



Networking Resources

It is a good idea to expand your network by regularly reaching out to people in your community and beyond. This tip sheet will provide you with some additional avenues for connecting with professionals in the career field you are pursuing. These avenues include: campus resources, social media and other online communities, professional associations, and professional networking groups in the Central Ohio region.

Campus Resources

Campus resources are a great way to ease into networking beyond your close contacts. You'll have the support of career services staff while taking advantage of these resources, just in case you have questions along the way.

- Attend job fairs and employer information sessions to connect with recruiters and begin developing relationships with employers. Check our Events listing weekly at: www.ascareerservices.osu.edu/events. Also keep up to date with your department's events schedule. The key to success at these events is preparation. These events draw large numbers of students, and the recruiters will be most interested in following up with candidates that have researched their company and opportunities prior to the event. When preparing for these events, a good starting point is to develop a targeted personal commercial that explains your interests and what you have to offer the organization. For more on how to prepare check out: <http://ascareerservices.osu.edu/guides/networking>.
- Join campus clubs and organizations as another way to expand your network. Peers within an organization can share their internship and job search best practices and might even refer you to specific recruiters they have worked with. Many student organizations reserve meeting time for employer presentations and networking activities. A list of student organizations can be found at: http://ohiounion.osu.edu/get-involved/student_organizations
- Use the alumni network, regardless of where you plan to live! There are Ohio State alumni clubs in practically every state in the country. Go to <https://www.osu.edu/alumni/> for more information.
- Check out the Columbus Business First resource available through the OSU Library system. In their weekly publication, Columbus Business First includes a listing of upcoming networking events in central Ohio. Access the publication online (free) through the library: Go to <http://library.ohio-state.edu/screens/databases.html> and choose "Business and Economics" from the subject menu; then scroll down to the entry for "BizLink [Full Text]." You can access business newspapers for multiple cities around the nation using the same site.

Social Media

- LinkedIn is the single best social media resource for networking and career exploration, and it has recently developed content specifically targeted to college students. In addition to finding contacts through your immediate network, there are two other ways you can identify potential networking connections. From your LinkedIn home page, go to the Network tab in the top navigation bar. Select "Find Alumni". As long as you have identified Ohio State as your current school, you will be directed to the Ohio State alumni directory where you can search current and former students based on criteria such as major, geographic location, or company affiliation. Another way to find contacts with similar career interests is to join LinkedIn groups. Select the Groups options from the Search box drop down menu and use key words such as "financial consulting" or "creative writing". You can also search on "Ohio State University" under the Groups option and browse to find OSU groups relevant to your major or department. Once you have joined groups you can follow online discussions, learn what professionals in your interest area are talking about, and apply classroom knowledge to join these discussions. The greater your level of meaningful participation the more you may get recognized as an emerging professional in your field. Keep in mind that before you begin using LinkedIn for networking you need to complete your profile! For additional tips on using LinkedIn go to <http://students.linkedin.com/>. Remember that LinkedIn is a professional social media group. If you have Twitter and use it to describe not-so-professional behavior, be sure to disconnect it from your LinkedIn account. Status updates on LinkedIn are also not the place to describe wild weekends, espouse your political or religious beliefs, or engage in rants.
- Twitter may also provide opportunities for professional networking. Some resources to assist in using Twitter can be found here: <http://mashable.com/2013/02/09/twitter-job-search/>. While the most well-known, Twitter is just one of many microblogging forums. You may want to research sites devoted to your interest area.

- Using Facebook for professional networking can be a bit tricky if you are already using it to post personal information and opinions. More and more businesses are using Facebook Fan Pages and Groups to connect to their customers, but remember—once you become a fan or a member of their group, they can see your page and pictures too! If your intention is to make a good impression, be highly vigilant about your privacy settings, status updates, tagged photos, and photographs you post. While Facebook is used less often as a career resource, the following suggests ways you can leverage Facebook for career networking purposes: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2014/02/06/4-ways-to-use-facebook-to-find-a-job/>.
- Listservs are generally good ways to receive reliable information about an industry and are simple to find. Online communities are also useful for finding information and creating relationships with people in your field. Search for listservs associated with your career interests by using <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!overview>.
- Use career websites like QuintCareers.com for more information on the use of social media in networking: http://www.quintcareers.com/leveraging_social_networks.html. Remember that using social media should be used as a supplement, not a replacement, for traditional face to face networking!

Professional Associations

Associations allow you to connect directly with professionals at all levels in your chosen field. Joining a group in central Ohio or in the city in which you'd like to live allows you to learn about industry trends, discover potential employers and the current top players in an industry, and meet people who may support your career goals. Most professional associations charge membership fees to participate in luncheons, networking mixers, or other events, but often have free e-newsletters or listservs and may have discounted membership rates and customized programming for current students. After graduation, check to see if Ohio State alumni are part of the association and connect to them as an alumnus. Another way to gain entry into professional associations is to find a mentor and ask if they will let you attend an event or meeting as their guest. Some resources for finding professional associations and their central Ohio offices:

- Quintcareers.com offers http://www.quintcareers.com/professional_organizations.html and includes a number of excellent tips for making the most of networking through professional associations http://www.quintcareers.com/professional_association_networking.html.
- Through the Weddle's Association Directory at <http://www.weddles.com/Associations/index.cfm>, you can access professional associations tied to a variety of academic disciplines and career clusters.

