

Course Name- Complete guide for campus interviews: Step by step preparation for Internships and Full-time jobs

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How to network

Hello folks, so welcome to yet another session. Today we will be talking about networking and diving a little bit more deeper into what networking means. Firstly, there are going to be jobs that are not traditionally available to you, that is they might not be there in your school network, they may not come through your placement office. So, it is very important that you actually go ahead start networking to get those roles. So there are gonna be different ways in which today we'll talk about how you would engage and start to get opportunities open up for you. And networking is not gonna be just about jobs, but it's gonna create a lifetime of opportunities for students.

Today, we will begin first session with talking about some traditional networking opportunities. We will not look at online networking for this session, the first session. So, most students have something called a company information session that is organized by their placement team. So, during the session a company comes over and starts presenting to the students about the company.

A bunch of students the ones that are either invited by the placement office or who are interested to actually learn about the company come and sit over in the placement information session. So, it is important for students to recognize that this information session is not something that is to be done very passively, it is something that requires active engagement from students to make the best out of the information session. And what does that mean? So, when you walk into a information session, please be up to date with what the company does, what kind of business are they involved in. try to understand some look at the latest news and try to understand some latest activities or news that are important for the company. And why is all this important? Because at every session there would be opportunities for students to ask questions and it comes out really well polished and something as expression of strong interest if students actually raise valid questions that are interesting for the recruiter or for the company.

So do not think about information session passively, come prepared and if time permits and if there is an opportunity for people to actually go ask the presenter some questions, make it a point to actually approach the presenting team and have a quick word with them. During the time that you have a chance to speak, if you know about roles that the company is actually looking for, it might be a good idea to talk about how good your candidature is and why you are such a good fit for the company. Expressing a strong interest and showing strong passion makes you a great fit for the company and it is something that many recruiters look for when they look at students. So, let me give you a example over here. So, Vinod for example, when he was at Wisconsin Madison, he actually reached out to the team the I think it was a It was one of the big food manufacturing companies.

They had come over to do an information session and we know they actually talked to them during the time that they were doing a presentation and expressed to them that, hey, he was very interested to actually start working in their manufacturing sessions. And that opened up an

opportunity where the recruiter actually wrote down his name on the resume and took it for something that other recruiters would definitely interview later on. So, there is just an anecdotal story, but you should be looking out for such opportunities at the time of information session. Secondly, there would be times where you can actually ask your career development self to actually go ahead to pull up a certain set of companies that you or a group of friends are interested in. If there is for example, at a club for example, supply chain related club that is your company or your school is interested in or maybe some technology related club, you can find those companies that are well known in the space and ask your team, your CDC team to actually invite them over.

If you do not have the buy-in from your CDC, it is also a good idea to actually invite people from your network or your friends network and ask them to come to talk to you and this person is of course from the companies that you are interested in. The reason why you want to do this networking session is that it is an engagement between the person or the company and the university. So, that kind of creates a bridge for further engagement and creates an opportunity for recruiters or potential insider information related to jobs and careers that are open within a company to come up. So, that is a very different line that you might want to pursue. Professors are a gold mine of information.

Professors end up doing a lot of consulting projects and also many industry projects where they are aware of connections within industry that you have absolutely no access to unless you of course reach out to a professor. Working with professors on research work, asking professors to actually give contacts that might be someone that or some company that might actually be interested to absorb your skill is a great start to actually begin your career. For example, when I was at Georgia Institute of Technology, I actually used the professor from the industrial engineering program to actually refer me to programs or teams at Amazon. It worked out well. In fact, there was a team that was hiring that had initially spoken to a professor asking for potential students.

And that helped me get into an interview stage with Amazon and consequently an offer from Amazon. So it is something that you might want to keep a lookout for these fantastic opportunities that comes from engagement via professors. Out of these three channels there is a very different channel which is meeting with people who are totally unconnected through any of the nearest neighbors that you are aware of including yourself. So, you might for example, if you were in Bangalore or any of those big hubs where there are a lot of startups, you would find a lot of the venture capitalists or startups at critical places for example, in good places where they all meet up like Starbucks. I have talked to students who actually have sat and worked in a work office and landed up with internship offers because they were communicating with people around them.

