



Growing Your Career

Sara Steever, CTO | Principal





Questions

1. What was your early life like?
2. Tell me about an obstacle you've overcome?
3. Who was most important in your development?
4. Tell me about a pivotal point in your career?
5. What did you learn from mentoring or being mentored?
6. **What is your best advice for people starting out their careers?**
7. What do you hope to be remembered for?
8. What concerns you most about where agriculture is today?

Two Themes

Being a successful person

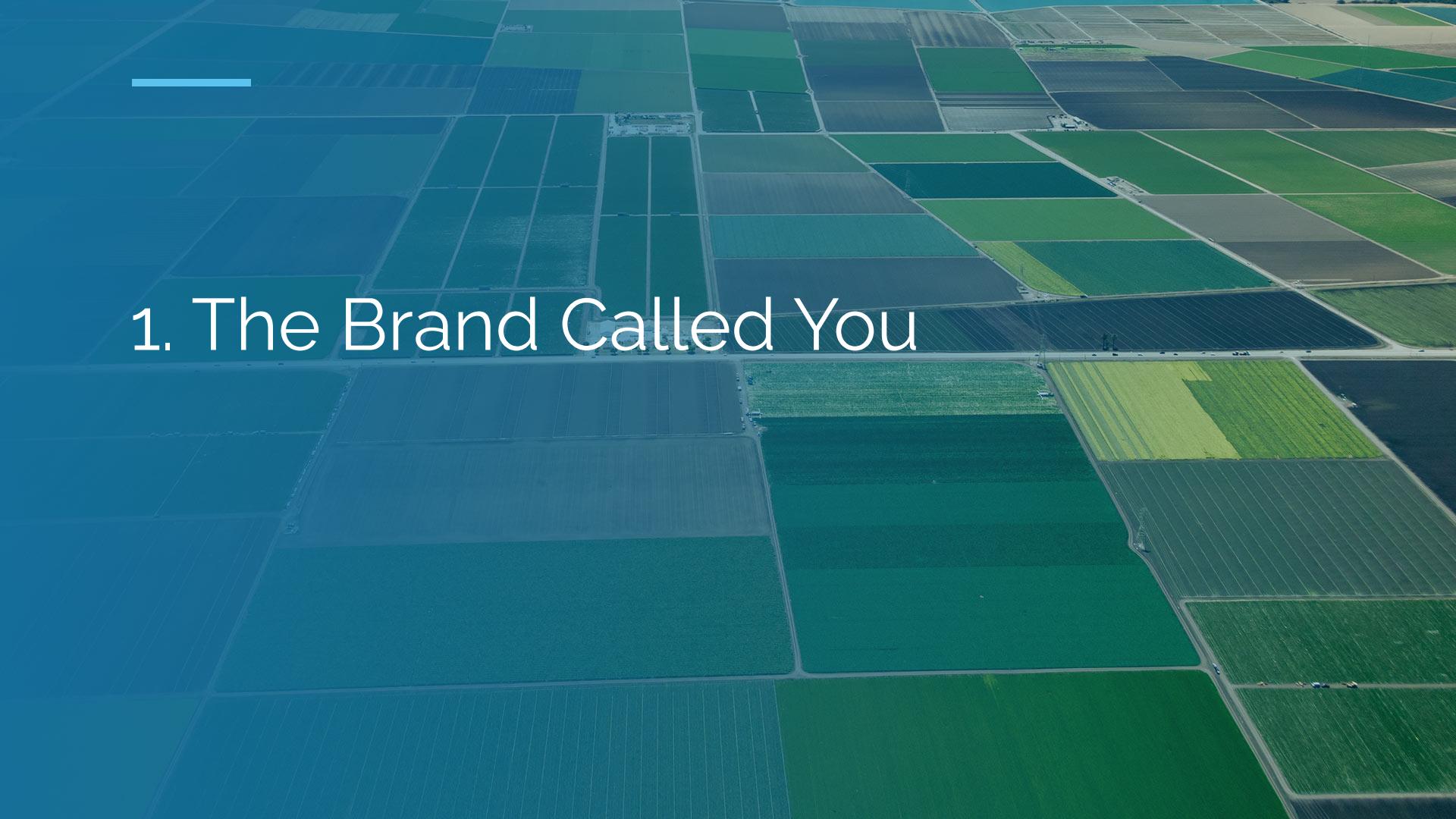
Building a Strategic Network





Additional Research

- Harvard Business Review
- Extreme Ownership: How U.S. Navy SEALs Lead and Win
- Barking Up the Wrong Tree: The Surprising Science Behind Why Everything You Know About Success is (Mostly) Wrong.
- How to Talk to Anyone: 92 Little Tricks for Big Success
- Gallup: CliftonStrengths

