone would want to talk to them**



Re-frame your perspective

“I suck at networking.” “This is so superficial.”

“Networking is too time consuming.”

“I hate making small talk with other people.”

“This is ridiculous. I shouldn’t have to do this.”

“Why would anyone want to talk with a postdoc? There are a million of us.”

“Why am I doing this?” “I have better things to do.”

“I’ll find some excuse not to go.”

“Meeting new people is awkward, and I’m not a people-person.”



Re-frame your perspective

Attune yourself to negative self-talk

- “I’m giving this a shot.”
- “I couldn’t remember Dr. Johnson’s name, but I made the best of it and will make a joke about it in my follow-up email.”
- “I forgot to bring business cards, but I’m proud of myself for going to the event. Next time, I’ll be better prepared.”

Don’t expect to quit the pessimism cold-turkey. A good first step is just becoming more aware of negativity.



Networking works!

Networking allows you to:

- Stay current by learning about:
 - new sectors
 - employment trends
 - research in other fields
 - new companies and technologies, etc.
- Become a better conversationalist
- Gain friends and professional allies
- Land a job!



Fundamentals of Networking

- **Be helpful** – provide relevant information, articles, introductions, and advice
- **Follow up** and maintain the connection
- **Don't ask for a job**



Networking...

Is:

- Asking for advice, suggestions, and contacts
- The start of a conversation, to building a relationship
- Learning about careers from people in those careers

Is not:

- Asking for a job. If the question you ask is, “Do you have a job for me?” – the answer is likely to be “no” and the conversation is over.
- Asking for preferential treatment



Set yourself up for success

- **Arrive early** to networking events
- **Do your homework** ahead of time: know who's going to be there and who you want to meet
- **Scan the room** for people you may know or want to approach
- Make eye contact
- **Eat (or at least snack) ahead of time;** Don't be a ravenous, unfocused mess



Set yourself up for success

- **Talk to the staff** who are running the event
- **Get in line.** These are sometimes the best place to get the conversation going
- Set **realistic networking goals** and bring a positive attitude



Become an effective listener

- Avoid distraction
- Face the other person completely
- Have open posture
- Make eye contact, nod
- Smile
- Have a calm presence
- Resist urge to interject your own voice



Become more comfortable

- Take stock of your accomplishments and what you're looking for
- Know what you want to contribute to science or whatever field the event is focused around
- How does this fit into your life and career?



Remember people's names

Repetition is key

- Say it in your response to an introduction
- Glance at their nametag and say it to yourself
- Say their name again as you end the conversation
- Review business cards right after the event and visualize each person you met



Turn Small Talk Into Meaningful Conversations



Master the art of small talk

Come up with a handful of subject areas you are interested in or that you want to know more about

- News/current events (biotech news, world events, local fairs)
- Positive comments about the event itself (speakers, sponsors, attendees)
- Research-related topics



Master the art of small talk

Extend the conversation. Conversations can evolve from one topic to another. A conversation about a particular local restaurant, for example, can shift to discussing your favorite restaurants in a previous area, around a previous institution or work place...and that can easily lead to discussing the work you did there.

Help yourself and others with "quick talk." Talking with lots of people for brief periods of time can take pressure off both parties in a conversation. Say, 'I've got to go; there are a couple of people I need to talk to. We'll talk again later.' This helps people avoid dominating conversations while also demonstrating they are capable of talking with a variety of people.



Ask open-ended questions

When did you move to Chicago?

Do you like living in the mid-West?

Is AbbVie a good company to work for?



Ask open-ended questions

When did you move to Chicago?

“2013.”

Do you like living in the mid-West?

“Yes.”

Is AbbVie a good company to work for?

“Yeah, it’s great.”



Ask open-ended questions

~~When did you move to Chicago?~~

How did you end up in Chicago?

~~Do you like living in the mid-West?~~

What do you like about living in the mid-West?

~~Is AbbVie a good company to work for?~~

What parts of your job at AbbVie do you enjoy the most?

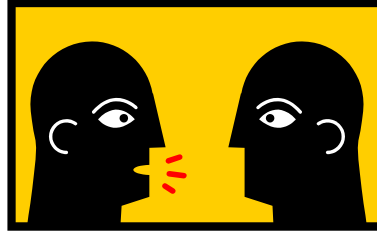


Ask open-ended questions

- Evoke more questions and keep the conversation going
- Stimulate reflective thinking
- Maximize information sharing
- Build rapport



Master the art of small talk



Do your part when someone asks you questions. Sharing something about yourself makes you relatable!



How to get started...

30 Brilliant Networking Conversation Starters

By The Daily Muse



The Classics

- "Hi, I don't know too many people here, so I wanted to introduce myself. I'm [name] and I work at [company]." And bam—you got it. [@cbmcmillan](#)
- "So, what do you do?" It gets them talking first and you can think about how to approach the conversation or how you could possibly work together. [@GrowSouthwest](#)
- "So, what brought you here today?" [@twofacedhrlady](#)



The Classics

- **"How's your day going?"** This is my go-to in any situation, and it never fails. It's simple, classic, and always effective if you throw in a smile. [@missmcheng](#)
- **"What's your story?"** It always sparks a fascinating and non-generic conversation. [@leslieforman](#)



Location, Location, Location

- **"How did you hear about this event?"**
[@myuliyam](#)
- **"It's so hot (or cold) in here."** Hey, maybe it is, maybe it isn't, but the person will either agree or disagree, and pretty soon you're talking about weather patterns, your best umbrella, and then your career goals. [Jessica Gordon for The Daily Muse](#)
- **"What a beautiful venue. Have you been here before?"**