Networking Groups in Central Ohio and Beyond

There are several networking groups here in central Ohio for you to tap into immediately. Some groups are general in their focus. Others identify themselves by a particular race or ethnic group to serve as a support network for people of similar backgrounds. Still others offer industry-specific forums for networking with professionals in a defined field. Below is a short list of groups in Columbus. It is important to search out new groups that are a good fit for you. It is better to focus your energy on one or two groups rather than spreading yourself too thin by joining multiple ones. Remember - you have to keep track of all of these people and how you know them! Don't overwhelm yourself right away. For those with free memberships or free events, attend them with a positive outlook about the potential, and get a feel for the group. If it's not the right fit, keep trying! Here are just a few examples of networking groups in central Ohio:

- Big Fish Networking: www.bigfishnetworking.com
- Columbus Young Professionals: www.cypclub.com
- Young Professionals of Columbus: www.ypcolumbus.org
- Young Buckeyes Alumni Club of Central Ohio: <http://youngbuckeyes.weebly.com/>
- Columbus Hispanic Professionals: www.columbushispanicprofessionals.com
- Atid: <http://jewishcolumbus.org/atid>
- LinkOUT – LGBT Young Professionals of Columbus: <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/linkout-columbus/8/a51/492>
- Network of Indian Professionals (NetIP): www.netipcolumbus.org
- Young Asian American Professional Network: <http://www.yapastl.org/>
- Business Networking International: www.bni-ohio.com/
- Meetup.com: www.meetup.com/find/us/oh/columbus/
- Industry specific group example from Meetup.com: www.meetup.com/techlifecolumbus/
- Chambers of Commerce can be found in nearly every city and serve as a professional network for local business owners and entrepreneurs. Membership is required, but their websites provides great information on local businesses and events that are open to the public. Use <http://www.officialusa.com/stateguides/chambers/> to locate chambers throughout the U.S. The site for the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, which regularly hosts luncheons and networking sessions, is <http://www.columbus.org/>.

Networking

Young Buckeyes Alumni Club of Central Ohio

- Made up of Ohio State University Alumni, this group organizes a variety of networking events in support of scholarship, community and the spirit of Ohio State. Activities include community service, monthly meetings, happy hours, and fundraisers. Individuals who have at least 15 hours of undergraduate coursework and are under the age of 40 are welcome to join. (<http://youngbuckeyes.weebly.com/>)

Young Professionals of Columbus (YPC)

- Networking organization that seeks to connect young professionals within the Columbus community. They provide opportunities for personal, professional, and community development through a variety of activities and events. Members are encouraged to participate by joining one of the many committees. (www.ypcolumbus.org)

Columbus Young Professionals

- An organization providing social, cultural, philanthropic, athletic, and career networking opportunities for Columbus-area professionals. All members are between the ages of 21– 45, and basic membership is free. (www.cypclub.com)

Big Fish Networking

- Provides informal and person-to-person networking opportunities with a variety of events. There are no membership fees or attendance requirements. (www.bigfishnetworking.com)

Business First

In their weekly publication, Business First includes a listing of upcoming networking events in central Ohio. To access the publication online for free, you need to

- Go to <http://library.ohio-state.edu/screens/databases.html> and choose "Business and Economics" from the subject menu
- Scroll down to the entry for "BizLink"

Columbus Hispanic Professionals

- Dedicated to the empowerment of Latino/Hispanic professionals through participating in, supporting, and/or developing programs, services, and activities that promote the growth of members as effective professionals and strong leaders. (www.columbushispanicprofessionals.com)

Atid

- This organization is sponsored by the Columbus Jewish Federation and is open to Jewish individuals between the ages of 22 and 40. The members seek to network and build new friendships through a variety of social, education, leadership development, and social action programming. (<http://jewishcolumbus.org/atid>)

LinkOUT - LGBT Young Professionals of Columbus

- Created with the vision of building a sense of community among LGBT professionals, LinkOUT provides connections to LGBT serving organizations and other communities in Central Ohio. Their goal is to shape the future of the young LGBT professional community making Central Ohio a desirable place to call home. (<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/linkout-columbus/8/a51/492>)

Network of Indian Professionals (NetIP)

- Nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement and achievement of South Asian professionals through professional development, community service, cultural awareness, and political awareness. Membership provides several benefits including discounts on events and access to the online community. (www.netipcolumbus.org)

Young Asian-American Professional Network

- Cultural group providing networking and professional development opportunities in the Columbus area. There is a small annual membership fee. (<http://www.yapastl.org/>)