

BEST PRACTICES

FOR DEVELOPING

YOUR

PROFESSIONAL

NETWORK

Service relations Alumni de l'Université de Strasbourg


From networking to professional cooperation



Adopt a positive attitude

BEFORE INTRODUCING YOURSELF TO SOMEONE, YOU NEED TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE!

With neither arrogance nor modesty, **take a look back at your career** to identify the highlights, experiences and acquired skills that made you a professional today. Once you have clearly identified your knowledge, expertise, and interpersonal skills, you can define what is known as your **"personal branding"**. The idea is not to be a product for sale but rather a personality offering quality services, ideas, and values, whether or not you are currently in business. This way, you will go forward with confidence and with the right mindset to **"give and/or receive"** opportunities.

 *Anna obtained her Master's degree at the University of Strasbourg 3 years ago. After some initial work experience and a few readings, she is getting better and better at identifying which speciality and type of structure she wants to pursue. She has established a common thread in her early career, and her social network profile is detailed and consistent.*


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welcometothejungle.com

Learn to cleverly connect

IF YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE, YOU ALSO KNOW WHERE YOU WANT TO GO AND WHERE YOU DON'T!

If you know who you are, you also know where you want to go and where you don't! Sure, there might be gut feelings, "professional crushes" and wrong turns, but **setting your goals** is probably the best way to achieve them. And you cannot do it alone: you must be surrounded by the right people, not by quantity but rather by the **quality of the relationships you establish, whether they already exist or are hoped for**. Start by **doing some research** to draw up a list of potential contacts. No need to hire a detective, the internet abounds with information; however, remember to be specific (press article, business profile, organisational chart, etc.). Sometimes all you need to do is look at the people around you, because we all have networks and the bridges that go with them: family, friends, communities, sports, clubs, schools, etc. After that, simply **dare** to contact those people who can help you achieve your goal. Easier said than done? Not if you're well prepared! Just write down the questions you need answers to, put yourself in the shoes of the person who is going to receive them and your approach will adapt accordingly. Don't forget to be yourself - authenticity is always appreciated and generosity is a must! If you want to take things a step further, feel free to ask your interlocutor if they know of anyone who might be willing to answer your questions and if they would agree to put you in touch with them.

alumni.unistra.fr → **annuaire**
linkedin.com

 *Anna needs to feel confident about her choices and ambitions. As she types in a few targeted keywords, she comes across the profile of Sarah, who has a very inspiring career path. She would like to talk to her, so she sends her the following message:*

Hello, I've just graduated from the University of Strasbourg like you and I'm very impressed by your career path. You've worked in different types of companies (SMEs, multinationals), so diversified! It can't have been easy to adapt each time.

I have recently been thinking a lot about it, would you be so kind to spare me a few minutes over the phone this week? Have a nice day.

At the end of their meeting, Anna asked Sarah if she could recommend other professionals to contact in order to define her project and develop her network; this is how she met Julien, then Manuel and finally Amina, her current colleague.

Get actively involved in events

EXCHANGING IDEAS ONLINE IS GREAT, BUT MEETING UP IN PERSON IS EVEN BETTER!

When we talk about networking, we're talking about human relationships - more or less intense - that need all 5 senses to thrive. And there's no better way to do that than through an event! Whether scheduled or impromptu, it's always a valuable opportunity to **show face-to-face** who you are. To be best prepared, draw up your **"elevator pitch"**, a sort of mini-presentation of yourself in the style of a dynamic start-up! As for the "fear of the unknown", don't be afraid to bring someone with you to a conference, for example, but make sure you don't stay glued to your partner all night; in the course of an evening, you can meet and talk to approximately 5 people, so you'd be foolish to miss out - it's a great opportunity to **open your mind** rather than staying in your own circle. To achieve this, learn to master the art of the **"smart talk"**: start off with an element of the shared context (do something more original than the weather forecast, talk about a specific topic from the conference, for example) and then enrich the exchange with relevant questions and active listening so that you can build a relationship. And don't forget to ask for their contact information!

 *Anna invited Sarah to attend a business conference organised as part of a forum in their town. They meet up and Sarah comes along with her colleague; together they talk about the day-to-day aspects of their job and the conversation carries on with two other people sitting next to them. Anna makes sure to hand out her business card and receive those of her new acquaintances.*

alumni.unistra.fr → **événements**

Cultivate your relationships

A PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP IS LIKE ANYTHING ELSE: FOR IT TO LAST, YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER TO NURTURE IT!

People are usually flattered to talk about themselves, but you'll get little or nothing out of them straight away. Other people's trust must be earned, just as yours is, which is why you need to **focus on the long term**. Now that you've taken the time to prepare, make sure you also adapt to your interlocutors' pace and timing, which may differ from your own - it's all a question of perception. There are plenty of **opportunities** to get in touch: greetings, birthdays, social or personal news... Sometimes relationships break down, and that's something you have to accept. But **regular** interaction also shows your sincerity and **perseverance** in your objectives, which makes us even more eager to help you!

 *Sarah offered to help Anna with her job applications, which she gladly accepted. She now has a new job that matches her aspirations. The two have lunch together once every three months to share their news and updates. Anna was recently doing an internship abroad, and she's going to give him some advice by videoconference.*

Join the mentoring program

COUNTING ON THE STRENGTH OF A NETWORK... THAT'S WHAT COUNTS!

Being a part of the university community throughout your life is important, as it gives you a real opportunity to create contact with other Alumni. It's a **tremendous boost** when you need expert advice from time to time, or the chance to share your experience with someone who can provide ongoing support. And sharing your knowledge and network is the best sign of professionalism!

"I really wanted to thank you, «godmother», for all your help, you've really helped me on a professional level but above all to regain confidence in myself and my potential when things weren't going so well. If we get the chance, I hope we'll meet again."

MASTER'S STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

"It's really great to meet people like you when you arrive in a new place and have to rebuild your network. I hope that in a few years I too will be able to help newcomers to Strasbourg!"

TESTIMONIAL FROM A SENIOR GRADUATE

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Best practices for developing your professional network

FROM NETWORKING TO PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION

Whether you are a fresh graduate or a seasoned professional, introvert or extrovert, **networking is for everyone!** And why is that? Because it undeniably **generates opportunities**: by diversifying your contacts, broadening your areas of knowledge, and sharing your projects, you will develop a collective intelligence that will lead to enriching experiences and growth outside your comfort zone. And to help you get off to a good start, the **Alumni Network Service** of the **University of Strasbourg**, with its **10 years of expertise**, will guide you through these **essential steps**.

So?

ARE YOU READY
TO ENTER THE
VIRTUOUS CIRCLE OF
NETWORKING?

Check out the series of **tutorial videos** and **how-to articles** on  **alumni.unistra.fr** that will help you get started and launch your professional network!

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