

# Networking Strategies

Adapted from “Networking Strategies” by Jan Cuny



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# WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Making professional  
connections and  
using them wisely



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# With whom should you network?

- Established teachers/researchers in your field
- People who can give you good teaching/career/technical advice
- Funding program directors
- People who could hire you
- Your contemporaries

# What to do at conferences

## Know whom you want to meet and what you want to talk to them about

- Know beforehand who you want to talk to
- Write their names down
- Know what you want to talk to them about
- Read their papers and check out their webpages

## Know what the people you want to meet look like

- Look on their webpages or in technical journals
- Ask others to point them out
- You should know what all the people in your field look like



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# What to do at conferences

CONNECT 

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# What to do at conferences

## Prepare a brief description of your work

- What your work is about
- Why it is important, why your solution separates you from the rest of the pack
- Need 3-sentence, 5-minute and 15 minute versions
  - Practice

## Ask a question during a talk

- No matter if you think it is stupid!



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# What to do at conferences

## Introduce yourself to the speaker after the talk

- “I liked your talk”
- “I have a question”
- Explain a different slant you may have
- Describe a related work

## Engage in hall talk

- Everyone is in the hall talking about their work



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# What to do at conferences

## Follow your personal style

- Be sociable and friendly to the people you meet
- Talk to them in a way that is natural and comfortable for you

## Use your contacts to get new contacts

- Get friends, your advisor, colleagues to introduce you
- Do the same for others



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# What to do at conferences

## Make lunch and dinner plans

- Pick a table where people are talking socially – not deep in a technical conversation
- Ask if someone standing alone has dinner/lunch plans

## Talk to people you meet by chance

- Talk to someone who happens to sit next to/in front of/behind you
  - Make a comment on the last talk
  - Ask about something you didn't understand
  - Talk about what you liked or didn't like about the talk



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# What to do at conferences

**Talk to people who happen to come up to you**

- Don't always be on the lookout to not see others who want to talk to you

**Talk to people about their lives as well as their work**

- Be interested if someone mentions family or travel or hobbies
- Don't pry



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# What to do at conferences

## Offer to help out when you can

- Bring people together who could help each other
- Suggest papers or colleagues they should know

## Volunteer

- Introduce yourself to an editor of a journal in your field
- Offer to help with an upcoming conference
- Be responsible!



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# What to do at conferences

## Don't hang around with your friends

- You already know them – meet other people

## Don't just stand there – speak!

- Ask someone about their research
- Have a specific question ready if you know their research
  - “I just read your paper and I was wondering if you could tell me more about...”
  - “Have you done anything further on it?”
  - “Who else is working on this topic?”



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# What to do at conferences

## Write it down

- After you've talked to someone
- Don't assume you'll remember what you talked about or what you are supposed to do
- Note their name on the conference attendee list and what you talked about – Connect!
- Give people your business card and write on the back what they told you they were going to do
- Write down technical ideas from a talk
- If someone asks you a question you can't answer, write it down and email them later with "That was an interesting question; it's made me think. Here's a possible answer." or "Here's a step in the right direction. Do you want to work on it together?"
- Send someone a paper or idea you saw that was related to a talk they gave



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# What to do at conferences

## Do joint work together

- Particularly good with people on your own level

## Invite them to give a talk at your university

- They might return the opportunity



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# What to do at conferences

## See the same people again

- Build long-term, stronger relationships



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# What to do when not at conferences

## Talk to people at your own organization

- Within your department
- Outside your area
- Administrators

## Send preprints

- Connect to people working on a related problem



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# What to do when not at conferences

**Meet with visitors to your department**

**Meet with program directors**



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# What to do when not at conferences

## Ask for help when you can use it

- Be clear about what the person can do for you



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# When it doesn't go as planned

- If people ignore you – move on
  - Their bad social skills
- Be professional
  - Avoid mistaken intentions

Welcome to the Old Girls Network!