

## How to Build Your Professional Network

A professional network is the connections you have to individuals in your chosen career field. These connections could be in-person (coworkers, acquaintances from conferences, etc.) or virtual connections via Handshake or LinkedIn.

When used appropriately, your professional network can be the key to unlocking all sorts of career opportunities. Below is some advice and resources to assist you with creating and maintaining your professional network.

- **Seek out relevant student organizations on campus**
  - See if there is a student organization that aligns with your career goals. This can be a great way to meet your Peers, as well as individuals who can bolster your professional network.
- **Join a professional affinity group within your organization/company**
  - "Many professional companies have begun to implement affinity groups within their organizations. An affinity group allows for employees, often those who belong to minority groups (people of color, LGBTQ employees, etc.) to network and support one another within the company."
- **Attend professional conferences related to your career**
  - Conferences are a great way to gain new information, but they can also serve as a way to expand your professional network. Be sure to have conversations with numerous attendees as this will increase your chances of learning new information as well as making new connections.
- **Network digitally via LinkedIn or Handshake**
  - Using these online platforms can be an excellent way to expand your professional network. Watched the video below to learn how to network using LinkedIn.
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BB-PnL0WWeM&t=6s>
- **Never stop networking**
  - Networking is an ongoing process. Individuals will come in and out of your professional network, it is important to maintain those relationships and check-in periodically with your connections.