An aerial photograph showing a vast expanse of agricultural land. The fields are organized into a complex grid pattern, with various colors representing different crops or stages of cultivation. The patterns are mostly rectangular, though some are more irregular. A few small roads or paths cut through the fields. The overall scene is a dense, geometric landscape.

1. The Brand Called You

Universe of people you might work with



People you work
with in agriculture

A photograph of a wooden structure engulfed in flames. The fire is intense, with bright orange and yellow flames consuming the wooden beams and rafters. Smoke and ash are visible against a dark, smoky sky. The word "Nope" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif letters in the upper left quadrant of the image.

Nope

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Your Brand

Think of yourself as a product, constantly needing to have new features and benefits to ensure that you're keeping up with the fast-paced changes that are going on in your field or your industry.

– Linda Rader, GM, Iron Solutions

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Believe in Your Strengths

The more you can do when you are younger to identify those things you like, what your talents are, and your strengths and pursue those things, and do not let people, even your parents, talk you out of it.

– Amy Bradford, Corporate Relations Manager, Growmark

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Presence

Have a presence, whether talking on the phone or face-to-face with an audience. Connect with people eye-to-eye and stay with them until they give you the opportunity to move on to the next person..

– Gloria Basse, The Context Network

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Stay Current

It's always important to read news regularly so that you are informed on what's happening. Have something to talk about, whether it's a cocktail party or sitting next to someone on an airplane.

– Jill Wheeler, Head of Sustainable Productivity, Syngenta

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Continuous Learning

Be open to learning opportunities - that's almost more important than the position or the company. Your company may provide those learning opportunities for you, but you also have to seek them out yourself.

*– Mary Shelman, Consultant and Former Director,
Harvard Business School Agribusiness Program*

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Continuous Learning

Create a professional development plan that allows you to be more effective and successful. Broaden your perspective not only about your area of work and career, but also about things that enrich your life.

*– Jim Spain, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies/
Animal Science Professor, University of Missouri*

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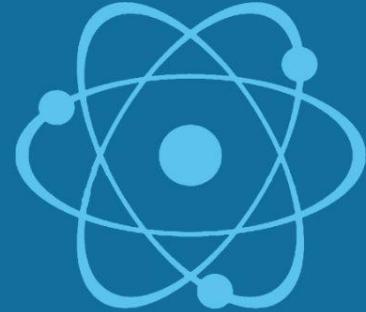
Continuous Learning

Be adaptable. Technology, consumer trends and a changing world population will drive innovation in agriculture and change the way we produce and talk about food. This will create opportunities that may not exist today, but will tomorrow.

– Nate Janssen, Director, Farmer Relations, Dairy Management Inc.

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SCIENCE: Growth Mindset



Abilities and intelligence can be developed

- Embrace challenges
- Persist in the face of setbacks
- See effort as the path to mastery
- Learn from criticism
- Find inspiration in the success of others

– Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D.

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Cultivating Confidence

If you find yourself stumbling in those first one to three years, it's probably a lot of what's in your head. Just refocus and rebuild your own self-awareness and confidence.

– Lisa Tronchetti, Dairy Products Merchandiser, Gavilon Group, LLC

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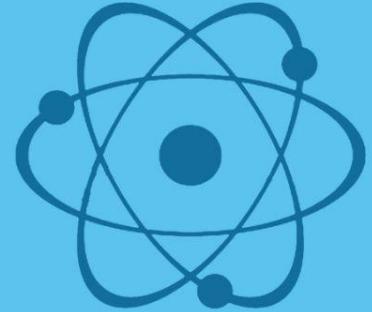
Cultivating Confidence

You always want to be more educated or more prepared than you are. So, even after all these years, still one of my obstacles is myself.