So, these are potential opportunities for you to like reach out to absolute strangers if you meet someone who is interesting in fact if you are aware of who is who of the industry and if you run into a well-known figure putting in a quick word having a connect giving them the recognition and then talking about maybe a good fit or talking about a potential opportunity within a company always throws up good opportunities ahead of course this is not a cup of tea for everyone this is for a people who are a little bit more outgoing but there is definitely an opportunity that is way behind way beyond what you think of traditionally as your university outreach I also want to call out a few things like for example, if your university has things like alumni networks, like IITs have a pan IIT alumni network, irrespective of the IIT you are in or irrespective of the university you are in, you might have a alumni network that you could

leverage. Alumni again are a fantastic set of people and a fantastic resource for you to actually leverage and create opportunities within the industry. Again, we have listed on a couple of other resources. I mean, any sort of workshop, any sort of a place where people who are looking for talent come together is always a potential for you to actually identify opportunities and of course, find a match and end up with a job. So, those are things to watch out for.

So, that covers a traditional networking like I said this used to be the bread and butter of students before the LinkedIn and the digital revolution took over. So, at if you took given a decade back people always used to have like a real person to person communication, but that has of course, been upended of late. One of the most prominent ways in which people network is through LinkedIn networking and we will get into a little bit more details about it. What is a LinkedIn good message? I think that is worth calling out. So, I have lot of people, me, my friends, we all have had connection requests coming in from lot of people around.

And one of the things I noticed is that students tend to not be very focused upon trying to like portray the kind of message or the information that they would need or correctly portray the image to the to the person they're trying to connect with for example the the mail the mail here is a very good effective um message communication message it clearly lays down where the student is from what they are looking for and what they would need as a next step from the person they're connecting with it is to the point It gives a clear background and there is a reason why the both of them need to connect. So, for example, in this particular case, it is that the student mentions that they have been following them, they particularly like their post and they would like to get a deeper dive into the views or the opinion of the author themselves. So, that is a very effective way express interest build a connection with the individual you are trying to connect to and consequently talk about what you would need or what you are expecting from them. Do not at the at the get go start asking for a job at a LinkedIn community where most people are going to be strangers unless it is unless it is someone that you are extremely comfortable with you would have to start off with being a little bit more generic build a little bit more connection with the with the person you are trying to connect with. And consequently, build a relationship in terms of a connection, in terms of a rapport, before asking for things like a job.

The messages that Vinod and I get are something of this order, hey, this is my resume attached, give me a job, right? Or can you refer me? This is my, hey Vinod, hey Vibin, this is my resume, get me a, please refer, right? The point the problem with for these sort of messages is that one there is no connection between me and the person asking the referral yet. So, because of that there is no need for me to invest into that particular individual help them or nurture them and help them grow in their career. Now, if you look at it, there is additional challenges too. So, if someone sends me a resume, I have no idea what that person is really looking for even though they have presented a resume. So, most people might have a certain interest and it is not obvious to a person being asked unless it is explicitly told what they are looking for.

There is also the whole write-up that I have to do as a referrer, which talks about what is the reason that I think the person is a good fit for the role. None of that information is available from this kind of communication. Therefore, these kinds of communications normally do not end up with a success. Let us jump into networking specifically with friends. No, leaving it as something as, hey, there is a connection between you and your friend.

How do you go ahead and develop that sort of like networking from a friend or someone that you know, who is actually in the industry already, right? Always first look at the company page

that your friend or the referrer is already involved in. Try to understand what are the roles that the person is hiring or that the company is hiring for. Only then ask because then your message would be very specific, you have done the homework, you know what the roles are that are open and you can then also tailor your resume to fit in with those skills required for that role and consequently make a statement on why you are a great fit for that particular role. So, it is a great idea to give the job codes as well as the I think there is something called the job id associated with every posting. It actually helps a referrer to narrow it down to a specific role instead of going ahead and searching and trying to find out the role themselves.

