

Career Services Corner

The Importance of Networking

by: Linsey Covert

Networking can be the single most important skill to possess to land a job right out of college. At least 60% - in some reports higher - of jobs are landed due to networking. Many college students might ask, "What do you mean by networking?" Networking can be defined as a support system to share information and services among individuals or groups of individuals that have common interests. So really it's developing relationships with people and/or groups of people who can help you find a job in the field you are interested in. If you're shy, the very thought of networking might make you want to jump into a closet or hide in a corner. You might have a vision of the cheesy salesman trying to pitch you the latest product and you think you couldn't possi-

bly just start up a conversation with a complete stranger to try and sell yourself! You have to tell yourself that you can and there are ways to get started with ramping up your networking skills. The beauty nowadays is you have face to face networking and you have social networking such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn to name a few. There are several things to keep in mind when beginning to think about how to network face to face. First of all you want to normalize it by thinking about it as making a new friend. Don't go into a room of business professionals with a mindset that they are intimidating or scary... think of them as a potential friend or someone you can have a casual conversation with. You might want to have a few thoughts or questions you could ask any of these profes-

sionals before approaching them. Set some goals before entering an event where you could potentially be networking. Tell yourself that you would like to get at least X amount of business cards before the end of the evening or that you would like to introduce yourself to at least X amount of people. Setting these goals will give you a focus for the event and may alleviate some of the stress associated with being new to networking. Be sure to be prepared for a networking event by doing research on companies that may have employees attending. This will give you a start for conversation and you may have an opportunity to "wow" the right people. Be sure to do a whole lot of listening which will allow for a whole lot of learning. Don't consume a conversation with nervous babble. Be sure to ask questions and really hear the answers. Lastly, never leave a conversation without a business card! You will want to be sure to follow up with that individual after the event.

Some statistics on social networking from 2010- 1.5 million businesses had a Facebook page and there were 400 million active users, Twitter had 24+ million visitors per month and 500 million tweets per day, and LinkedIn had 60+ million professionals worldwide, including all Fortune 500 companies. These numbers have only increased. What should this mean to you? Social Networking is HUGE and as a potential employee you should be taking advantage of learning to use these websites as a tool to network professionally. Social networking allows you to obtain information on a company and connect to key people within that company. If you are a Facebook user you will want to be sure to clean up your account before friending potential employers. Be sure that your pictures are appropriate and you don't have goofball friends writing inappropriate comments on your wall for everyone to see. You can also use Twitter as a tool to follow the most up to date

information on a company. LinkedIn might be the most useful resource as a professional networking tool. Registering with LinkedIn will give you access to connecting with professionals within your field to give you opportunities to learn through them and their connections. LinkedIn also provides a job searching engine and many times will provide a contact (within LinkedIn) for that particular position. All of these social networking sites require some time and energy in learning how to best utilize them. So what's the bottom line? Get out there and NETWORK!! Meet people...mingle...and show them who you are and what you can bring to their business!

Project TEAM (Con't)

The program is used every day at the school. Students receive "Teamwork Tickets" for doing good things and displaying one of the six foundations. "I always tell teachers they shouldn't be looking for extraordinary behaviors, they should be looking for the behaviors they expect, because students need to know that that's good," Linsey explains, "Students know if they get a ticket, it goes in the house and goes towards the common good of the school". Students can earn tickets by class, grade level or as an individual.

An example of this was seen at one of several assemblies that are held throughout the year. Students could earn tickets for

being quiet while the speaker was talking. During the assembly, each class got to stand up and sing and dance along with their class song while lyrics and animations were shown on a projector screen. Each class had an inspirational pop song, such as Taylor Swift's "Mean" or Katy Perry's "Firework," assigned to their class. They also have a school song, Survivor's "Eye of the Tiger." When these songs are played during a normal school day, it means double tickets for the class whose song is played, or double tickets for the whole school if the school song is played.

At the end of the assembly, the school reads the Project TEAM pledge together. Covert designed the pledge following the

format of her favorite poem, "Anyway" by Mother Teresa. The pledge reads:

"Today I am making a pledge to Project: TEAM.

I am pledging to help those around me when in need.

I am pledging to make the right choice even if the wrong choice seems easier.

I am pledging that I will pick myself up when I am down and help pick up those up around me when they are down.

I am pledging that I will not bully and I will help those that are being bullied.

I am pledging to help make this school and this world a better place by always being willing to give a helping hand and work together as a team!"

Covert is hoping to organize a club on campus for students that would be interested in helping with Project TEAM, as well as career services. Penn State students involved with Project TEAM would be able to go to the schools and work with the students and promote activities such as THON. Penn State students would go through training to prepare them to work with Project TEAM. Students that are interested should contact Linsey Covert

by emailing her at ldr146@psu.edu, calling her at 717-749-6104, or visiting her at her office in 101D General Studies.

Career Services Office Information

101D General Studies

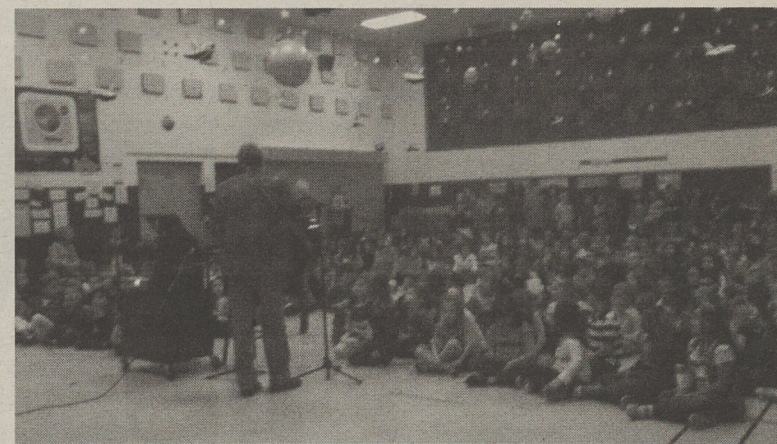
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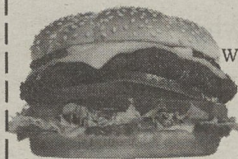
Regional Principal Dr. Sick performs for students at Guilford Hills Elementary School in Chambersburg for Project TEAM.



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