

# EFFECTIVE NETWORKING TIPS – ONLINE VS. OFFLINE

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**Online and Offline Networking are both different; with each requiring a bit of a unique approach. At their core though, they both come down to personal interaction. Something, as an International Code Council Member working in the field, you are well acquainted with from your professional endeavors.**

## Online Networking

As a ICC Member you have a powerful tool available to you through the use of the organizations website at [www.icccsafe.org](http://www.icccsafe.org). Here you can create and edit your personal profiles and network with other members locally as well as nationally and internationally. It is a incredible resources to helping you network to industry peers and colleagues.

Beyond association tools, LinkedIn provides excellent online networking opportunities. Rather than just submitting your resume to a job board, consider searching for professional connections on LinkedIn to see who works at the company you are targeting. Then reach out to them to and invite them to connect with you.

Also, reach out and connect with everyone you know professionally, from friends, colleagues and associates to clients, vendors, suppliers, and others you may have in your list of contacts in your phone and computer. Pay attention to updates and send congratulatory notes when appropriate and other messages that fit the purpose.

Connect (re-connect) with former classmates, colleagues and clients so you can build a strong, viable network that can be a valuable assistance in your job search efforts. Keep in touch with them; let them know what you are doing as well as your plans. It also provides an opportunity to get together again and touch bases. Also, be sure to use your contact settings so others will know what you are interested in and are available for, such as new career opportunities. It's important to your career plans to maintain a strong network even if it seems a bit awkward. Consider their viewpoint too. Why wouldn't they want to connect with you again if you could be valuable to their future opportunities?

Consider sending them a “get back in touch” message that explains how you came across their profile, what you might still have in common, and provide a bit of information about what you’re doing. When they reply with an acceptance, it’s a perfect opportunity to suggest a “let’s get together” or a follow up about your career plans. Keep the dialogue going. Stay in touch and try to be of assistance and of value to them.

Another way to stay connected with others is by sharing something with them, such as professional industry information they might be interested in or enjoy, comment on a discussion you’ve seen, or an update they have posted. LinkedIn’s co-founder calls this doing “small goods,” and it’s one of the best uses of the site. And, don’t forget to post updates too so others can stay connected with you. Just make sure to be gracious as appropriate when responding to their reply as well.

It may seem that all of this online networking is time consuming and you have a job and life outside of reading online media. True, but it really doesn’t take a lot of time and effort to stay connected. Keep in touch a couple of times a year. Reach out and send a note.

As long as it touches points that are genuine and sincere you will be maintaining a valuable network of colleagues and friends. Promotions, new jobs, birthdays and anniversaries are all natural invitations for doing this “small good.” Just be authentic and generous in all of your networking efforts.

It’s not about growing the largest list of connections or giving everyone a weekly update on your job search, it’s about building and maintaining mutually beneficial, long-term relationships that you and your network genuinely appreciate.

## Offline Networking

Most of us use LinkedIn, Facebook and perhaps other social and networking sites. But in addition to networking online, you must also network personally with your peers and other professionals. Personal networking is the "Gold Standard" for interactions. Something often lost in today's world of digital interactions.

Relationships can easily be developed by actively participating in professional activities, especially through ICC Chapter and national trade associations representing your industry sector. Get active in the local and state chapters, and attend meetings regularly. In fact, take on leadership roles and volunteer for committees and other activities as these will bring you into more regular contact with peers.

Getting to know others and spending time with them is the most valuable networking you can develop. You can never have enough friends. You need to work at developing contacts and relationships. That’s why being active in organizations is so helpful to your efforts.

At every professional gathering, take the initiative and introduce yourself to others. Make a point to meet new people at every meeting and sit with those you don’t know so you can make new acquaintances. Exchange business cards, but remember, simply exchanging is not networking. After meeting a new person for the first time, follow up in a day or two by sending an email, making a quick phone call, or even invite out for coffee or lunch.

Networking is a career lifetime activity and requires a committed effort and nurturing. By this time in your career you should have a fairly healthy network that can help you with your job search. But even if you don't, it is never too late to start developing a network. You will be surprised at how over the long run it will pay dividends to your professional career.