

HOW TO GET A JOB PART 2

By Mark Brownley

Start connecting with industry in 1st year, not 6th year

Checklist

- 1.** Don't leave your industry connection to your last year. Start in your first year. If you start meeting people who have the power to employ you during your first year of study, relationships start building and so does your confidence in being able to build them. Your visibility also increases and you remain front-of-mind for opportunities like internships and eventually employment. You can get a jump start on your competition, your fellow students.
- 2.** Size up the market. Think about where you want to work, doing what with whom and tailor your industry connection strategy accordingly. Make a list of the people you should meet to deepen your understanding of the industry and employment opportunities. Then approach them.
- 3.** Keep a diary or industry journal. Always record your meetings. Who you met, the date, contact details and what came out of the discussion. It gives you an excellent reference point for future follow-up and is the start of your all-important contacts list.
- 4.** Get used to rejection. Despite your best endeavours and professional and courteous behaviour, some people just don't want to play ball. They will either ignore you or pass you off to someone else (which is still useful, creating another contact). Alternatively, you'll meet them and seemingly nothing worthwhile will come from it. But there is always something to learn so reflect on the bad meetings also. Don't be dejected, it's all part of life experience. Move onto the next one quickly.
- 5.** Work out who you need to meet. Don't restrict your attention to high profile leaders, entrepreneurs or business leaders. Everyone tries to get to them and so should you if it's important to your career journey. However, a lot of unknown engineers are doing extraordinary work. Find out who they are and meet and learn from them.
- 6.** Become an intern. Internships, placements, vacation work. Whatever. Spend time up close and personal with the companies you admire and the people you need to meet. Find out how their placements work and get in the queue early. Share your experiences with other students that will help enrich their learning and confer "maven" status on you on campus. That's good, trust us. Google it.
- 7.** Mix it up. Move across industries, don't limit yourself. Having a broader perspective helps to clarify your thinking and might even throw up some surprise options you hadn't thought about. The military as well as management consultants employ engineers. Lots of them. Keep an open mind as you explore the world around you.

8. Stay in touch without harassing your industry contacts. This is a fine line. Constantly bombarding your contacts and willing industry leaders or professionals with requests for meetings - or employment – will have the opposite effect. They'll just ignore you and you'll tarnish your personal brand. Their time is scarce so be patient and respectful. A friendly reminder down the track is fine just don't be a pest.
9. Ask for advice – and opportunities. When you come face to face with industry leaders and professional engineers, make the most of your time. Be prepared, don't waste their valuable time. It matters to your host. Have a list of questions ready to go and ask them. That's the only way you'll learn. And if you sense opportunity, or even if you don't, ask for that as well or at the very least guidance as to how you can get involved. Don't ask, don't get.
10. Use your relationships and networks. Opening doors can be tricky as a new graduate or young engineer with few powerful contacts. Ask everyone in your family, friendship group, social and professional networks who they know and if they're somehow connected to the companies and people you want to meet. The ask them for an introduction. That's how it's done. And never doubt yourself or your confidence. Understand that 99.9% of people will want to help.

STILL HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

Just email us at tellus@myengineerexchange.com and we'll get right back to you.

