

WISEST INITIATIVES / *POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAM* / *Post-doc Institute*

Making your work known to others

Employ multiple channels to get the word out to a wide audience about your activities

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A. Persons in your specialty

You want these people to be aware of your research accomplishments: they are the likely reviewers of your papers, the referees of your proposals, the chair of symposia in your specialty who may invite you to give a talk, the possible external evaluators of your promotion and tenure, the possible nominators for an award

How? Send a pdf of your most recent paper attached to a chatty e-mail, especially if the recipient is doing related work. Send a preprint of a review article which you have just written, if the recipient is likely to find it useful. Always give a poster or a talk in a conference that is regularly attended by people in your subspecialty. Make it a point to use poster sessions, meals, hallway chats, mixers, to remain connected with the set of people in your subspecialty. Have business cards and exchange them with everyone you meet for the first time. After a meeting (a conference, a departmental seminar, whatever), figure out how you can remind the people you have just met about your work and how it is connected to them.

B. Persons not in your specialty

These are people you want to influence: such as your faculty colleagues, your department chair, your dean, other professionals in industry, colleagues in other departments
Because these people are not in your specialty, they are going to need some help in appreciating what you have done.

How? Ask your graduate students to summarize your co-authored papers in an accessible form (a series of PowerPoint slides, or a large poster) at a level that can be understood by a beginning undergrad chemistry major. A major component should be the motivation for the work: What is the greater context? Why was it worth doing? Why do we need to know this? These have multiple uses: for posting in your research group web site, for recruiting undergrads to your research group, for posting on your lab walls to serve as tools for explaining your work to lab visitors, for a news release to be featured in the school paper, for showing your department chair when you see him for a performance review or any other excuse.

Explain to others what you have done in ways that are also helpful to them.

(a) "Gifts": When I give a talk I give away "gifts" of understanding to experimentalists in the audience whose work I have seen either at the meeting or in some other venue.

(b) When a colleague in your subspecialty has published or reported something really interesting or done something outstanding, make a special effort to tell them what you think of their work.

(c) When you visit another institution, take some time to know a little something about the work of the individuals you will be meeting. If possible, figure out a way in which their work may be related to yours. People connect better with those who are interested in their work.