*– Susan Tronchetti, Business Development Professional,
Tronchetti & Tronchetti*

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SCIENCE: Self-Esteem Fails



Self-esteem is the greatest sickness known to man or woman because it's conditional.

– Dr. Albert Ellis

Soldiers with **self-compassion** are far less likely to develop PTSD. In fact, how self-compassionate they are is a better predictor of avoiding PTSD *than how much combat they faced.*

SCIENCE: Self-Compassion



Benefits:

- Same advantages as high self-esteem, with no discernible downsides
- Less anxiety and depression
- Less likely to procrastinate
- More happiness, optimism and positive emotions
- Easier to forgive others, too

Become Self-Compassionate



Do what Navy SEALS do:

- Understand the mistake
- Reframe negative thoughts as positive ones
- Say it out loud
- Yes, you read that right

Consider being as kind to yourself as you are to anyone else you love.

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Become Self-Compassionate

Life is going to throw you some real curve balls. It's going to take you off your feet; it's going to knock you over once in a while. And then you stop, pick yourself up and say, 'Okay, what did I learn from this today?' And then try to make sure that you don't do it again.

*- Theresia Gillie, State Director and Past President,
Minnesota Soybean Growers Association*

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Secret to Resilience

Believe that whatever challenges we're facing right now, there are some incredible opportunities that these challenges are bringing that we just can't see right now. Have the perspective that good things are coming your way.

*– Rebecca Cisek, Global Communication Leader,
Johnson & Johnson*

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Lessons Learned

You may have to ask if there is a lesson there? To me that's not a sign of a weakness. It's a sign of strength and integrity if you as an employee can step back and say, 'How could I have done this better?'

– Karla Trautman, Interim Director, South Dakota State University Extension

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Preparing for Leadership



- Simple but not easy
- Lead without the title
- Leading up the chain
- Taking the blame
- There are no bad teams, just bad leaders

Your Brand Online (Pre 2020)



Improve your writing – Grammarly

Google yourself

Social media – there are no secrets

LinkedIn – your professional self

Facebook – your personality and humanity

Twitter – advocacy

Everything else – still true, there are no secrets

Master Video Conferencing



- Camera on - always
- Energy and smile
- Frame and light yourself
- Backdrops
- No eating
- No RBF
- Teleprompter cheats
- Glasses
- Prep for the awkward beginning

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Work on Your Work Habits

Come in early, leave late. This will be easier to do earlier in your career. Call it paying your dues, but it will be noticed.

– *Walt Cooley, Editor, Progressive Dairy Publishing*

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Work on Your Work Habits

Get up early, go to bed late, and get after it.

– *Evelyn Brandt Thomas, Founder, Brandt Consolidated, Inc.*

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Work on Your Work Habits

Serve. You should work to serve the organization rather than work in the context of how will this advance my career.

*– Jim Spain, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies/
Animal Science Professor, University of Missouri*

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Work on Your Work Habits

Be flexible and work hard – going over and above what you are asked demonstrates commitment to the organization.

– Marvin Kokes, Vice President, Agribusiness Lending at Farm Credit Services of America; Past President of NAMA

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New Job, Same Company

Don't think that you have to go into one job and never do anything else, even in the same organization, the same office and in the same chair.

*- Amy Bradford, Corporate Relations Manager, Growmark
Former NAMA President*

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Surprise!

It's not about you.

– *Your New Network*

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2. Build a Strategic Network

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Relationships are Key

The most important thing for someone who wants to be successful in their career is relationships. This is especially important in our industry since we are such a tight-knit community.

– Ryan Power, VP, Producers Livestock Credit Corporation

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Networking Hack

If you want to make friends, be friendly.

– My Mom

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Be Intentional

Take notice of the people that you respect and like in your everyday life, because those types of people that you feel are doing things right are going to be your best guides.

*– Sheri Seger, Chief Retirement Officer
Former DTN/The Progressive Farmer Rockstar
Former NAMA President*

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Apply a Process



- Identify people to meet
- Set your calendar for outreach
- Stay well-versed in industry issues
- LinkedIn mining and Google alerts
- Attend in-person events
- Handwritten stands out

Super-Connectors



- People who know everyone and enjoy making introductions
- Ask them: who else do you know that I should talk to?

