

POTENTIAL CAREER PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Based on recent survey results of over 5,000 respondents, Dartmouth alumni are interested in career development programming that facilitate networking, but they also want the opportunity to strengthen and build connections with one another. All programming offered should allow alumni ample time for socializing as alumni-to-alumni contact remains a primary driver of alumni interest and attendance.

Dartmouth Regional Clubs can address this interest by hosting anything from an informal networking event or a more structured networking event, to a panel of alumni or a featured outside speaker. Here are a few best practices for determining optimal career program formats as well as designing and executing events to meet these interests.

INFORMAL NETWORKING EVENT (SUGGESTED FOR DGNN)

Ideal Use: Small or medium gatherings for alumni who've expressed a strong desire to get to mix and mingle. This format is definitely informal, but advanced planning definitely pays off. Understanding areas of interest for your club is key.

How it works: Attendees affix a color coded sticker representing an "area of interest" to their name tag (for example green for finance, blue – healthcare, yellow – Sales/Marketing, red – Communications/Media, orange – Law, purple – Technology and so on). After a short reception, participants break into groups based on their colored stickers (areas of interest). It is helpful, but not necessary, to invite club members who can facilitate some of the groups, and who are currently working within that area of interest. This will enhance the experience and provide some tangible leads for networkers. Networking should be kept to 1 hour or so, followed by socializing. The goal is to make connections, exchange cards, share leads, and provides some mentorship to younger alumni.

Recommended: Invite a club volunteer to give a short introduction to the program, including an overview of the goals of the evening. It is helpful, but not necessary to line up club members who are working in identified areas of interest to act as facilitators. Food and alcoholic beverages can be made available, but they should not be the focus of the evening. Other schools have offered only water – but the format is flexible enough to accommodate many variations.

Pros: Informal Networking is flexible and does not require significant organizational planning – registration, name tags, color coded stickers, legends, and facilitators. Since food isn't the focus, events can be done relatively inexpensively. Venue can be large or small – preferably not too noisy.

Cons: Without some additional coordination and leadership it becomes little more than a reception.

STRUCTURED NETWORKING EVENT (SPEED NETWORKING)

Ideal Use: Medium to large gatherings for alumni who've expressed a strong desire to do career networking. This program format may be especially appropriate for clubs that serve a large population or to meet the needs of individuals seeking work in a specific industry sector who may not have met at previous events. Speed networking, is similar to speed dating. The difference is that the goal of speed networking is simply to add to your network.

How it works: Attendees take seats across from one another at long tables arranged in a horseshoe shape. They are instructed to develop a 30-second "elevator pitch," explaining exactly what we do and why our partner across the table might want to know.

Recommended: Invite a club volunteer to give a short introduction to the program, including an overview of the rules (generally there is a structured time for each one-to-one networking exchange of 3-6 minutes), best practices for networking, and a brief icebreaker participants can use during their first exchange. Program registrants may also appreciate a how-to handout on how to develop a 15 second introduction to explain their interests and experience. (For a quick resource on this subject, see 15secondpitch.com)

Once the networking begins, the "pitches" actually can take on a relatively natural, conversational flow, as pairs of attendees introduce themselves, swap business cards, and chat about **how each could help the other**. After a couple of minutes, the moderator ends the mini-session with a loud whistle. Those seated in the inner circle to rotate one seat to the right, and the whole thing start again.

Recommended: Invite a club volunteer to give a short introduction to the program, including an overview of the rules (generally there is a structured time for each one-to-one networking exchange of 3-6 minutes), best practices for networking, and a brief icebreaker participants can use during their first exchange. Program registrants may also appreciate a how-to handout on how to develop a 15 second introduction to explain their interests and experience. (For a quick resource on this subject, see 15secondpitch.com)

Pros: Speed networking is a great way for alumni to facilitate short, meaningful connections among program participants.

Cons: Events must be hosted in relatively large venues, and can be very loud and frenetic in terms of volume and level of activity. These events require careful planning, precise execution, and significant forethought. Someone needs to be in charge to explain the rules and orchestrate the evening. There are consultants who facilitate speed networking events, .

Best Practice: Define industry sectors of interest and expertise in advance of meeting, recruit alumni volunteers to serve as leaders for focus areas, and request information on participant interests as they register for events. Charge a small fee for events to ensure that program participants show up, and host the event in a large space that absorbs noise well. Create designated areas (like tables, or placing temporary lines on the floor with masking tape) for individuals to network with one another, and designate time keepers to enforce time limits on

conversations. Provide alumni with lists of all attendees that they can take home (and request permission to gather this information in advance of events.)

