Making Connections at the Engineering & IT Industry Career Day

Networking continues to play an important role in the search for internships and jobs, yet the idea of networking strikes fear in many people, especially students. To reduce that fear, it’s helpful to remember that networking is simply the act of making a connection with someone.

The Center for Student Professional Development offers a number of events where students can begin to build relationships and develop networks with employers and VU alumni.

The upcoming Engineering & Information Technology Industry Career Day (ICD) is ready-made for networking. Interacting with recruiters at the ICD allows you to learn more about their companies, discover what positions are available, and add new contacts to your network.

Remember these key points:

- The purpose for attending an ICD is to make connections.
- Don’t be afraid to talk with recruiters!
- Make sure the recruiter knows who you are, what you have done, and what you are seeking.

The ICD is just one of many opportunities you will have to practice networking. Each professional interaction will help to increase your confidence and improve your skills.

By smiling, showing enthusiasm, maintaining eye contact, and being your (professional) self, you’ll create a positive impression helping employers remember you long after the event.

Use your mentor to help you:

- **Prioritize the companies**
  
  With so many employers, you need to prioritize which companies you want to target during the ICD. Research the participating companies prior to the event and ask your mentor to offer insight and information on companies about which they have knowledge.

- **Rehearse your pitch**
  
  Delivering a well-rehearsed elevator pitch is a key component in networking. Practice your pitch with your mentor as he/she can offer feedback and recommendations to help polish it to perfection.

- **Follow-up after the event**
  
  Check in with your mentor and share impressions after the event. Mentors can offer guidance on how to follow-up with employers.

For more information about networking visit the Center’s [website](http://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/mentor).

Conversation Topics & Activities for This Month

- Spring classes—How are they going? Which subjects are you finding most interesting/challenging?
- Summer plans—What steps have you taken to work toward them?
- Ask your mentor to help you write and practice delivering an [elevator pitch/speech](http://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/mentor).
- Ask your mentor to offer insight/information on companies participating in the Engineering & IT ICD as well as advice on prioritizing those on which you should focus your time/energy.
- Ask your mentor to run through a mock [interview](http://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/mentor) with you via phone/video chat or in person and offer feedback.
- **Engineering & IT Industry Career Day (2/11/14)**—Attend and afterward discuss your experience with your mentor.

* Students — When meeting up with your mentor in person, double check the time and location in advance, dress professionally and make it a point to arrive early. *

Visit us online at [http://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/mentor](http://engineering.vanderbilt.edu/mentor)

Questions or comments? Email us at vuse-mentor@vanderbilt.edu or call (615) 343-8061.