Networking Events



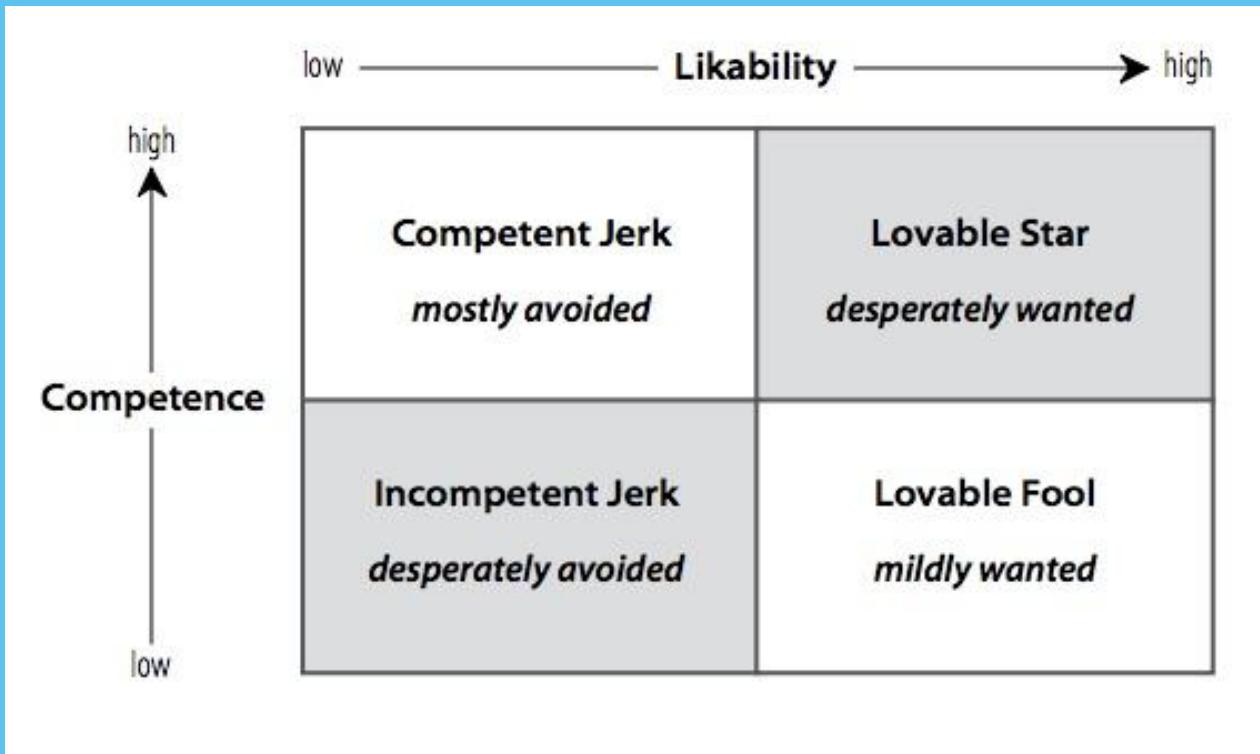
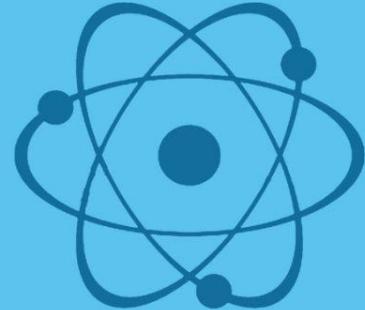
- Have your pitch down
- Set realistic goals
- Scope the room
- Look for people standing alone or in open groups

Networking Events



- Smiling
- Eye contact
- Learn the graceful exit
- Follow up

Science: Whose Likeable?



Conversation Starters



- Seek thoughts and opinions without judging
- Ask questions, then listen
- Resist correcting
- Fight your urge to one-up
- Only say positive things about others
- End on an up-note

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My, What Big Ears You Have

Oftentimes you really don't know what you don't know, so just stop and listen. If you ask the right questions and you listen more than you talk, you'll always have information at your fingertips.

