

Legal Networking Like a Pro in Law School

Networking is about making connections with other people. Lawyers need to network throughout their careers to secure new clients. For professional success, this is crucial. Client events that a lawyer attends in the evening, lunches, conferences, and black-tie events include drinks and lunches in the evening.

Networking is an important part of law school: people often land jobs through people they know. But how do you go about it?

Law schools host a lot of legal networking events for a reason: so students can develop their networking skills and gain knowledge and expertise-and consequently get jobs and internships.

Our guide on how to network in law school and beyond provides the knowledge and expertise you need for a successful future.

Legal Networking: What It Is and What It Is Not

The first thing to remember about professional networking is that it is not about blindly collecting business cards and demanding work from strangers. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It consists primarily of the following steps:

Meeting people in person and online.

Developing genuine, meaningful relationships with people.

Compiling information and keeping that information up-to-date about the people concerned.

Contacting them and maintaining relations.

Giving them a lot of help and thanking them when they help [The Lawyer Mentor].

With more connections (and maintaining them), the greater your chances of hearing about job openings. During this process, you may also meet people you can recommend to you when you apply for a future job.

See Also:

[The Importance of Endorsements, References, and Getting Others to Cheer for You](#)

Law School Legal Networking Opportunities

Where should you start? Getting involved in your law university legal professional networking is not an exact science, but the individuals and resources listed below should be a good place to start.

Past Employers:

It is still possible to network in and after law school with past employers, even if you know that they are not hiring. Be sure to let former colleagues and supervisors know how your job search is going as graduation approaches. Send them a rsum that reflects your current interests, and seek guidance about the job search.

Alma Mater:

Your law university alma mater and even those from your undergraduate institution can be invaluable networking connections as you begin your career. Both on-campus and off-campus, your school will almost certainly host networking events for students and alumni. Go to them! A directory of alumni in your area of interest may be available to you, or you might have access to one. Your school's alumni office may also be a good resource for advice and tips about getting started.

Bar Associations:

Bar associations are excellent places for networking with industry professionals. Several bar activities offer excellent opportunities to meet attorneys and get your name out in the legal community, including local meetings and mentor programs.

Additionally, you may meet attorneys who have been in the field for more than ten years, so do not assume you will only meet young lawyers who are looking for jobs.

LinkedIn:

Make connections with fellow classmates, old friends, professors, colleagues, and former colleagues using LinkedIn. LinkedIn's "groups" can also be used to broaden your network.

Continuing Legal Education (CLE):

Legal education programs offer more than just education in a particular area of law or legal issue. CLE events also offer the opportunity to meet leaders in your field. Scholarships are available for most CLE programs based on the student's needs.

Volunteering/Pro Bono:

Find out about volunteer and pro bono opportunities through your local bar association. Being a lawyer who contributes to the common good can be a great way to meet fellow lawyers and gain experience at the same time.

See Also:

[Using Connections](#)

[Relationships, Commodities, and Making Connections](#)

Do's and Don'ts of Networking Events

Do's

Dress Appropriately. You should wear business casual or business attire in this case. It is probably unnecessary to wear a three-piece suit on a Sunday morning when you are meeting someone for coffee. However, most people who attend after-work events wear business attire. Dress to impress in any case.

Be Punctual. Attend networking events on time and leave when the party is over. Keep all one-on-one meetings on time, no matter what. (Tip: arrive about ten minutes early.)

Consider how much time you are spending with one person. It is usually sufficient to chat for five to ten minutes at any networking event. Please be mindful of others waiting to talk with the person you are with.

You should be open-minded about who you speak to and who you network with. A lawyer practicing in a field completely [unrelated to yours may offer you excellent career advice](#). Your interest may be piqued by a new legal niche you have yet to discover!

Collect business cards. As soon as you make a new connection, ask for their business card. Send a thank-you email or phone call within two days of receiving the email or note after receiving it.

