Personal Networking Strategy Workbook

This workbook provides a framework for conducting outreach to individuals in a variety of settings to help you grow your professional network. The ability to identify and connect with those working in your field of interest is an essential skill in the career search process.

CU @ the Intersection

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NOTE: In the spirit of our mission to **inspire and empower Cornell Engineers to create lifelong career success** we have developed this workbook as a tool to capture information at this point in your life. Your career aspirations, skills, abilities, interests, and desires will change over time. We hope you will continue to grow right along with them. There are no "right" answers, and there is no need to feel 100% confident in your decisions. Decisions will adjust and change as you move forward, and being flexible and adaptable will allow you to embrace new information and opportunities that present themselves.

For now, the exercises and information in this workbook are in an effort to help you clarify what you want and gain confidence in your ability to be successful in its pursuit.

Check out our additional workbooks and resources online!
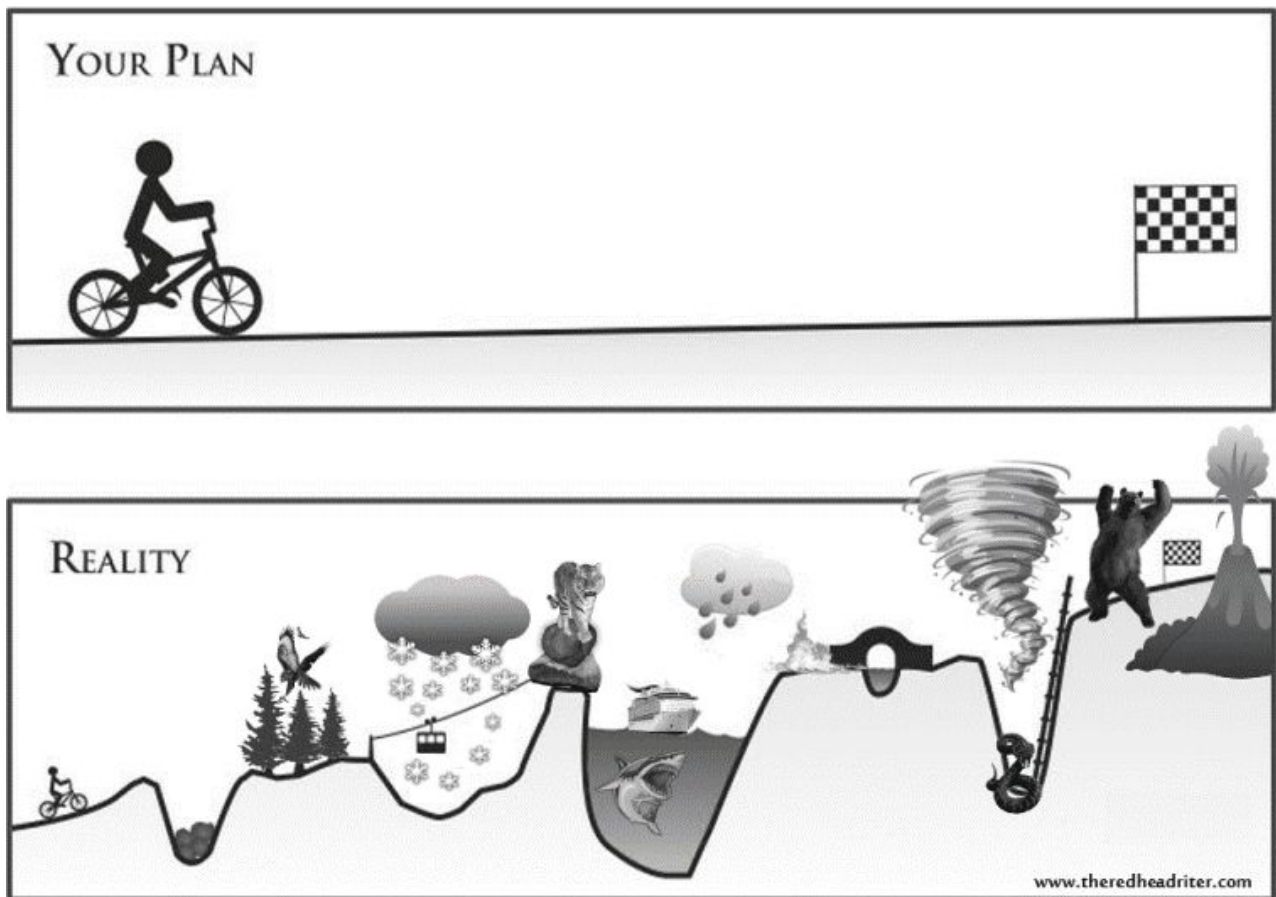
Reflection Questions

We are giving you the tools you need to successfully navigate the career exploration and internship/job search processes through conversations with others. This workbook will guide you in working through the following questions:

- What does networking look like?
- What are your networking goals?
- Who is already in your network?
- Where might you find additional mentors or contacts?
- How might you approach an individual from whom you are seeking advice?
- How might you approach a group networking situation?
- What is your "pitch" or introduction when meeting someone new?
- How can you use networking to learn more about an industry, career field, or organization?
- How does social media fit into all of this?