*- Sheri Seger, Chief Retirement Officer
Former DTN/The Progressive Farmer Rockstar
Former NAMA President*

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Hello?

Be present. I cannot tell you the number of conversations that I have that the person that I'm talking to is distracted because they keep looking at their phone.

- Cyndi Young, Director of Brownfield and Ag Operations, Learfield

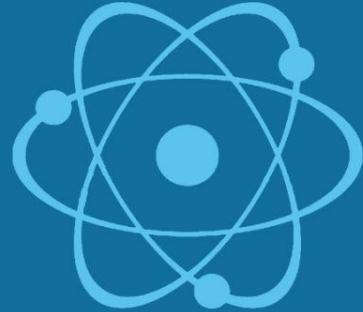
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Graceful Exits



- Politely extend your hand
- Reiterate part of the conversation
- Offer your business card and go
- If possible, introduce them to someone new

SCIENCE: Gotta Run



- Begin with telling someone you only have a few minutes before you have another obligation
- Takes pressure off the conversation

Open Circle



- Stand so there's always an opening in your conversation circle
- Welcome
- Make introductions
- Then restart the story

Safe Questions



- Where are you from?
- Have you vacationed or traveled lately?
- What are your challenges?
- What do you do for fun?
- Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?
- Would you like to be famous? In what way?

Safe Questions - Con't



- Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time?
- For what in your life do you feel most grateful?
- What would constitute a "perfect" day for you?
- If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one ability, what would it be?
- What is your greatest accomplishment?
- What is your favorite memory?

No Orphan Answers



- Every answer should include a hint for the next question
- Give answers that offer connecting points
- End on an up-note

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Give Before You Take

By giving and serving, you learn, grow and succeed.

*- Jim Spain, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies/
Animal Science Professor, University of Missouri*

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Asking Favors

He that has once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another, than he whom you yourself have obliged.

– *Benjamin Franklin's Dad*

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Informational Interviews

The biggest thing is to never, ever hesitate to ask for an informational interview and end it by asking whom you should talk to next.

- Jill Wheeler, Head of Sustainable Productivity, Syngenta

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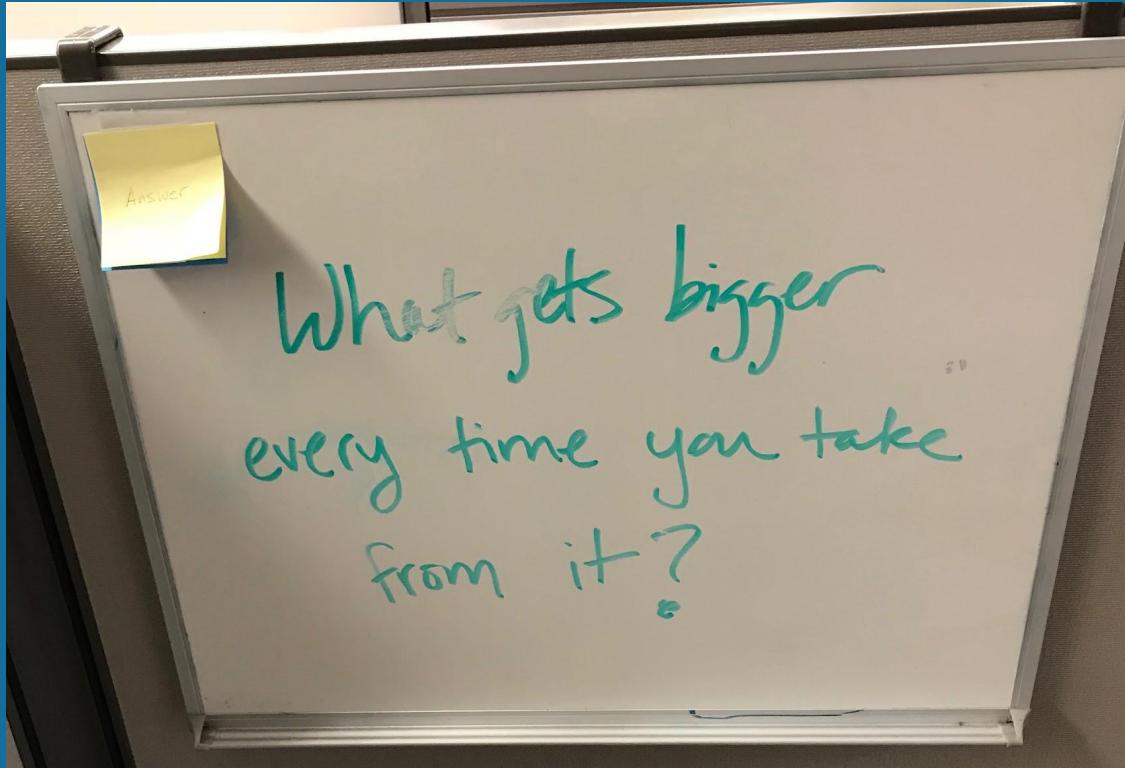
Always Take the Interview

