

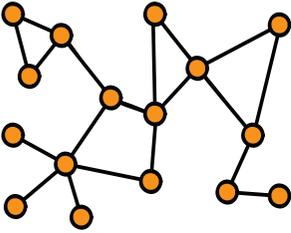


PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

Building and leveraging professional networks both online and offline can help young people explore, discover and create career paths of their choice.

Quest Alliance is a non-profit trust working to bridge the education and skills divide by enabling self-learning for young people 10-35 years old.

Quest is fuelled by research, strengthened by partnerships and driven by innovation and technology.



How is networking useful for learners?

Making the transition from school to work can be overwhelming for young people and being part of a professional network helps navigate this transition. Networking is also useful for experienced professionals looking to upskill themselves or discover new work opportunities.

What are some things to keep in mind in this process?

- **Begin with known acquaintances.** Whether networking offline or online, a good place to start building your network is to reach out to people you already know. If you are actively looking for opportunities, this can be a great way start generating leads.
- **Keep your professional profile updated.** If you are on a platform liked LinkedIn, ensure that your profile is updated and customized to reflect your current

interests and goals. This way, if someone chances upon your profile, they have enough information to go on to connect with you if they choose.

- **Follow groups and companies you are interested in.** Joining groups and following company pages that you are interested in are great ways of meeting people with similar interests and staying updated on professional news relevant to you.
- **Explore features offered online.** LinkedIn offers great ways of showcasing your skills and expertise through features like endorsements and recommendations. Invest some time in exploring professional networking platforms to fully utilize all they offer.
- **Think beyond your own acquaintances.** Once you have an initial circle of professionals in your network, don't limit yourself to people only in your field, or who you know. Interesting opportunities constantly come up across industries and fields and being connected gives you a great source for such opportunities.
- **Prepare and research when meeting your connections.** While building your network, you will get to meet professionals and discuss ideas with them. If setting up

such meetings, do research on their work and backgrounds and be clear about your own goals to have a more meaningful dialogue.

- **Networking is not transactional.** One important thing to keep in mind is that networking is not about using people to get what you want. The focus should be on building a network for it to be a source of learning, exploring, and both giving and taking of ideas and experience.
- **Don't be intimidated.** Platforms like LinkedIn and events like conferences and conventions are a great place to meet people who may be influential and renowned in their fields. Use these opportunities to connect with people with your questions and ideas. More often than not people like being approached with opportunities to discuss their work.
- **Be respectful.** When reaching out to professionals, be respectful of their time. Being clear about what you want to discuss and doing some research beforehand can help keep your meetings and conversations to the point and help create a fruitful experience for both parties.

Is there an example of professional networking helping young people?

QUEST Alliance has partnered with LinkedIn for Good to introduce the LinkedIn platform among underserved youth who are being trained in employability skills to help them connect with careers of their choice.

Watch this video to hear a trainee discuss her experience of discovering this platform

Sneha: Experiencing LinkedIn



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apkowzp_ruE

What are the value propositions to different learners from this tool?

Young Learners:

- Exploring work opportunities to help plan their careers.
- Connecting to experienced professionals and gain industry insights from them.
- Connecting with peers and understanding their various career paths.
- Highlighting volunteer experience, certifications and qualifications to potential employers even when they are just out of college.

Experienced Professionals:

- Discovering opportunities for professional development.
- Staying updated on industry news.
- Finding opportunities for reimagining and changing career paths.

“Talent is equally distributed in the world.
Opportunity is not.”

- **Maryam Ghofraniha, LinkedIn for Good**

“We shouldn’t underestimate the power of our extended network. Over 90% of new jobs today are found through people we know.”

- Maryam Ghofraniha, LinkedIn for Good



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