

# GET THE JOB

## Become Better at Networking

In some cases, who you know is as important as what you know

Building professional relationships through networking can be a cornerstone of professional development.

They provide tips, expert advice and camaraderie when you are tenured at a certain company, then can play a key role in opening doors for your next professional role.

Best of all, networking costs you nothing. The only investment is time, either by joining industry groups, being actively involved with online forums or professional websites, and attending meetings and conventions. The results will be friendships and connections that may unlock doors to opportunities you may never have even heard about before.

### GOING ON-LINE

Networking forums and websites have made it easier than ever to make new connections. Sometimes, it's smart to begin with your long-standing ones. Prior relationships can lead to introductions, since your friends, family and coworkers may already be connected to decision-makers, hiring managers or related professionals. Friend, follow, comment, endorse skills and write



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recommendations. These professional courtesies might just lead to real-life partnership opportunities in the future.

### IN-PERSON MEET UPS

It can be easy to rely too much on technology, since connecting with others is now

such a streamlined experience. But sometimes there's simply no substitute for person-to-person conversations.

This kind of traditional relationship-building does more than put a name with a face. By catching up over lunch or coffee, you're creating a conversational space to discuss things that go far beyond a specific job opportunity. Open up about your goals and dreams, ideas you have to advance your role or the wider industry, or other long-range professional-development goals. When that perfect position comes open, these contacts will more likely to recommend you based on knowing more about how well you'd fit.

### JOIN THE CLUB

Attending a professional association or trade-group event can provide job seekers with early information about staffing changes or new employment opportunities. Even joining an online forum can open the door to a wealth of information, including things like industry trends. Some of these groups and associations are focused on complete business sectors, while others might be job specific. Either way, you'll be have access to leaders, influencers and fellow workers who move these industries forward. Some university alumni associations also create smaller professional subgroups so that graduates can advance their careers. Contact your alumni relations office.