So, some truths hard truths for networking in general if you do not know a person there is the success rate of course is of communication is going to be down it is you are asking a favor remember that you are asking a favor and there is no reason why the other person should oblige. So, if you do not hear back from the connection request, if there people do not reflect, I mean if you do not reply back to a great message, please be patient, people have their ups and downs, they have times where they are pressurized at work, they might have family problems or they might not be that interested in that engagement. Please be patient, give the person some time. It is always a good idea to follow up once or twice, but give them a space of like maybe two weeks before you follow up for the first time. And do not pester a person more than twice, it is not a good practice.

Like I said do not ask for a referral directly unless you are in a crunch kind of situation where you have to have a job within a few weeks of their order. It is anyway not a good practice to try and build a connection of that nature. Remember that referral or anything any connection is a sort of an investment. It happens by you spending significant amount of time and then developing a relationship or a connection between individual before asking them for favours including a referral for a job. I also want to add that when you ask for referrals when you ask for first when you ask for connections you might have a success rate of let us say 50 percent or slightly lower maybe 30 percent when you actually reach out for people with connections that is expected it is talking reaching out to strangers and then trying to connect with them.

If you ask for referrals consequently after you might have 1 in 10 or maybe 2 in 10 as your success rate. So, those are some numbers to keep track of ok. Again, networking with the strangers begin by having some sort of like connection with the individual, read up about the individual, read up about their post, see if there is some mutual connections that you can be leveraged to build up a sort of like a familiarity with the individual. Always try and begin by having some conversations, general conversations, ask for information sessions, ask for opinions on certain subjects that you are interested in. It is good to build that relationship a little long term rather than jump straight into hey, I found you on doing this particular job, I am interested in this job, get me a job.

That is a rather poor networking strategy. Be genuinely interested in people, I think that is maybe the number one call out. Networking in LinkedIn does not mean that it is separate from the reality. The reality of life is people respect you as much as you respect them and honor them. So, try to build a genuine liking for individuals, try to develop genuine bonds and trust that you can actually leverage, not just for your next job, but throughout your career and your life.

Now that we have spoken a little about all these networking opportunities and referral process, I think it is good to understand why referrals are so important. Of course, the referrals may not be that important if you are looking purely from a campus placement position, but if you are

looking for any opportunity that comes over and beyond campus opportunity, referrals become significantly important and we will get into details. If you remember one of the slides, we discussed how the normal success rate by applying blindly for jobs is maybe 1 in 100. So, if you directly drop in your resume into a certain recruitment portal and hope that you would be actually noticed, it is almost 0. It is going to be very very low chance that you actually would get even called for or even screened for the job.

But things dramatically change if you actually have a referral. So, the chances based upon a referral is close to like 25 to 30 percent and they are significantly different. So, it is a one in three chance of you getting. So, if you have like 10 applicants in, you can definitely expect a few of them going to the stage of being screened and consequently ending up with the interview. So, big takeaway do not apply directly without a referral use referral as a way for you to stand out from the rest of the applicants and find an insider to the company.

Now, referrals have a remarkable success if they are also from the hiring manager. So, remember if there is a team hiring and the hiring manager is someone that you actually reached out to and connected. The hiring manager who refers to himself to actually select you is almost 100 percent chance of success. So, closer you are to the job and the team that is actually being hired, higher is your chance rate of being successful of being accepted, being called for interview and consequently landing up in the dream job that you are interested in. I mentioned this earlier, but every referral referrer has to add some details when they refer.

So, they have to mention, hey this is the individual, these are the contact details and also why they think that candidate is a great fit for that role and that company. So, they have to write a blurb, it does not have to be much, but it has to be a significant description of what that fit is. That description is something that the hiring manager and the recruiter is going to read. So, better is the targeted message, better is the input from the referrer saying that this is a candidate is a great fit for both the company and the role, a higher chance for the candidate to be actually called for interviews. So, when you network remember that the referrers are actually putting up their reputation on the line by giving a validation to you.