PANEL PROGRAMS

Ideal Use: Alumni event that is not less than 90 minutes in length. Panels can run from 45 to 75 minutes depending on nature and appeal of topic. (Programs exceeding 60 minutes in length should only be offered at programs that run for two hours in order to allow attendees one-on-one time to network with fellow alumni.)

Recommended: Designate a moderator and no more than five panelists who represent diverse opinions or industry sectors, 3-4 panelists is optimal.

Pros: Panel programs can provide great forums for discussions on trends, current events, and education—they can also stimulate discussion for alumni networking and club dialogue.

Cons: If your panel topic is narrow in scope (e.g. focus on one industry sector); you may lose crowd appeal.

Best Practice: Organize panels that provide different perspectives on a broad or popular topic. For example, “The Effect of the Economic Downturn on Silicon Valley, Financial Services, the Arts in the Bay Area” or “Success Stories for the Current Job Market from Social Media to Dartmouth Networking: How Four Alumni Landed New Opportunities in 2009.” (Note: Skip Sturman, Director of Dartmouth Career Services suggests “Alumni Success Stories” as a great program topic to showcase the power of social media job search techniques.)

Tips for Organizing Panels:

- Gather speaker bios and photos in advance and share them with panelists—in addition to program attendees. Create table tops with panelist names, titles, and affiliations and write details of panelists on back of table top cards to facilitate discussion (making information visible to other panelists helps liven up exchange of ideas and information between panelists.)
- Keep introductions of panelists short (provide written bios to program attendees). This allows more time for Q & A.
- Develop a list of 2-3 questions for panelists in advance of your program, then request feedback for panelists from registered attendees via your club webpage, LinkedIn or Facebook groups. This will help you in marketing your event, and showcase your opportunities.

FEATURED SPEAKER

While the job market is competitive, unemployment rates may be high, most metropolitan areas also have “hidden gems”—potential speakers willing to share their expertise with your club in exchange for visibility and the opportunity to showcase their services. Guidelines for educating these individuals on your club’s needs and interests are provided in the Appendix of this document.

Ideal Use: To address specific career interests or areas of concern for alums. Based on networking survey results, two popular topics for featured speakers are networking tactics and tools, as well as best practices for making career transitions (this could include programming on the topic of switching to a new industry or changing job functions; young alumni may also be interested in programming on applying to graduate school)

Recommended: Survey your audience interests via Facebook, LinkedIn or other short survey tools such as survey monkey, then invite a speaker to speak on an area of broad interest to the club.

Pros: Keynote speakers can provide short, focused programs of interest to general audiences.

Cons: Relying on one individual for a program can be problematic if your speaker becomes ill, needs to reschedule, or does not understand the needs of your audience.

Best Practice: Provide clear expectations on program topic and questions of in advance of program. Preview speaker's material (e.g. PowerPoint slide deck and handouts) in advance of presentation to ensure relevance for audience and request questions from registered attendees in advance of presentation (see above tips on organizing panels). Share questions with speaker prior to club visit.

Program topics of broad potential interest could include:

- Monitoring and Evaluating Your Online Presence: How to Manage Your Online Reputation
- Best Practices for Creating Your Online Resume (Or LinkedIn Profile)
- Alumni Career Stories (Profiles of Alums who've made significant career transitions, found new jobs through innovative job search strategies, or who've taken interesting career paths)
- The "Blitz" Form to Career Management: How to convey your areas of skills and expertise in short form from status updates to developing a concise resume.
- The "Tried and True" Meets the "New": Best practices for networking in face-time and in real time.

Tips for Speaker Visits:

- Provide a formal introduction for the speaker at the beginning of your program.
- Establish expectations on program length in advance of presentation. Signal to speaker when they are 5-10 minutes away from goal end time for the program. (Let the speaker know you will be doing this.)
- Facilitate Q & A after presentation. Plant one or two questions in the audience or offer a Dartmouth-themed giveaway (e.g. hockey tickets for the first question). If audience is restless, limit the amount of questions asked and announce speaker's availability for the remainder of the event gathering.
- If the speaker is participating in the event at no cost to the club, allow them to mention—but not to sell or aggressively market—their business or consulting services. See guidelines for speakers for additional information.

For this reason, it is recommended that all program participants and workshop speakers present their work within the time parameters they are given to make a presentation. We recommend that programs range between 20 minutes and one hour. Panel programs should not exceed one

hour; the optimal time for an individual presentation is 30 minutes. Here are five success strategies:

Publicizing Your Involvement with a Dartmouth Program

We appreciate your time and willingness to speak to our alumni, and recognize that you may want to publicize your participation for our events. Unless otherwise specified, our events are closed to the general public and are limited to alumni and their guests. We ask that you respect and follow these general guidelines in advertising your involvement with our club events.