Prepare for the event. See if you want to meet anyone in particular at the networking event by researching the people attending. You should then prepare several questions in advance about the person's career, so you will be prepared. You can ask event organizers to see if lawyers practicing in your preferred field will attend networking events by asking schools that share attendee lists.

Put yourself out there. Sure, it is easier said than done. Despite these differences, you are all attending these events to network. Feel free to speak your mind! See if you can start a conversation with people who are alone. The possibility of meeting someone, learning something new, and exploring ways to benefit both of you from the meeting is always possible.

Don'ts

Do. Not. Ask. For. A. Job. Networking events are different from job fairs. Establish professional relationships, gather information for your career strategy plan, and make valuable contacts.

Do not bring your rsum to networking events (unless specifically instructed). Instead, collect business

cards or email addresses so you can follow up later.

Do not be afraid to ask "dumb" questions. You are not expected to know everything about the law! For example, if you are chatting with a corporate lawyer and you are unfamiliar with the practice, a simple question like "What is your job like?" is a great way to start a conversation.

Do not think of it as "schmoozing"! Attorneys love to stand and share their stories. You are giving them the opportunity to engage. Moreover, keep in mind that the lawyers attending these networking events know what it was like to be a student themselves - they want to help you!

Networking Etiquette Basics

These networking tips for law students would be appreciated by Miss Manners:

You should introduce yourself and share relevant information, such as your year in school, legal interests, work experience, and student associations and memberships.

Remember to shake hands firmly (but not too tightly). Eye contact is important. Smile.

Make sure you have a few thoughtful questions prepared to get the conversation started (see below for suggestions).

Listen--really listen.

Keep an eye on the time. It is best not to talk with someone for longer than five minutes if there are other people waiting to speak to them.

You can ask your conversation partner for their business card at the end of your conversation. The next step is up to you, at which point your contact information can be shared.

Thank the individual for their time.

See Also:

[Getting Referrals from Powerful People \(We All Know Someone\)](#)

Sample Networking Questions

You should ask questions that fit your contact's experience, your career goals, and even the tone of the networking event, but these basic questions are a good starting point for law students.

What is a typical workday for you?

What types of cases/projects are you currently working on?

How is what I am learning in school different from what it will be like practicing?

What does a [practice area] lawyer do?

How did you become a [practice area] attorney?

If I am interested in [practice area], what can I do to make myself an attractive candidate for employment by the time I graduate?

Can you recommend any professional organizations that might be useful for someone interested in [practice area] law?

How did you get your first job after school?

Did you work while you were a law student? Where? How did it help you along your current career path?

My practical experiences in school include [examples such as internships, research, pro bono, etc.]. How do you think that will impact my career trajectory?

How did you find your firm/company? What do they look for in attorneys?

Are grades important in securing my first position after school?

Follow Up

The most important thing is to follow up, regardless of how you met someone, whether it was on social media or at a virtual conference. Meet with the person or call them one-on-one, so that you can learn everything there is to know about them. It is even possible to be creative - send a gift certificate for a meal delivery service and invite them for a virtual lunch.

The key to following up is not continuously pitching your services - sleazy salespeople do that. Staying in

touch with someone means doing so in a way that will benefit the two of you.
 Introduce them to a potential client for their business,
 Provide information to them that they need,
 Send an article that is of interest to them,
 Invite them to a webinar or a different
 virtual networking event in which they would be interested.

As a side note, you should also contact your current and former clients and renew your relationship. Contact them personally and see if you can lend a listening ear to see how they are dealing with the pandemic. Throughout your career, your clients (both past and present) aspire to know that your attention goes beyond a billable hour.

Guide to Networking Events in a Virtual World

March 2020 marked the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. The United States, Europe, Asia, and the rest of the world are affected. All networking events, conferences, lunches, golf events, and happy hours were no longer available to employees since they were not permitted to leave their houses unless they were "essential workers."