So, remember that to enjoy that validation and the trust you have to earn it and consequently you need to have some sort of communication with the individual and build some trust over a period of time to actually get good successful referrals. So, this is again describing more of why that matters. Again, more the referrer knows about you, more is a valuable feedback that they can provide or higher is a chance that they can recommend strongly to the team. And by strongly I mean, for example, that there were people who reached out to me and I knew those candidates really well because they had been in touch with me for a while. And consequently, what that meant for me was that I would ring up the team because I would know, for example, working for the tech companies in US, I would know the recruiters and I would know the hiring managers, I would actually give them a call and say, hey, I dropped in a referral for this candidate, I think it is a great fit for both for the company and the team.

In fact, if my team was hiring, I would actually take him, but I know you and I know this candidate, I think it is a great fit. That is a kind of a strongly worded push that a referrer can do if things align really well. So, that is a state you want to get into and all your efforts should be directed towards that goal. Who should the referrer be? I would say the closer it is the referrer is to the position, the higher the chance of that role actually working out favorably for the candidate. So, for example, to give you some truths, there was for the first role that I applied for when I was in US, the candidates I competed with, one of the candidate was actually referred

from the VP of the company and he was directly called in for the interview and consequently, throughout the interview process, there was always a pressure that, hey, there is someone who has a very close connection with the vice president of the company and therefore, we would need to consider that candidate more seriously than others.

It plays into the psyche, it plays into the role. So, the stronger the referral, the higher the position that the referrer enjoys within the company, there is a greater chance of course for things being pushed through. One of the friends, one of Vinod's friends who was actually his colleague got referred by the head of a large biotech company and that consequently led to him having successful interviews with the team that was hiring him and being like taken in for the team. Higher a person is with the organization, the larger and stronger is a referral that they put in for the candidate. It is important that you be very clear on the roles and you tell the truth throughout the process that a referrer would know very well about you and consequently find things that are a great fit for you.

So, keep that honest, keep the communication honest, keep that personal, build that connection only then you will see success that comes up. What is the summary of all that we discussed for networking that we have had, whether it is in person, whether it is through LinkedIn? The summary is that these relationships, these networking opportunities are a genuine opportunity to build lifelong trust. So, do not think of them as, hey, I have to have a connection to get a job. Think of them as connections and relationships that you built that will stay with you throughout your life. So, these are exactly like your colleagues or three or like exactly like your friend network that you have built the more time and energy you invest into it better is the outcome that you can get from them.

So, when you meet people, when you reach out to people on LinkedIn, keep the genuine nicety with you, be genuine in your approach, try to look at your career from a longer term perspective and try to see that how would you grow as an individual over period of time rather than narrow short term interest of what do I get from this whole communication or how do I get from this connection at the immediate short term. Short terms might or might not work, long terms always work, keep that in mind. Job market, the nature of the jobs fluctuate up and down, but you would always find that there are jobs that open up in the dream companies are looking for and in different times that the economy changes. So, if you wait long enough, if you have the right connections and if you build your skills the right way, if you have a good match with the job descriptions, things will work out perfectly well. And you would need to use your networking strategy as something in addition to everything else you bring to the table.

And it is a powerful component to have, but it is not the only thing that you should be focusing on. Build your entire portfolio. Use this as a powerful increment to how you network and reach and augment what you bring to the table. that we come to the close of the networking slides I think it is very important that individuals whether they are looking from the campus placement perspective or from the off-campus placement perspective think about networking really well even for the cases where you are trying to like land up in a job for your on-campus roles It is a great idea to talk to people who currently work in the within the industry. So, for example, if you are working for if you are interviewing for company X, it is a great idea to talk to people who are competitors to X.

It is a great idea to people who are working for X and also in the roles that you are interested in the company X. And what does all that mean? When you have conversations later with the recruiter or with hiring managers, you can have that discussion with them saying, hey, I spoke

with these many people, both within industry or within the company. And this is the understanding I have. These were the feedback they gave to me. And this is why I think I'll be able to add value to the company or I'm a great fit for the organization.

That's a fantastic answer. So always think of networking opportunity as something that you can use to augment what you bring to the table and use it well and be successful in your careers. I end that this whole presentation with this note. Thanks.