Timing One’s Approach to a University

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Are You Ready?

• Passed Ph.D. qualifying exams!

• History of accomplishment (i.e., a good story)
  – Scholarships, fellowships, best paper awards, captain of sports team, etc.

• Interesting research results to discuss
  – Can you communicate the details and ‘big picture’ effectively?

• Quality publications
  – High impact or ‘hot topic’ journals
Establish Environment for Good Timing: Build Your Brand

• Do your homework
  – Understand the responsibilities and duties of the position you seek to obtain

• Network broadly
  – With Academic, Industry, National Lab, etc.
  – Use current mentors to ‘spread the word’ about your career interests
  – Present your research at many conferences (hand out business cards!)
  – Attend seminars and events on campus that allow you to meet interesting people in your field…and ask good questions!

• Volunteer
  – To give lab tours, recruit students (e.g., at NSBE or SHPE), etc.

• Learn to balance the above with research and class activities…
Focus Your Efforts

• Get to know someone in your research area at Universities that you would like to join
  – Ask questions about their papers
  – Let them know of your interests
  – Identify if they will be an advocate for you
  – Let them know when you apply for an open position in their department

• Talk with the decision makers about hiring needs (June and July are good times to catch them with a cold call!)
  – Department head
  – Head of search committee, if there is an active one
Tips

• Begin networking when you are ready, i.e. have a good story to tell (see slide 2)

• Focused efforts should start as early as 1-2 years before your expected graduation date

• Tailor your application to express your research interests in the context of department/university needs
  – Ask your advocate/mentor to review your application
Know your selling points, know their needs, and know someone on the inside!