

Networking

Christopher Galbraith's talk focuses on networking and how it truly works. He described how most of the job opportunities out there are never published or advertised but are instead filled with recommendations and referrals from trustworthy employees. Basically, mentoring plays a big part in networking as you need to reach out to new people in the industry to get new mentors and thus create a good network for yourself.

Galbraith also explained how before we even land an interview, we need to understand the industry we are interested in (its players, its suppliers, and its customers), need to understand the organizational level (basically how the employees operate), and the role-specific (daily operations/ unique skills required for the organization). Among other things, Galbraith mentioned that practice makes perfect, you need to ask around in order to find the right opportunities and you need to sell yourself hard as a potential new employee. In other words you have to make a powerful strong first impression.

In addition, Galbraith mentioned that the definition of networking we should use is the 'Hunting Approach,' which basically means that we should use informational interviews to gain knowledge/ expertise and to be referred to the job opportunities we are dreaming of. Finally, he closed the presentation by giving some pointers:

1. Do your research on the prospective company first. You want to know the basic information before you reach out.
2. Reach out to the prospective mentors at least twice since they may be too busy, and they may need reminders.

3. Consider the following elements for an email- Person recommending you, what you expect to achieve, your request, and of course express gratitude for their time.
4. Avoid spelling mistakes and contractions.
5. List your possible objectives- Explain you want to learn from them, then move to making contacts and finally hoping for an opportunity.
6. Do not take more than thirty minutes from your new network connection/ mentor. Make sure they know you know their time is unbelievably valuable.
7. Make sure you are prepared for the common questions regarding your background and as to why you are interested in the company or in the industry.
8. Identify 'chit-chat' talking points to use as 'ice-breakers' on next communication.
9. Remember that face-to-face interviews are basically screening interviews. Be ready for them. Be ready to sell yourself hard to this new company.
10. Know that internships eliminate the risk for your prospective new employer and that they will basically sample you. Because of that, you need to know this is necessary most of the times and you should do your best if this applies to you.
11. Do not forget to send a thank you note for their time.
12. Keep your new network connection/ mentor updated as to your progress. In other words, do not always make it about benefiting you, you can just touch base with them occasionally. This is a collaboration after all.
13. You can always start making connections and growing your network even when you are uncertain about what you want. In fact, that is the best time to start your network.
14. Remember that 'hope' is not a good strategy.

Personal Statement

I believe everybody can apply Galbraith's experiences and talk to their lives. It is easy to see how we can often make some of the mistakes he mentioned. It was very interesting to hear the pointers he closed the presentation with. That was in fact my favorite part. I think those pointers could be used as one's 'bible' when trying to network and find new opportunities. On a very personal note, I did some networking on my own as part of a previous class and that got me a new job promotion just based on an informational interview I requested with the CEO of my company. I was working as a Student Success Advisor for an online school for about six months. Fast forward to an assignment from one of my Masters in Interdisciplinary Studies classes that asked me to have an informational interview with a prospective mentor. I requested the CEO of my organization to give me some of her time. When I had the informational interview, I mentioned what my goals were and how I wanted to soon move into social media full time. I elaborated on my knowledge of social media and recreation; I also mentioned important information I knew from the organization based on my time at the company as of then. Weeks later, an opportunity came for a new social media manager for the company and the CEO herself contacted me to tell me she wanted to interview me for that position. Now, that is my new position in the organization. While this may seem a bit easier, I still think I applied pretty much half of the pointers Galbraith mentioned. I am hoping to continue to use them for future opportunities.