

# Getting Recognized as an Independent Scientist— Without being a “Photon Magnet”

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Randy R. Brutkiewicz, Ph.D.  
Assistant Dean for Faculty Affairs and Professional Development

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**SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

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INDIANA UNIVERSITY

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**Randy Brutkiewicz**  
**Assistant Dean for Faculty Affairs and**  
**Professional Development**  
**IUSM**

**Professor, Dept. of Microbiology &**  
**Immunology**

*[rbrutkie@iupui.edu](mailto:rbrutkie@iupui.edu)*

*OFAPD Home Page: <http://faculty.medicine.iu.edu/index.asp>*

*For Research Faculty: <http://faculty.medicine.iu.edu/offices/fd/resFac.html>*

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# What do I mean by “photon magnet”?

- Look at me...
- Look at me...
- **LOOK AT ME!!!**

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## What is so bad about being a “photon magnet”?

- You can be looked upon as being “too big for your britches”
- Cultural/gender stereotypes
- You can come across as a “know it all”
- It can appear as that you were given an opportunity to talk because of someone you know (e.g., mentor), rather than **what** you know (and have contributed)  
--e.g., “coattails”

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## Being recognized for your work

- Clearly, this is essential for P & T
- You need credit for your efforts
- People need to be able to know who is the leader in a research project
- But—you cannot ignore the contributions of others

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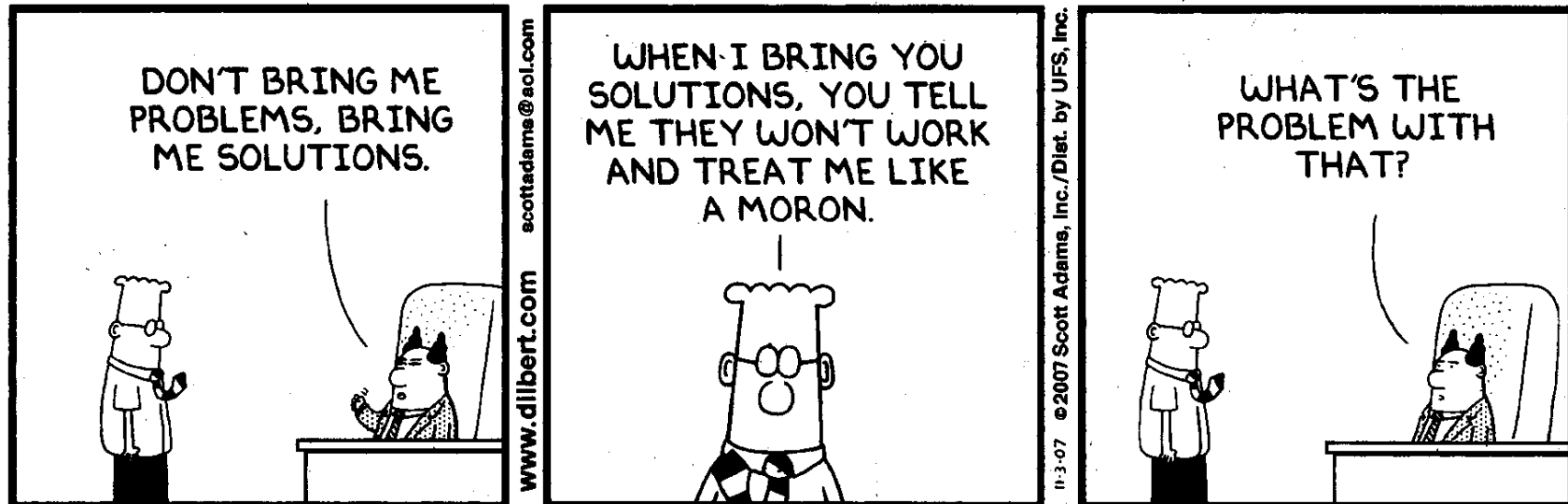
# Characterizing your trainees' work

- When you present their work in your seminars, compliment them
  - people remember what you say
  - show them RESPECT when you are speaking to others about them
- They are not simply a graduate student or postdoc in the lab
- It is always appropriate to give them credit
  - everyone knows you are the PI—you lose nothing

# Respecting your Trainees

DILBERT

by Scott Adams



*The same goes with ideas for experiments, projects, etc.*

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## Characterizing your trainees' work (continued):

- If you want them to succeed, never complain about them to others who are potential postdoctoral mentors (or hiring officers)
- If they succeed, YOU succeed
- Be realistic; however, one could characterize a weakness as a “developing strength”
- It is always advisable to give them credit  
--everyone knows you are the PI—you lose nothing



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# Collaborations

- Collaborators can help others see the importance/impact of your research program
- If you came from a large laboratory, you probably collaborated with a fellow graduate student or postdoc
- Sometimes, however, even when coming from a large lab, there are no “intramural” collaborations
- Has anyone here not collaborated with another investigator before?
  - it is OK if you have not

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## Collaborations—advantages:

- Long gone are the days in which one person is lone in their field
- You can't know everything
- Collaborators contribute expertise you do not have
- You learn from them
  - but, they also learn from you
- Productivity can have more breadth and work could be published more quickly
- It can enhance your recognition