Networking Objective: You make connections with others who can assist you in your career development and advancement.

As you progress in your career development, you'll develop two essential networking skills. This workbook provides opportunities for reflection as you go through the process of developing these skills.

Objective 1: You identify and connect with people in your field of interest.

Emerging skill development: Create and maintain an up-to-date LinkedIn account, including contact list. Connect with at least one person in your field of interest.

Developing skill development: Use LinkedIn and other tools to identify potential contacts and mentors. Request introductions to at least two people. Identify 2-5 people to call on for career advice. Outline appropriate questions to ask of mentors.

Advanced skill development: Request introduction to at least three people outside of your immediate (1st & 2nd degree connections) network. Keep mentors up-to-date on major career events such a new internship, job, promotion, or graduate program. Share articles and opportunities of interest with others as appropriate.

Objective 2: You apply professional etiquette to correspondence with alumni, employers, and others and know how to act in the workplace.

Emerging skill development: The frequency, tone and content of your correspondence is professional and polite. Demonstrate respect in corresponding and conversing with more experienced professionals.

Developing skill development: Send thank you notes to mentors after each interaction. Offer to help mentors, even if it is unclear how you may help. Hold a paid job or have significant volunteer work in a professional setting.

Advanced skill development: Complete at least one internship or job with positive feedback about your work (or your professionalism).

Defining networking

Professional networking is the process of developing *relationships with people who might provide guidance on various aspects of your career development and planning.*

Mentors refer to the individuals *whom you've identified as people with an interest in your success, the ability to offer valuable information or advice, and whose perspective you appreciate.*

Step 1: Who is in your network?

Aim for a network that includes people in a variety of careers, with a variety of backgrounds, so you have access to multiple perspectives. Aim to include people who are willing to share information about their career fields and industries as well as people who may be in a position to tell you about open job opportunities within their organization or elsewhere. Not everyone in your network needs to be familiar with your career field or industry; you also want people who can provide feedback on your career development and people who can simply offer another perspective. It's also possible that the connection you are seeking comes from an unlikely source.

List 5 people closest to you.
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

List 5 more people you encounter weekly.
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

List 5 more people you've met in the last month.
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

List 5 more people you know from previous work, project, or volunteer experiences.
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

List 5 more people you know who are successful in their careers.

    1. ____
    2.
    3.
    4.
    5.

List 5 more people you know who have qualities you particularly admire (and note the qualities).

    1. ____
    2.
    3.
    4.
    5.

List 5 peers who have internship experience.

    1. ____
    2.
    3.
    4.
    5.

Step 2: Self-Assessment

What is it you are hoping to get from networking?

Are you hoping to learn about a particular career field? Are you hoping to learn about internship or job opportunities in a particular organization, industry, or location? Are you hoping to further develop a particular skill set? This list will change over time and it's helpful to revisit your career objectives on a regular basis, often annually.

Career-Related Goals	What I Need	Who Can Help OR 1st step in finding someone who can help

Step 3: Your Mentor Network

Of all the people in your network, to whom do you often go for advice? With whom might you wish to further cultivate a relationship? What does this network look like? Draw a diagram or picture to represent this network.

Step 4: Making the Most of a Networking Event

Use this template as you plan for a networking event, on- or off-campus.

Event Title:

Time:

Location:

Attire: (check the registration site or contact the organizer if you are unsure)

What groups were invited to participate? What do you know or guess about the people who might be there? Can you find out more in advance, perhaps secure a registration list?

If you are able to get a registration list prior to the event, LOOK AT IT. Google a few people. Determine at least two people with whom you hope to connect at the event. List them here.

    1.

    2.

What are two questions you might ask each of these people?

Person 1:

    1.

    2.

Person 2:

    1.

    2.

What is your overall goal for this event? For example, if you can learn two things that would make this a successful event for you, what would they be?

    1.

    2.

