

# GET THE JOB

## Become a Networking Pro

Professional relationships can help your career both in the near and long term.

These contacts provide expert advice, tips and camaraderie during your current tenure at a company while also potentially taking on a critical role in opening the door for your next job. Your only investment is in time, since you'll have to become actively involved in online forums, join an industry group or attend conventions and meetings. In the end, however, it could all prove very valuable since these connections may unlock opportunities you might never have otherwise known about.

### GETTING ONLINE

Networking websites, forums and professional pages make it easier than it used to be to make new connections — and you can do it from the comfort of your office or home. Begin expanding your network by building outward from prior business relationships. Coworkers, former coworkers, friends and family may already have connected with hiring managers, decision-makers and related professionals who can guide your career to its next stop. Follow, friend, endorse, comment and



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recommend within your online space. Professional courtesies like those can lead to partnership opportunities in the real world.

### MEETING IN-PERSON

Don't settle with a tech-only approach, even though it's such a streamlined modern experience. There's no substitute for old-fashioned in-per-

son conversation. Traditional relationships like these pair a name with a face, and can thus be far more memorable down the line. Catch up over coffee or lunch, creating an open dialogue that may go beyond your job search. As you open up about dreams and career goals, you're connecting on a deeper level. These contacts are more likely

to think of you when a job comes open that matches your long-range professional development ideals. They'll know you're the perfect fit.

### JOIN THE CLUB

The fastest way to grow your circle is to attend a trade group or professional association event, where job seekers can learn about employment

opportunities or staff changes well before the job is posted. Some groups are focused on specific sectors of business while others are job specific. All of them provide access to influencers, leaders and fellow workers who can help you move your career forward. Your university alumni association may also have helpful professional subgroups.