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## Collaborations—disadvantages:

- Whose efforts are the greatest (i.e., most) in publications?
- Who should be first/corresponding author?
- Is this a new area for you?
  - it can be an advantage OR a disadvantage
  - it can DELAY your notoriety in this field
- Will this help you take your research program to the next level?
  - it can be an advantage OR a disadvantage
- You are at their mercy for when their experiments are completed

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## **Best way to maintain a collaboration:**

- Both of you receive recognition and benefits for the work
- You are both productive and get along
- Trainees receive appropriate credit  
--and feel that they have
- Both of you present the work and recognize the contributions of your collaborator during seminars
- The results of your studies become increasingly interesting to you both  
--and will enhance your recognition in the field

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## Getting Recognized:

- There are different ways to get recognized
- National, international recognition
- Etc.

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## How can you be “seen” in the absence of a published research paper?

- Write an unsolicited review
  - there are lots of journals that appreciate review articles (e.g., overseas)
- Offer to write a peer-reviewed review
  - often, when you publish a paper, you are contacted by the journals indicated above to submit a journal article. Do so—and with your trainees.
- Someone can suggest you to write one

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# Who else can help you be known in your field?

- Meeting seminar speakers
  - here or elsewhere
- Literature
  - email the corresponding author of a paper in your field → "this is excellent work", etc...
- Colleagues make a suggestion
  - thus, you need to talk to your colleagues!
  - this includes me—that's part of my job!
- What if you are the only one here who works in your field?

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## How else can you find people to help bring light to your research program?

- Scientific meetings
- A manuscript (or grant) you reviewed
  - someone with complementary interests
  - you have to be very careful so that there is no concern you are “stealing ideas”
- Study section colleagues
  - their own research could complement yours
  - or, they suggest people at their institutions
- When you give seminars (here and elsewhere)



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## Making contact:

- Email (IUSM/IUPUI or outside)
- Phone (does anybody use this ancient communication device anymore?)
- Meet face-to-face
  - scientific meeting (outside person) or at their office (faculty here or close by)
- Video conferencing (e.g., Skype)
  - when distance is an issue, but you still want the semblance of a face-to-face meeting

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# Can service activities get your work recognized?

- Grant reviews
  - NIH
  - other funding agencies
- Manuscript reviews
- Committee service
  - department (e.g., safety committee)
  - school (e.g., IACUC)
  - university (e.g., search committee)
  - national organization (e.g., FASEB)

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## Grant review panels: how to serve

- Recommendation: do not become a permanent member until AFTER you are tenured
  - do *ad hoc* only (once or twice should suffice)
- Express an interest to people you know (current or former mentor, department Chair, etc.)
- Do you have friends or colleagues who have served/are serving on a panel?
- Do you know SROs or Program Officers at the NIH?

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# Manuscript reviewer

- You can be recommended by people you know
- Meet journal editors at the national meetings in your discipline
  - they are often checking out the posters
- Check with the journal you mostly read and/or where you have published
  - Editors who assign reviewers are people in your field
  - most journals are looking for good reviewers
- Be timely in returning your reviews to develop a good reputation...

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## Committees--Department

- You are generally “assigned” to these
- Can be anything from “Safety Committee” to “Graduate Policy Committee” or even “Seminar Coordinating Committee”, etc.
- Faculty search committees
- Graduate student recruitment committee
- In general, these do not take too much time

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## Committees--School

- You are generally asked to serve on these
- Examples:
  - IRB
  - IACUC
  - IUSM medical student admissions
- Internal grant reviewing (e.g., BRG, Showalter)
- Can often be “time sinks” for junior faculty, so choose wisely

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## Committees--University

- You can be asked to serve or be elected  
--IUPUI Faculty Council
- Promotion and Tenure committee  
(tenured Professors only)
- Search committees at IUPUI or IU levels
- Mostly more senior people serve
- Although very important, all the “local” committees provide limited help in enhancing your visibility in your field

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# Committees—National Organizations

- You can be asked to serve
- You can volunteer
  - during annual payment of dues
- Sometimes you have a choice; other times you do not
- It gets you “seen” by more senior faculty (“movers and shakers”) nationally
  - good for your research program
- **Makes a name for you, IUSM and IU**



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# What is important in the service realm?

- Do what you will enjoy and that will help you, the School and institution
- Avoid “time sinks”, but do your part as a good “citizen” for recognition as a faculty member
- “Local” service can make people think of you when it comes time to nominate faculty for recognition
- Extramural/national **service can help you be known by others in your field** with influence in soliciting reviews, meeting presentations, etc.

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## Take home messages...

- Participating in several activities and doing a very good job will get you recognized
- Doing too much, too quickly, can bring attention to you in a negative light
- Don't be pushy
- Give credit to others who have helped you
- Be proud of your accomplishments
- Enjoy what you do—but have a life, too
- The recognition will come; just be patient...

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**Others' experiences to share?**

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**Additional questions?**

**Please fill out the evaluations  
and hand in as you leave**

**Thank you for attending...**

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# Additional Feedback?

*Let me know your ideas/other thoughts on this topic*

*Every little bit helps you AND your colleagues*

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