



Unit: Networking

Skill 25: What And Who You Know

Activity B: Who Do You Know?

Activity Skills:

One-on-one conversation, role playing, networking.

Leadership Skills:

Understand the basic aspects of professional networking.

Suggested Level:

Advanced

Time:

30-40 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Paper for writing.
- Pencils or pens.

Do Ahead:

- Make copies of worksheet

Source:

Developed by:
Rory Klick
UW-Extension

Adapted from:
Networking on the Network,
by Phil Agre
<http://polaris.gseis.ucla.edu/page/network.html>

BACKGROUND:

We have all heard the expression, “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” What does this expression mean, and how have you observed it to be true or not? Why is it important to know people in your field or work? How do you get to know them?

Networking is the term that many now use to describe the process of getting to know other professional contacts. Networking is a difficult skill to teach, as it requires many other skills – personal communication, strategy, organization, memory and follow-through. Many resources exist on how to improve your professional networking skills, but let try to cover some of the basics with this activity.

Building a professional identity takes time. You are developing a reputation based on what work you do yourself, but you also are developing a list of contacts and knowledge about those contacts. One of the foundational rules of networking is to treat everyone as a future contact. This means you cannot be rude or unprofessional to anyone, as you never know when you might need to work with that person in the future.

Next, consider that networking is really just socializing with purpose. If you have trouble remembering names, write them down. Use a small notebook or the back of the person’s business card to record their name and a brief note that will help you remember them.

Of course, this can only be done when you are out and about actually making new contacts. If you need to start the process completely on your own. There are a few more steps. Let’s refer to the handout.

WHAT TO DO:

Start by having the group generate a list of situations where you could network – a community awards banquet, a local press conference, a neighborhood meeting, a professional seminar or conference, etc. Have participants divide into partners. Ask each pair to take turns being the person wanting to network, while the other person plays the role of the expert. Each person has 3 minutes to introduce themselves, start a discussion, and wrap up the brief meeting. Allow the pairs time to switch roles.

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- Was it easy or difficult to be the networker and approach the expert?
- How did you introduce yourself?

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Notes:

- How did you make yourself memorable?
- For the experts, what did you share with the networker?
- How did the networker do in terms of making a positive impression?

Apply:

- Why is it important to have professional contacts?
- What kinds of skills does it take to meet people with purpose?
- Are you good at networking? If so, why? If you don't think so, why not?
- What would it take to improve your networking skills?
- What does it mean to schmooze? Is this a positive or negative term?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Find a person in your field that you would benefit from knowing. This will involve some research! Develop a plan for how you will contact them, and do it. What kind of response did you get? What will you do to follow up?

Resources And Web Links:

<http://polaris.gseis.ucla.edu/pagre/network.html>

Networking on the Network, by Phil Agre,
<http://polaris.gseis.ucla.edu/pagre/network.html>