SOCIAL CAPITAL, SOCIAL NETWORKS: WHY ARE THESE CONCEPTS IMPORTANT FOR YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS?

PRESENTED BY
Nancy Hoffman, Senior Advisor, JFF
April 2020
DOES A COLLEGE DEGREE ALLOW EVERYONE EQUAL ACCESS TO SATISFYING WORK?
FEWER CHILDREN EARN MORE THAN THEIR PARENTS

2016 Data

MORE LOW-WEALTH STUDENTS GO TO COLLEGE, BUT FEW GRADUATE

Figure 4.2. The Inheritance of Wealth Status

Percent of adult children in each wealth quintile

Parents' wealth quintile


a. Net worth quintiles within ages 45-64 (N=1,975); quintile cutpoints in 2013 dollars.
DEGREES DON’T HOLD THE SAME VALUE FOR EVERYONE: INCREASE IN LIFETIME EARNINGS DIFFER BY STARTING POINT

Source: Bartik and Hershbein, 2016
GETTING AHEAD IS A GROWING CHALLENGE FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES

The income ladder in the United States has changed.

The rungs of the income ladder have grown further apart (income inequality has increased)...

..so a child's chance of climbing from lower rungs to higher rungs is less likely.

THIS IS NOT THE SOLUTION....

WORK HARDER
“Resources embedded in one’s social networks, resources that can be accessed or mobilized through ties in the networks.”

(Lin, 2005)

“Social capital is the goodwill available to individuals or groups. Its effects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity it makes available to the actor. A social group’s or individual’s stock of social capital can be thought of as a reservoir of social trust and support that they can tap into.. in times of need.”
HOW NETWORKS WORK IN THE LABOR MARKET

“Influence, information, and mobility opportunities are diffused between groups with different places in the social hierarchy.”

This phenomenon is called “the strength (and cohesive power) of weak ties” (Granovetter, 1973).

Later theorists distinguish between the ties of family, relatives, and acquaintances. Each is important.
What Does Success Look Like on LinkedIn?

When a person has followed every possible direction for a great profile, checked all the to-do and don’t lists and made every little tweak and adjustment—then what? How do they know when they have created a successful profile?

A profile is successful when the views start piling up, the introductions roll in, comments increase on whatever you post, and recruiters are getting in touch to ask what they can do for you. Success might very well look like a great promotion, but sometimes it’s subtler, such as connecting with a colleague who then introduces you to a great source of mentoring or getting in touch with alumni from your old school who are now ready and willing to help you spread your wings. Professional development is a constant dance that keeps you moving forward, so celebrate the little successes along the way to that big one—that dream job!
Common LinkedIn Pitfalls & How to Avoid Them

It’s important to know what to do to make the profile stand out, but it’s equally important to know what NOT to do. Here are some common pitfalls to avoid.

**Treating LinkedIn like other social media.**
LinkedIn is for professionals—period. “Blasting out a million connection requests to people you don’t know, joining a group and immediately asking for help, trolling on posts like this is Facebook or Twitter—these are all the hallmarks of someone who doesn’t know or want to know how to use LinkedIn for professional development,” Wheaton said. “There is a lower tolerance for nonsense on LinkedIn. No one is there to waste time.”

**Skipping the personalization.**
LinkedIn is all about networking, and that requires a bit of a personal connection—so never skip an opportunity to personalize a connection request or message. Sending out a request without a touch of personality can easily tarnish a good reputation.

**Not spending enough time on the site.**
“Getting the most out of LinkedIn is a process,” Wheaton said. “If you think that you can join and it will magically change your life or your prospects, you are likely mistaken. It is part of your professional development and, just like anything, will take some work to get something out of it. What I have found is that the more I use it, the more useful it becomes to me.”

**Not following up.**
When someone provides an introduction, helps you get a job interview, answers your request for advice or otherwise takes an interest in how things are going for you, circle back and let them know how the situation turned out. Thank them for opening the door to that great job, let them know how their advice helped you, or simply tell them you appreciate the time they took to make introductions on your behalf.
One thing I learned is that our careers are created and built. It’s not just that you get your degree, you learn a set of skills, you just get a job, and apply it. It’s not given to you that way. So I learned more of… career dynamics and how we’re always learning and navigating through different stages. It’s not as clear cut as learning how to do one thing…you get a specific task and you do it.

—GUTTMAN STUDENT NOW IN A GUIDANCE COUNSELOR PROGRAM IN GRAD SCHOOL
“I’ve been on a lot of interviews and I’ve had to learn how to communicate by myself. No one taught me how to; my mom, she would always tell me to “do good” on the interview. But no one actually taught me how to prepare myself for an interview.”

“We learned the elevator pitch and that the skill we mostly had to build up was communication skills. To have communication skills, you need to speak out more about yourself and who you are.”

“What I really like about [EOW] is to do the interviews and I feel like that makes people feel open and it takes people out of their shell; it took me out my shell, my little turtle shell, and let me speak out and not be scared. I will talk to anybody, ‘Hello, my name is Jenna’. I am very outspoken now.”
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

Nancy Hoffman
nhoffman@jff.org
MY PLACE IN THE WORKPLACE

Ethnographies of Work,
Year-long course and lab
at Guttman Community College
ETHNOPHROGRAPHS OF WORK
THEORY OF CHANGE

Students who understand the meaning of work in human lives and who have a critical understanding of work experience will have greater agency in entering and navigating the labor market than those who believe they only need a credential.

EOW students are asked to reflect on workplace and community experiences with a social science lens, gaining new insights into the world of work.
GOALS OF ETHNOGRAPHIES OF WORK

Understand workplaces from both a theoretical and practical perspective

Understand ethnographic methods and use them in career exploration

Access key NYC labor market information and understand job options and opportunities

Explore careers and connect interests to major

Increase social capital and build networks

Practice professional skills including email, presentation of self, elevator speech
EXAMPLES OF ETHNOGRAPHIES OF WORK READINGS

Understanding the Labor Process

• Karl Marx, “Alienated Labor”
• Arlie Hochschild, “The Managed Heart”

Management and the Assembly Line

• Fredrick Taylor, “The Fundamentals of Scientific Management”
• Harry Braverman, “The Division of Labor”

Race/ethnicity and professional work

• Lauren Rivera, “Hiring as Cultural Matching: A Case of Elite Professional Firms”
• A.H. Wingfield, “Are Some Emotions Marked ‘Whites Only?’ Racialized Feeling Rules in Professional Workplaces”

Studying Workplaces

• Steven Vallas, “Methods for Studying Work and Workers: Ethnographies”