Attorneys have been attending live networking events, conferences, or meeting one-on-one as their only business development activities. Many did not know what to do when they lost access to the in-person world as a result of working from home. Therefore, they acted like many of us who do nothing when we are unsure.

Networking Is a Skill

For all of the lawyers who hate networking because they have not been successful at it, this is a great fact: networking is a skill.

In other words, this is a skill that can be learned. Those who are already fairly successful at it can become even better with practice. It is important to note that this definition does not address the fact that skills can only be mastered through deliberate, focused practice.

However, how can you practice if you cannot attend networking events in person? This is the biggest networking misconception there is. It is not mandatory to attend networking events in person, such as coffee, luncheons, golf tournaments, etc., if you want to network. In general, people think of networking as large events where everyone gives each other business cards to start new business relationships between them.

When you meet with another person - even one-on-one - you are networking. A meeting could take place in person or online through social networking sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, etc. Meetings can also be conducted via telephone or online.

Establishing relationships and then leveraging those relationships into opportunities is the art of networking.

Regardless of the type of law you practice, regardless of the position, you hold within your firm, whether you are a managing partner, a midlevel attorney, or an Associate, if you cannot leave the house for networking, you are harming your business development efforts.

Virtual Networking Events

A virtual networking event and industry conference are replacing in-person networking since the coronavirus pandemic began. It involves events that take place on a variety of platforms, such as Zoom, Gmail, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Go-to-Meeting, Teoh, Remo, and a number of other platforms that are constantly emerging.

These events can be found online or by asking your colleagues. You can search for virtual networking

groups on Linked In using its search function. There may be virtual networking events offered by your industry associations. You can check with them. There are thousands of virtual networking events available to attend on Event Brite and Meetup.com. By inviting others to attend your networking events, you can talk about how to grow your various businesses.

For example, if you are in a larger firm that has different practice areas, then ask a few of your co-workers to meet, one from each practice area, at least once per month (but preferably once a week as you will find you will grow your respective books of business faster), to discuss business development ideas, which of your clients may need the others' services and vice versa, and just to encourage each other.

A number of industry conferences are also being held virtually. There will also be keynotes, and attendees will have the opportunity to talk to vendors and other attendees. In some cases, networking can be conducted while attending these events, although it does not reach the level of meeting someone in person to chat.

What is a Law Firm Network?

A law firm network (law firm association or legal network) is an association of independent law firms. Similar to a professional accounting network, this network is one type of professional service network. The purpose of the common purpose is to extend the resources available to each member so that they can better serve their clients. Prominent primarily law firm networks include CICERO League of International Lawyers, First Law International, Alliot Group (multidisciplinary), Lex Mundi, WSG - World Services Group (multidisciplinary), TerraLex, Meritas (law), Multilaw, The Network of Trial Law Firms, Inc., the State Capital Group, and Pacific Rim Advisory Council. The largest networks have more than 10,000 attorneys located in hundreds of offices worldwide.

The firms who are part of the networks may be formally or informally linked to one another depending upon the purpose of the network.

Conclusion

Get rid of the idea of selling (or pitching your services) and start finding ways to continue to build relationships with your former, current, and prospective clients. Relationships are the key to Rainmaking Success. Nothing generates relationships more than networking - whether it is one-on-one, at a large event, or online.

See Also:

[How Attorneys Can Network: Why Networking is Essential to Attorney Success](#)
[Using Social Networking in Your Job Search](#)
[Top 9 Ways For Any Attorney To Generate a Huge Book of Business](#)
[Take Small Actions and Meet Others](#)
[How Attorneys and Law Students Can Use Networking to Find Legal Positions](#)
[Why Networking Is Essential to Your Success as an Attorney](#)
[10 Ways to Reciprocate in Networking](#)
[Is Your Networking Working](#)
[Dating and Networking Etiquette](#)
[Get a Job Through Networking](#)