

>> [Amy]: The information in this podcast is provided for general informational and educational purposes only, and is not a substitute for professional advice. Accordingly, before taking any action based upon such information, you should consult with an appropriate financial, medical, legal, or other professional. Hello, and welcome to the podcast, "Navigating the Veterinary Profession," a show dedicated to helping veterinarians navigate life, bringing you advice on career development, personal finance, and the business of veterinary medicine. We're your hosts Amy Snyder--.

>> [Andrew]: Andrew Rotz.

>> [Amanda]: Amanda Bates.

>> [Amy]: And today, we're talking about Networking. So, Amanda, tell us, what is networking?

>> [Amanda]: Well, I actually was going to flip the question on you guys and -- yay, for unscripted, and ask you when you think about networking, what do you think about?

>> [Andrew]: So, to me, my network is individuals in, regardless of industry, regardless of location, that I know, that -- and the point being, I might be able to help them at some point, and they might be able to help me at some point, answer questions, get interviews, get candidates for interview. It's really just a professional friendship. That's what networking is to me. And so, they can be very, very useful, but they're very seldom harmful.

>> [Amanda]: I think that's -- you've highlighted something that often, when people think about networking, they don't always think about, and the fact that it's mutually beneficial.

>> [Andrew]: Oh, yes.

>> [Amanda]: Right?

>> [Amy]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: So, I think that when we hear "networking," we think we have to go out and sell ourselves, but we don't think about what the other person or parties get.

>> [Andrew]: Yes, absolutely.

>> [Amanda]: Right? So, I really like that definition. I try to make sure that people understand that networking is mutually beneficial. And so, you highlighted some of the folks that you see in your network. Amy, what are some of the folks that you would say are in your network from a general landscape?

>> [Amy]: Yes, so I think of my professional network as again, those people that I can help and who can help me, like Andrew said. And as a veterinarian, I think about it, not only as business connections for jobs

and so forth, but I also think about it as my professional network of people who assist me when I have complicated cases.

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: So, they're the people that I reach out to professionally when something comes up and I'm not quite sure about it. And I'm sure you guys have those as well. So, my network consists of those people, too, is the other piece that I think of in addition to what Andrew mentioned.

>> [Amanda]: Very cool. And where would you say you found your network?

>> [Amy]: That's a great question. So, my network has evolved over many years now of being in practice. And I think it comes from people who I have met professionally and stayed in touch with. So, previous jobs that I have had, and continues to stay in touch with those individuals. Also, people that I meet professionally at conferences and along the way. And then, probably the last group of people would be those that I meet through extension work that I do and work activities that I do nowadays.

>> [Andrew]: Yes, pretty similar response from me. The one addition I'd say is, you know, family and friends.

>> [Amanda]: Okay.

>> [Andrew]: And who they know. Right? So, a big piece of the network isn't who you are directly connected to, but who you know, knows. And like, "Hey, actually I was just talking to that guy who also does sophisticated surgeries on swine."

>> [Amanda]: Right.

>> [Andrew]: Right? And like, there's only like five of them in the world, do you know what I'm saying? You know? So, it's not just who you have directly connected with, but your network is also a couple of layers out. What is it? Six degrees of separation kind of deal?

>> [Amanda]: With Kevin Bacon?

>> [Andrew]: There you go. There you go.

>> [Amanda]: [Inaudible] Bacon.

>> [Andrew]: So, similar, right? Old employers, old colleagues, people from college, people from my Navy side of things, you know, just all sorts of all walks of life. That's why it's important never to burn a bridge, right? Because you never know when they're going to be important on the other side of an interviewing table, for example, or that they know somebody on the interviewing committee or something like that. So.

>> [Amanda]: And I think what I would also add to that list is [inaudible] shared interests. I mean, you mentioned the Navy for example. I would say communities of faith as well.

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: Those are huge places people sometimes overlook, but I'm like, "You know what? There might be someone at your synagogue or your church or your mosque or however you worship or--"

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: -or your religious background who may be connected to or are in the industry--

>> [Andrew]: Right.

>> [Amanda]: -that you may not consider.

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: And I know Amy, you talked about conferences and people that you've worked with and sort of networking that way, but have you seen in that -- it could be yes or no. But have you seen changes as well with online, because we're starting to see there are mechanisms for people to engage online? I don't know--

>> [Amy]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: -if you've experienced that yet in your career, or what you're seeing?

>> [Amy]: Yes, definitely. So, I think veterinary medicine is usually about a decade behind [inaudible] when it comes to technology, no offense. But you're definitely seeing more through LinkedIn and that's the biggest one that I'm seeing. So, I think we kind of started seeing it a little bit with Facebook just in so much as it's easier to keep up with people that we've met, but now we're certainly shifting over to LinkedIn and I'm seeing a lot more opportunities to connect with a ton of individuals using LinkedIn as a platform for that professional development piece.

>> [Amanda]: And you know, you brought up social media and so I like to tell folks, especially if you grew up in the kind of Facebook era, that LinkedIn is more of that professional space, whereas I think we're familiar with Facebook being more of the personal space, although there's some people who brand and blog and promote their businesses on Facebook and that's great for that.

>> [Andrew]: Sure.

>> [Amanda]: One of the hidden gems I believe with LinkedIn, especially as we're talking about networking as, not only can you create a profile, and people can see your history, but I love, love, love the Alumni feature. And there are a lot of people who don't really use it to that extent, but when I give LinkedIn workshops, I go, "Let's talk about the real gem in this when it comes to networking." And so, all of us are attached to institutions that you've graduated, undergrad, you know,

maybe master's level, doctoral level, wherever you fall. And most institutions in the United States, at least as we're speaking North America, really even outside of the United States when you get into Europe and other places, have a school page. So, NC State for example, has a school page, right? And so, one of the things that I always encourage folks is, make your profile, get your profile up, and then follow your school's page.

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: Because there's an alumni search function. And on that alumni search function, I think it goes back -- the earliest I've seen it go back to is graduated in 1900, which would be hilarious.

>> [Andrew]: Whoa.

>> [Amanda]: Hilarious. If you graduated in 1900, still alive, and on LinkedIn. Like that's a whole other story.

>> [Amy]: Impressed.

>> [Amanda]: Up until the modern era -- like to the most recent, which would be you know, 2018. And you can actually tease out, based on your college or institution, course of study. So, you could drill it down and literally find someone who graduated from NC State, College of Veterinary Medicine, if they're on LinkedIn, right, and graduated in 2004. You can drill it down that way, and it isn't just for veterinary medicine, but it's pretty much for any major. One of the reasons I encourage students to actually use that tool, is that it's a great way to one, especially if they're moving into an area where they don't know anyone. So, say they're moving to Washington D.C. or Washington State, they can actually find alumni who are in their field, in that area, especially when they're looking for opportunities.

>> [Andrew]: Right.

>> [Amanda]: But it's a great way to network, because I tell students this all the time. Nine out of 10 times, if someone messages you on LinkedIn and they have the same degree, and they're from your school, they're going to talk to you because it's a little bit of nostalgia and it's like, "Oh, my gosh. We're part of the Wolf Pack," or, "We're Gator," or we're whatever it is.

>> [Andrew]: [Inaudible comment]

>> [Amanda]: And they're [inaudible] like, "I see you. I remember when blah, blah, blah, blah [inaudible]," year that they graduated.

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: But the other gem I think to it, is that you can actually see other people's career paths.

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: Yes.

>> [Andrew]: [Inaudible] fair enough.

>> [Amanda]: Especially for students who are trying to figure out, "I want to go into this specific sector of medicine," "I want to go into this specific career and maybe include global health overall." "I want to do A, B, or C." It actually helps to see someone who graduated with your degree, and see all the steps that got to where they are.

>> [Andrew]: [Inaudible] that way.

>> [Amanda]: I mean, LinkedIn is such a gem in that way, and I feel like a lot of people don't know that. And it's for free.

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: That's not having a premium account. It's literally just creating an account, you know, putting your own information up there, and they can actually see you also were at that institution. So, it's not just you saying, "Oh, I want to talk to you because you went to NC State, and you're a DVM," right? But it's actually saying -- the person's saying, "Oh, you're also a student." And even for prospective students, if I can get the word out, it's actually cool for them as well to see sort of the career opportunities for them, as they are coming into the program.

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: Agreed.

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: So, I think that's really interesting how you're talking about, you know, for students who want to identify a particular career path. I would also add, for people who are looking to career shift.

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: So, if you're a little later in your career, but you're thinking about entering a new sector, I think that's a great opportunity. So, as we talk about that, let's say you've identified somebody, and you're interested in learning more about them. But how does that actually work?

>> [Andrew]: How do you break the ice?

>> [Amy]: Yes, how do you make contact, because I feel like that's kind of the awkward next step in moving forward?

>> [Andrew]: So, I think -- doesn't LinkedIn give you a couple prompts, too? Like, "Hey, this might be something that you want to say,"?

>> [Amanda]: I think it depends on where you are on LinkedIn. I don't know if it gives you prompts, but to Amy's point, you're right. So, I think starting the conversation, that where the challenge is for a lot of students, and really for a lot of people, is, "How do I approach someone I don't know?"

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: And sometimes to be honest, I think it's easier for us to approach people online.

>> [Andrew]: Oh yes.

>> [Amanda]: Because we can [inaudible] -- send the DM or send a message and run away. But I think where the biggest challenge is in person. So, we come back to the traditional networking you guys were talking about at a conference, right? If you're at a networking dinner, or whatever. I always stress that if you're going to go and network, you need to have a strategy in person. You need to know what your goal is.

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: It isn't just you just go and network, because if you do, you'll kind of fail at it because you don't know why you're doing it. So, if you're going to a conference and there is a professor there or there's a speaker there who is in your field of medicine, and you really want to connect with them because there's a possibility of you eventually doing a fellowship there, or you just want to engage with them, you need to think about, "Okay, I'm going to this conference. My Number 1 goal is to talk to Dr. So-and-So. What are some questions that I can think of that will spark conversation?" Because when you approach someone, it shouldn't just be you know, it's like, "I hate -- I can't--." All of a sudden, I'm thinking word diarrhea. I'm so sorry, but do you know what I mean? Where you just like word vomit everything?

>> [Andrew]: Oh, yes.

>> [Amanda]: And be like, "Hi, my name is Amanda. I'm a second-year student. I really, really, really like you know, bees and beekeeping and I know you're the beekeeping professional, and I wanted to meet you." Well, what are you supposed to do with that?

>> [Andrew]: Yes, what's he supposed to say, or she's supposed to say to that?

>> [Amanda]: Right.

>> [Andrew]: Like, "Cool."

>> [Amanda]: No, you're right.

>> [Andrew]: "Congratulations for being interested in bees."

>> [Amanda]: You're right. But more importantly, when you approach someone, you want it to be an actual conversation. And if you do the networking right, you allow them to talk more, and you allow them to be able to ask you questions. And so, there are a couple of questions I always think that when -- once you introduce yourself, right, you say you know, "I know that you are, blah, blah," you know, whatever your specialty is. "Could you tell me what you love about your field?"

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: "What are some of the trends that you're seeing?"

>> [Andrew]: Sure.

>> [Amanda]: What are some of the -- you know, "You've hired folks. What are some of the success stories?" Right? And those become positive things that people like to talk about, and if we're honest, most people like to talk about themselves.

>> [Andrew]: Oh, yes. I was just about to say, this is like Dating 101.

>> [Amanda]: It literally is Dating 101.

>> [Andrew]: Ask a couple questions, people--

>>

[ In unison ]

-love to talk about themselves.

>> [Andrew]: Exactly.

>> [Amy]: Agreed.

>> [Amanda]: Especially if they're known as a specialist in their field, or they are the go-to person for whatever. They will happily talk about themselves, and if you're listening carefully, you can find opportunities to sort of inject information about yourself.

>> [Andrew]: Sure.

>> [Amanda]: Right? Because too often, we go up to people, we say all this information, but then we don't really leave them anywhere to go.

>> [Andrew]: Right.

>> [Amanda]: What are you looking for? I don't know who you are? I don't have any context. And you're trying to build context about your story.

>> [Andrew]: And you can also do a little bit of research, right? If this is conference or whatever, and you know that they're going to be there,

if they're as specialized as you say, for example in this example, do a little bit of research on them. See what some of their studies that they did were, or some of their major projects. I guarantee you, there's a couple articles out there. And you can say, "Hey, I was reading an article in Business Insider about you and it said this and this and this. How did that turn out? How did you get to that place? How did you blah, blah, blah?" And that shows that you've actually shown some interest in their work prior, and it's just not a spur of the moment kind of thing. It's okay if it's a spur of the moment kind of thing--

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Andrew]: -but it doesn't hurt to impress them by showing that you like what they're doing.

>> [Amy]: Agreed.

>> [Amanda]: And I just gave you that example in sort of an academic setting. But when I -- I did an activity with some students last week, and we actually did it in three settings. So, we practice doing networking in an academic setting. We practice what about networking with your fellow students? So, someone that you know who maybe is -- who has done an internship you're interested in? And then -- because the conversation's going to look a little bit different than the sparks that you're going to use in an academic setting. And then we had one. It was sort of a fake social setting. So, it was like a wedding, and you're at a table, and you're like--

>> [Andrew]: Solid.

>> [Amanda]: -because to be honest--

>> [Amy]: Sure, it happens.

>> [Andrew]: Oh, yes.

>> [Amanda]: -most networking is not going to happen--

>> [Andrew]: It's informal.

>> [Amanda]: Right. It's going to be completely informal, and I think that's where people freak out the most, and they go, "I'm at this table."

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: "And how do I have this conversation?" And so, maybe for that environment, it's still the same thing. You still want to be engaged and say, "This is what I'm doing." And 9 times out of 10, I would imagine, especially for vet students, them saying they're in veterinary medicine, kind of sparks its own conversation.

>> [Amy]: It does, and I think the challenge there is diverting the conversation back to the other person.

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: So, as I've noted over the years, once you mention you're a veterinarian, the questions come in. So, it's being able to tactfully answer those questions, but then also being able to engage the person you're talking to, with questions about themselves, because people--

>> [Andrew]: Sure.

>> [Amy]: -are fascinated by veterinary medicine. They're very interested in it. They want to hear more. And so, to your point Amanda, trying to build that relationship with the other person, is going to involve flipping those questions around and asking more questions of them--

>> [Amanda]: Totally.

>> [Amy]: -and encouraging them to communicate. I also always like to bring up in this conversation of networking, there's that initial meeting. You know, right? You go, you meet this person, and then there's that, "How are we going to follow up?" piece of it. So, I love that initial meeting and talking and exchanging of ideas, followed by a, "Hey, could I get a business card?"

>> [Andrew]: Oh, yes.

>> [Amy]: You know, and that swapping of cards so that you have that contact information, so that you can follow up with an email or something later on to say, "It was really nice to meet you." You know, or, "Can we get together again?" or something of that nature. So.

>> [Amanda]: And I think with the follow up, because I was at literally two networking events last week, one, if you are someone who doesn't have business cards yet, especially as a student, if they've got their business card, you know, take your phone and take a picture.

>> [Amy]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: And in fact, I know folks who they didn't have all their business cards, but they had -- the one card they had, they had taken a picture of it and they were -- they would text it to you. So, then they made sure you had your number -- you know, you had their number, and you had their card. The other thing is that's where I think LinkedIn also comes in--

>> [Amy]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: -because so many professionals are on LinkedIn, it's so much easier. As soon as I meet people, I follow them or I add them on LinkedIn, because that's just a great freeway to remember, especially if you're like me and you have a lot of business cards, and you're like, "Who has what?" But you can sort of remember. And you can -- and LinkedIn gives you their work history, as they put it in, so then you can actually remember, "Why am I connected to this person?"

>> [Amy]: And LinkedIn has a feature now where you can turn it on when you're at a conference, and it can find--

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: -other people in the room--

>> [Andrew]: Really?

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: -yes. It's pretty awesome.

>> [Amanda]: It's super new. That was like last year.

>> [Amy]: It's very new, but you can actually go to your LinkedIn profile, turn it on, and it's like a -- almost like a little GPS.

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: Let's find other people--

>> [Andrew]: Creepy.

>> [Amy]: -on LinkedIn, in the room. And you can connect with them, right away. So, it's an awesome way--

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: -to kind of keep that conversation going. So, to circle back around to those cold calls. So, I found someone on LinkedIn. I don't really know them, but I've connected with them, maybe through an alumni association or--

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: -or through somebody else. And now, I want to reach out to them. Any last words of advice on kind of how to break the ice?

>> [Amanda]: Sure. Be normal. No because, sometimes we overthink these things--

>> [Amy]: Yes, agreed.