When people ask you questions about yourself, what might you say? You might want to share why are you interested in the topic/theme of the event or what you hope to learn from the event. You want to say something relevant and perhaps memorable. There are likely to be several others with your major and year in attendance. Saying, "I'm fascinated by health care technology and eager to learn more about how to apply my software engineering skills to contribute to this dynamic landscape" will get the conversation off to a more robust start than "I'm a junior, computer science major."

What things might you mention in an introduction or conversation?

What is a succinct way to state this when introducing yourself?

Remember to follow-up with those you meet by sending emails thanking people for their time and reminding them of something you discussed. This could be the start to a longer-term professional relationship.

Step 5: Making the most of an individual mentor session or informational interview

When you meet with an individual for the first time, second time, or tenth time, it's important to honor their generosity by setting targeted goals for the meeting and to respect their busy schedule by defining and sticking to the time commitment. Provide a brief overview of your goals for the session when making the request to meet.

Contact name:

Meeting time and location:

Stick to the set end-time, even if the person is being nice and still chatting. Twenty minutes is a good amount of time for a first meeting.

What you know about the person:

Meeting goal(s):

Provide a brief overview of your goals for the session when making the request to meet.

Questions to ask:

Step 6: 6 Month Networking Plan

Consider all of the networking opportunities available to you as a Cornell Engineering student (see list on next page). What is your plan for connecting with more people who might serve as resources in your career development and planning over the next year? How will you use breaks to take advantage of additional networking opportunities?

Write three things you will do this semester to further develop your network. This could involve meeting new people or further cultivating relationships you already have.

1.

2.

3.

Write three things you will do over the next break to further develop your network. This could involve meeting new people or further cultivating relationships you already have.

1.

2.

3.

Consider these opportunities:

- Career fairs
- Clubs and project teams
- Co-op networking events (for sophomores interested in Co-op)
- Employer information sessions
- Student organization sponsored events
- Department sponsored talks and events
- Cornell Alumni Connections Program (opportunity for job shadowing/informational interviews)
- LinkedIn groups for your department, clubs, etc.

Step 7: Social Media

LinkedIn, GitHub, about.me, Twitter – these are just a few of the social media platforms you may consider using to connect with others and share content on a professional level. Find out what platforms are more widely used in your industry, find examples of those who are successful in your field, and get started.

Step 8: Giving Back

What is one area in which you consider yourself quite skilled, particularly compared to your peers or compared to those outside of your field?

You may be asked to assist someone in a mentoring capacity sooner than you expect. Remember to listen, provide encouragement, and to make referrals to others in your network.

Long-Term Networking Goals

Students who have the greatest success developing professional relationships and expanding their network are those who set concrete goals for outreach and maintain organized records for easy tracking.

Set your goal: My overall networking goal is to connect with _____ alumni/employees in _____ industry(ies) by _____ (date)

Use the charts below to track your outreach with alumni/employers over the next year.

Fall Semester

September
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn…)	Date of Contact	Notes

October
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn…)	Date of Contact	Notes

November
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn…)	Date of Contact	Notes

December
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn…)	Date of Contact	Notes

January
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn…)	Date of Contact	Notes

Spring Semester

January Continued
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn…)	Date of Contact	Notes

February
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn…)	Date of Contact	Notes

March
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn…)	Date of Contact	Notes

March Continued
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn...)	Date of Contact	Notes

April
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn...)	Date of Contact	Notes

May
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn...)	Date of Contact	Notes

Summer

June
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn…)	Date of Contact	Notes

July
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn…)	Date of Contact	Notes

August
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn…)	Date of Contact	Notes

August Continued
Networking Goal:

Name/Title	Organization	Contact Type (email, phone, LinkedIn…)	Date of Contact	Notes

Resources

Claman, Priscilla. "Forget Mentors: Employ a Personal Board of Directors." *Harvard Business Review*. N.p., 20 Oct. 2010. Web. 15 Oct. 2015.

Gallo, Amy. "Demystifying Mentoring." *Harvard Business Review*. N.p., 01 Feb. 2011. Web. 15 Oct. 2015.

Ibarra, Herminia. "How Leaders Create and Use Networks." *Harvard Business Review*. N.p., 01 Jan. 2007. Web. 16 Oct. 2015.

Appointment Worksheet: Make the most of your meeting with a career advisor. Complete the first section BEFORE your appointment or drop-in hours.

Class Year: Degree:

What are your expectations for today's appointment (please be specific)?

What are your career interests/goals?

What, if any, obstacles, challenges, or concerns are impacting your career planning?

You will complete this section during your appointment.

Action Plan/Next Steps:

☐   1.

☐   2.

☐   3.

Expected Date of Completion: