

Network Your Way to Success

BU alumni helping alumni

BY REBECCA GLOE

NETWORKING IS ABOUT helping others before they ask for help. The two-way concept is simple: you make yourself available to support colleagues and answer their questions, and they, in turn, make themselves available to help you.

It takes time to make the right connections and develop an effective network. The key is to have a plan.

Go social.

YOU HAVE ACCESS to the exclusive BU Alumni Association at linkd.in/BUalumni, a group of professionals ready and willing

NETWORKING: IT'S NOT ABOUT ASKING FOR A JOB

"Networking is a lifelong pursuit and a lot like breathing. For example, when you exercise, you breathe a lot harder, but when you stop exercising, you don't stop breathing, you just breathe a little less. When you are looking for new opportunities or learning about new industries, you network a lot harder, but when you've finished, you don't stop networking, you just network a little less."—*Boston University Lecturer Gary Bergman*

NETWORKING IS NOT ASKING FOR A JOB. AS A RESULT, IT:

- Eliminates pressure between you and your contact;
- Gives you the opportunity to ask questions you wouldn't normally ask in an interview; and
- Allows your contact to be at ease in agreeing to meet with you.

NETWORKING IS ABOUT ASKING FOR AID

- Advice
- Information
- Referrals

to network with you just because you're a fellow alum. If you are a member of your school or college group, consider becoming a member of the association. The benefits of a niche group complement the benefits of a multidisciplinary group.

LinkedIn (linkedin.com) announced recently that it had hit 150 million members, and it continues to grow daily as the online leader of professional networking. Bullhorn Reach (cheers to the alumni working there) recently came out with its 2012 Social Recruiting Activity Report, which shows that LinkedIn gets 8.8 times more job applications than Facebook and 3 times more than Twitter. Recruiters are on social media. Alumni are on social media. Are you?

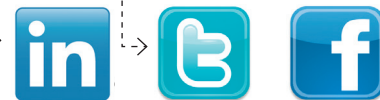
Where do you get started? In your neighborhood.

ORGANIZED BY GEOGRAPHY, industry, or shared interests, BU Alumni Networks are all over the world, helping you to engage in the ways that are the most meaningful to you. You'll reconnect with classmates, faculty, and the BU community, and have opportunities to network with people who share a common goal for social, educational, and professional advancement. There's a BU Alumni Network for you at bu.edu/alumni/networks.

Your online brand.

WE HAVE ENTERED an era where the concept of "branding" no longer refers exclusively to a product or company. Bright and competent individuals can display their abilities and develop their reputation online by participating in industry or alumni discussions on platforms such as LinkedIn. Your feedback and participation reinforce the image of your brand. As a result, you might find a position (or a position might find you) more quickly.

• linkd.in/BUalumni
facebook.com/BUalumni
twitter.com/BUalumni



At work.

NETWORKING CAN BE of value to you in your current job. It needn't be something that is exclusively geared toward a job change. Consider who is already in your network. You probably have a number of colleagues, both old and new, who already know you and your work ethic and are well positioned to help you succeed.

The best time to network is when you're not looking for a job. Savvy networkers start building relationships and helping other people at every opportunity. That way, when you are looking for a job, a promotion, a new hire, or simply advice, you have an established network you can call on to help you out.

What's in it for me?

SOME NETWORKERS LOOK for others to pass them referrals. Successful networkers are always looking to help others first. It's about building a community of people who trust you, will ask you questions, let you contribute your expertise, will listen when you need help, and will provide assistance when in a position to do so.

Networking is about give-and-take. If you enjoy keeping in touch with others, then networking is easy work. So easy, in fact, that you probably network more than you think, without any end goal in mind.

Suppose you're interviewing for a job at a new company. Perhaps you've lost touch with an old roommate. Maybe you're moving to a new state or country where you don't know a soul. Or suppose you're in need of a professional, such as a dentist. Why not rely on a fellow BU grad?

Ask anyone who is active with the BU Alumni Association, and they'll tell you that the benefits are the people you'll meet, the connections you'll make, and the opportunities that will come your way. And it's all free.

Your BU network. It could prove to be your most useful career tool yet.