

Networking

The term "networking" makes people very nervous (including me!), but if you view networking as relationship building, you might be more confident to pursue these relationships with people. Networking "everywhere" simply means developing relationships with the people you interact with each day. When you step into the bank to deposit a check, get to know the person behind the counter. When you go to the dentist to get your teeth cleaned, talk to the hygienist about their family. These simple acts of kindness help us become more connected to those around us, and help us develop positive relationships. You never know when you might talk to the cashier at the grocery store and find out that their cousin's husband's best friend works at the exact company you want to work for. If you have already developed an acquaintance with the cashier, they might be willing to give your name to the "best friend" who works at the company!

In addition to being kind to those around you, there are organizations and websites devoted to networking and gaining industry knowledge in your field.

1. Professional Associations or Industry Groups- Professional associations are comprised of members from a similar profession, industry, or interest group. These organizations typically have state, regional, and national chapters for members to be involved with. Some of the benefits of being a member of one of these professional associations include regional/state/national conferences and meetings; access to webinars, professional journals, networking events; and opportunities to serve on regional/state/national boards and committees. Most associations charge a membership fee which ranges from a few dollars to hundreds of dollars, but many employers will pay for membership fees and conference attendance. These associations, in my opinion, are the most effective way to network with professionals in your field, inquire about job opportunities, and participate in professional development activities.
2. Alumni Associations- Alumni Associations are comprised of graduates and past students at a particular school, college, or university. Many alumni associations host

and restaurants typically are \$10