>> [Amanda]: -right? We have to remember that these are people. And so, maybe it was a cold call, or it was a second-or-third-degree contact. I would just say, just be normal and introduce yourself. And say, you know, give them at least a sentence or two of who you are. So, you're a student. You're a grad. You're an -- wherever you are. You're a professional. And then say, "You know, I'm really interested in whatever it is--." Because there's a reason why you're connected with them. So, kind of reiterate why you're connecting with them. "I know that you are a vet in this particular space. I am hoping to be a vet in equine. I was just hoping to connect with you and maybe have a chance to either have an

actual phone call." So, if you've never actually had dialogue with them, you know, ask them nicely, even if it's just for a 20-minute phone call, like keep it tight, so you can introduce yourself, just so that they can have some actual human interaction, because from that point, that's how you build relationships.

>> [Andrew]: Exactly.

>> [Amanda]: There's some people where they're so busy where it's just going to have to be an email, but always remember that anyone that is helping you, is taking time out of their busy schedule.

>> [Amy]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: So, work with it.

>> [Amy]: Yes. Agreed.

>> [Amanda]: Work with it.

>> [Amy]: I like the fact that you added you know, sort of a time constraint, too.

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: "Can I get you for 15 minutes or 20 minutes?"

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: Because I think that's really important. Keeping in mind that a lot of the people that we're reaching out to are also very busy, and a commitment to a very small chunk of time, can be a lot easier.

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: I also think this is really important for students and individuals in the workforce who are going to conferences. If you identify someone, who's going to be speaking or going to the same conference as you, "Hey, I see that we're both going to be at XYZ Conference."

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: "Could we grab a coffee during a break? I'd love to connect with you."

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: So, being specific in what you want.

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: Introducing yourself in a normal, non-stalker way.

>> [Amanda]: Right.

>> [Amy]: And then, kind of setting those parameters for what the expectation is. I think those are all really great keys -- pieces of information.

>> [Andrew]: I have a quick question.

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Andrew]: What are your thoughts on level of formality in that? So, for example, we're in the veterinary community, is it Doctor So-and-So, or is it John? How do you bring that up?

>> Speaker 1: So, I think -- yes, so I definitely always defer to the formality of it, initially. So, when you're making that initial contact, I think addressing you know, Dr., Mr., or Ms., you know, whichever is appropriate at the initial conversation. And then as you get to know one another, obviously there would be some informal turns that would take place. But I personally like to lead with formal.

>> [Amanda]: I agree. If you don't know anyone, I always go by their titles. And then I -- if it's online, I see how they respond back to me--

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: -and try to match that.

>> [Amy]: Agreed, yes.

>> [Amanda]: So, if they are using more formal language, then I'm not assuming anything because you know, we're all from a different cultural landscape.

>> [Amy]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: We're all from a different professional landscape, and generational. But I would never go informal first, because that can rub some people the wrong way, right?

>> [Andrew]: Oh, yes.

>> [Amanda]: They don't know you and they go--

>> [Andrew]: I worked hard for this. [Inaudible]

>> [Amanda]: Right. And it's just--

>> [Andrew]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: -you don't do that.

>> [Amy]: That's a really good point to sort of mirror what they do. So, if you say, "Mr. or Dr. Smith," and then they respond and sign, "John--"

>> [Amanda]: Right.

>> [Amy]: -then it may be completely appropriate to--

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Amy]: -flip to--

>> [Andrew]: Sure.

>> [Amy]: John--

>> [Amanda]: John, right.

>> [Amy]: -in the next email exchange.

>> [Andrew]: I mean, that's something I struggled with since being in this building with all the doctors and saying, "Do, I call you Doctor? Do I call you by your first name? Like, even though you've used your first name with me, like--

>> [Amanda]: Right.

>> [Andrew]: -signing an email, like do I feel comfortable with that?"

>> [Amanda]: Right.

>> [Andrew]: It never hurts to defer to formality.

>> [Amy]: Yes.

>> [Amanda]: Yes.

>> [Andrew]: But if they give you the opening to go more casual, okay.

>> [Amy]: And I think Amanda's point about you know, considering different cultures and being culturally aware of what is normal in that instance, is a really good one. So, awesome. Well, thank you guys so much. This has been a great conversation. And I appreciate it. Thanks guys for listening. We'll see you next time.

>> [Andrew]: See you next time.

[ Music ]