When networking, don't think of it as looking for your next opportunity, but solving problems and finding what the marketplace needs. Never turn down an interview. You need the practice and you never know how they may be connected.

- ***Buck Trawick, Marketing Director, Kubota Tractor, Retired***

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Internal Networking



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Surround Yourself

Find a group of passionate, motivated peers who will drive you to do better. You are who you surround yourself with.

– Holly Rader, Agri-Business Division Manager, Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce

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Nurture Your Network

It's not only building, but continuously nurturing that network and checking back in with them. Giving updates and getting their updates. You never know whom people know.

– Amy Tranzillo, Senior Consultant, The Context Network

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Mentors

Find mentors who take a genuine interest in you and in your development.

– Sarena Lin, President, Chief Transformation Officer, Bayer

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Mentor Feedback

Get your work reviewed by your mentor and your colleagues often. Ask them to give honest and critical feedback. This will show you're earnestly working to improve.

– ***Walt Cooley, Editor, Progressive Dairy Publishing***

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What to Expect from a Mentor



- Career guidance
- Emotional support when times get tough
- Role model, giving you something to emulate and aspire to

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Mentees Drive the Relationship

It's on the mentee to drive the relationship. Don't expect a mentor to be the one calling. The mentee schedules the meeting or comes prepared to talk about a specific issue.

*– Susanne Wasson, U.S. Commercial Leader, Crop Protection,
Dow AgroSciences*

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Peer to Peer

- Can be a powerful part of networking
- Can provide career advice
- Can provide emotional support



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Sponsors

The key thing for a sponsor is that it's somebody that is a bit more influential. They bring your name up when there's an opportunity.

– *Lisa Tronchetti, Dairy Products Merchandiser, Gavilon Group, LLC*

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Become a Mentor

Being a mentor is the rent we pay for a good life. Young professionals look to us, watch what we do, what we say and how we act and how we treat others. It casts a wide ripple.

– *Wendy Pinkerton, U.S. Industry Relations, Zoetis*

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Learn as a Mentor

There is an old adage that you really learn a subject only when you have a chance to teach it. The same thing applies to mentoring. You have a positive impact on future leaders in your profession, and can grow as a professional, too.

*- Jim Spain, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies/
Animal Science Professor, University of Missouri*

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Coaching Upstream

Certainly, you need to be coaching people that you report to, that are your leaders, because that's part of the reason they hired you is for your expertise and what you can bring to the table.

*– Rebecca Cisek, Global Communication Leader,
Johnson & Johnson*

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Opportunities Through NAMA

NAMA provided me opportunities to network with other people throughout ag, to sit side-by-side with some fabulous professionals and experts in their space. NAMA provides amazing opportunities!

*- Jenna Oesch, Global Head of Marketing Communications
at Syngenta, Vegetables*

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Be a Joiner



- NAMA
- Alumni associations
- Professional societies
- Community service organizations
- Faith based organizations

Grateful



- Respect the opportunities you are given
- Follow up and follow through
- Express your gratitude

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Lastly

Life is not fair or easy. Your life is defined by the choices you make. Where you are today is the result of every choice you've ever made, so choose wisely!

– Greg Guse, Retired, Paulsen and 2012 Agri-Marketer of the Year

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Thank You



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