The Newsworthy

- **“What do you think about [insert topic germane to the event or person here]?”** [@thatsportsgirl](#)
- **“Any chance you read the news today? I missed it, and I’m dying to know what’s happening with [insert news topic here].”**
- **“So, was it a pain for you to get here?”** The mode of transportation and location in the city are always on peoples’ minds. There’s bound to be a story about it. [Jessica Gordon for The Daily Muse](#)



Great for Introverts

- **“Man, these networking events can be so crazy. Mind if I join you over here where it’s a little quieter?”** [*Careerealism*](#)
- I like to compliment people on their clothes and accessories. I find this approach to be more friendly and less about professionally connecting, especially if you’re at a networking event. I believe both men and women can compliment each other on their choice of attire and use it as a conversation starter! [*@MsMeganGrace*](#)

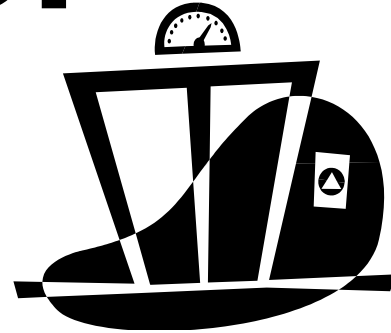


The Funny

- I always start by saying, **"I can't believe how under-dressed I am for this event."** A little self-deprecating humor is always good, and I'm always poorly dressed. [@EllBell9](#)
- **"I'll be honest, the only person I know here is the bartender, and I just met him two minutes ago. Mind if I introduce myself?"**
- **So, on a scale of 1 to undrinkable, how terrible is the Chardonnay?"**
- Something jokey—like **"I just came for these carrot sticks."** Then ask a question, like **"How'd you hear about this event?"**
[@beetorr](#)



The Elevator Pitch



The Elevator Pitch



CALIFORNIA'S STEM CELL AGENCY
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

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CURRENT RFAS

CIRM funds grants through directed Requests for Applications (RFAs).

RFA 14-04: CIRM Extraordinary Supplement Awards

RFA 14-03: CIRM Strategic Partnership IV Awards

RFA 14-02: CIRM Pre Clinical Development Awards

RFA 13-07: CIRM Coordinating and Information Management Center Award

RFA 13-06: CIRM Alpha Stem Cell Clinics Awards

[See all RFAs](#)

WORKSHOP REPORTS

CIRM holds regular scientific workshops and meetings to update the scientific staff and CIRM grantees about particular areas of stem cell and related research.

- Engineering Strategies, Opportunities, and Challenges for

Home / Stem Cell Elevator Pitch Challenge

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Stem Cell Elevator Pitch Challenge

The Challenge

"What do you do for a living?"

If a scientist's answer to that question isn't comprehensible (or perhaps even fascinating) to the average person they risk losing the attention of journalists, potential donors, politicians, or all those good people whose tax money funds their science. What's at stake isn't just the listener's attention. If scientists can't explain the value of their publicly funded research in a way that makes sense to the non-scientist, they could lose the support of the tax-paying public.

With that in mind, we held an elevator pitch challenge to help our scientists talk about their work. Here's our pitch for the pitch:



<http://www.cirm.ca.gov/our-funding/stem-cell-elevator-pitch-challenge>



Elevator Pitch Exercise

- Have different versions of your elevator pitch, depending on your audience
- For this exercise, focus on your research for a conference-like setting
- You need to have a really good first 10-15 seconds in order to get someone to listen to the rest of your pitch → the hook!



Elevator Pitch Exercise

- You can begin by posing a question or stating a problem
- Describe the unique approach or insight that motivates your study
- Tell a story
- Find your (active) verb. What is happening? Eg. “seek” or “cure”



Elevator Pitch Formulas

Formula 1

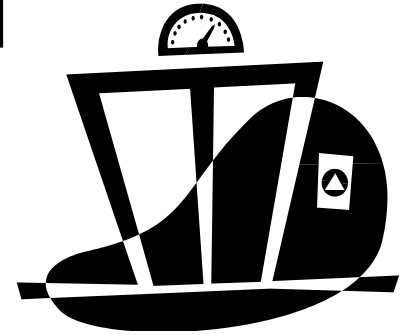
- What do you do?
- What skills do you have to do it?
- What would you like to do?
- Why? Motivation, Passion, Interest

Formula 2

- Name + postdoc in ___ at ___ university
- Describe current research/techniques
- Career goal
- What you want to learn about



Elevator Pitch Exercise



(5 minutes)

Speed Networking Exercise

(25 minutes)



Speed Networking Exercise

- Stand up and form groups of two or three, partnering with others you don't know
- Spend no more than one minute each giving your elevator pitch
- Use the remainder of the time to practice small talk
- When you hear the bell, move on to a new partner/group



Take proactive steps

- **Practice!** Register for a CHlentist, BSD PDA, myCHOICE, Polsky, or AWIS Chicago chapter event
- **Interact** with seminar speakers
- Pay it forward: **introduce two people** you know could benefit from knowing each other
- Set aside **dedicated time** for maintaining your network (i.e., Thursdays at 4pm)



Maintain your connections

Reach out to people when:

- You read an article that reminds you of something about them, their business, or their interests
- You receive an invitation to a conference, workshop, meeting, or event you think they might be interested in
- You are browsing LinkedIn and happen to come across their name
- You see an article about them or by them in a publication
- You see something indicating they have been promoted or awarded an honor
- You meet someone who would be good for them to meet or know



Questions?

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Add me on LinkedIn!

www.linkedin.com/in/bkonnick

Advising Appointments:

Gradgargoyle.uchicago.edu

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