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# PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

A guide for international students

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# Professional Networking

## A guide for international students

A professional network is important to have better chances on the job market. Here we would like to provide you with tips and advice to help you build a professional network while you are still studying.

### Overview of contents:

#### A professional network - What is it and are there benefits?

- + Advantages of a professional network
- + Guiding questions before starting

#### Possibilities of networking

- + Making contacts during studies
- + Networking at events and functions

#### Online networking via XING, LinkedIn and Co.

#### One-on-one networking - mentoring, job shadowing, strategic coffee dates

- + Professional mentoring and job shadowing programs
- + Strategic Coffee Drinking/Never Eat or Lunch Alone

#### Link collection: Further tips for professional networking

## A professional network - definition, advantages and guiding questions

**Building a professional network is not difficult, but it requires commitment. We all have basic networks and personal relationships:** Contacts who belong to your network are, for example, your friends and fellow students. Your network also includes colleagues from part-time jobs or internships and people you have met through volunteer work, for example. All of these people can help you in different ways with your professional orientation during your studies and your career entry after graduation. In addition, however, you should also proactively form new contacts in order to expand your network.

### Advantages of a professional network?

A professional network can be helpful in several ways. **It serves to share knowledge and thrives on mutual help.** This means that you can obtain helpful information from the people in your network and pass it on. For example, when it comes to jobs: Is there a position posted somewhere right now that is interesting? Is there a position that needs to be filled but is not officially advertised? Does someone know a person who works in a similar field in which you would like to work?

The people in your network can advise you or give you feedback. How did they get a job in their favored career field? What do you need to consider when applying? What is the daily work routine like? In the same way, you can and should share your own knowledge and experience and be useful to your contacts.

This will create professional advantages for you: Networks expand your knowledge and give you a better starting position for your job search through the support of your contacts.

### Tip - Online Lecture "Relationing":

Goethe University alumnus Dr. Stefan Söhngen describes such contact networks with the term "Relationing" - the establishment, maintenance and use of a stable network of relationships. This is interdisciplinary and based on trust, values and sustainability.

You can learn more about "Relationing" in his presentation for the Career Service of Goethe University (in German): [www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEh4gIp5TAw&t=1794s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEh4gIp5TAw&t=1794s)

## Guiding questions before you start

If you want to strategically build or expand your professional network, you should think about two guiding questions in advance:

### I. Which occupational fields, industries and activities are you interested in?

This consideration will help you build networks in a targeted manner and find the right contacts for you, rather than simply collecting as many contacts as possible. If you do not yet have a specific career field in mind, it is also possible to network with regard to specific subject areas that are of particular interest to you.

#### Practical tips for occupational fields

- + On the page "Was werden?" by the Career Service, you can discover industries, occupational fields and employers suitable for your subject (in German): [www.uni-frankfurt.de/95995714/Was\\_werden](http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/95995714/Was_werden)
- + Take advantage of the career coaching offered by the Career Service to become aware of your competencies and goals: [www.uni-frankfurt.de/94784627/Individuelle\\_Beratung](http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/94784627/Individuelle_Beratung)
- + Some departments offer information about possible occupational fields after graduation on their homepage or through lectures.

### II. What professional, social competencies and potentials - skills, abilities, strengths, knowledge - do you possess, that you can use for your network?

3

A network thrives on mutual help, give and take. If you know your personal strengths and competencies, you can use them confidently in your network and when making new contacts.

#### Further links and tips:

- + The Career Service offers workshops on the topic of potential or competence assessment or analysis: [www.career.uni-frankfurt.de](http://www.career.uni-frankfurt.de)
- + Further information on **competence analysis** (in German): [karrierebibel.de/kompetenztest/](http://karrierebibel.de/kompetenztest/)
- + Further information on **potential analysis** (in German): [karrierebibel.de/potenzialanalyse/](http://karrierebibel.de/potenzialanalyse/)
- + How to recognize your potential (in German): [karrierebibel.de/potenziale-erkennen/](http://karrierebibel.de/potenziale-erkennen/)
- + Online potential analysis by Gepedu (German and English). You will receive a free basic evaluation after one or two days: [www.gepedu.de/potenzialanalyse](http://www.gepedu.de/potenzialanalyse) .
- + Explanation of the **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) Personality Test** for potential analysis (in German): [karrierebibel.de/mbti/](http://karrierebibel.de/mbti/)
- + Personality test based on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator in many different languages: [www.16personalities.com](http://www.16personalities.com)

## Networking opportunities

### Making contacts during your studies

**At university**, you interact with many people who can become part of your professional network. Your fellow students, for example, who will later work in similar or even the same professional fields. Do not consider them as competitors for your career entry, but rather as valuable contacts and providers of information for your career entry. It is advisable to form working and study groups with other students and to support each other already during your studies. You can also form career tandems with other students, where you support each other in the job search and application process and exchange information on career orientation.

**Internships and part-time jobs** not only provide important initial professional and practical experience. They also offer the opportunity to get to know people with similar professional interests and to establish initial contacts with interesting employers. Those who have already completed an internship in a company increase their attractiveness for potential employers. The activities underline the practical relevance of graduates.

For further information on internships and part-time jobs go on the Career Service website: [www.career.uni-frankfurt.de](http://www.career.uni-frankfurt.de).

**Volunteering** can help you build a network in addition to providing valuable experience. Whether in sports clubs or non-profit organizations, church congregations, district meeting places, cultural centers or immigrant associations, the possibilities are many. Scientific studies show that international students are better able to integrate and learn German through volunteer involvement. You will not necessarily meet people with the same professional background, but you will meet people who are willing to help and who can offer a perspective outside your professional environment. Often these people can in turn act as professional door openers.

Goethe University offers a service center ("Servicestelle Engagement") with information about volunteer engagement that you can turn to in order to find the volunteer activity that is right for you: [www.goethe-university-frankfurt.de/78551478/Volunteer Engagement Platform](http://www.goethe-university-frankfurt.de/78551478/Volunteer_Engagement_Platform)

**Better chances on the job market through volunteer engagement:** The economist Sebastian Koch has looked into the advantages of volunteering for one's own career start, as part of a scientific study and tells us about his findings in a short video lecture.

Watch the Video here: [www.uni-frankfurt.de/111197782/Kontakte kn%C3%BCpfen im Studium#a\\_b4db4fa5-b1fa43b9](http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/111197782/Kontakte_kn%C3%BCpfen_im_Studium#a_b4db4fa5-b1fa43b9)

## Networking at events

### Videotutorial “How to Network Effectively - Become a Pro in Building Working Nets for You”

Not sure how best to make contact with strangers and how to win them over for your network? In our three-part video course by networker and communications expert Anja Henningsmeyer, we give you practical tips and advice on how to make contacts and build sustainable professional networks. We then present the occasions on which you can put what you have learned into practice.

In part 1 (15 minutes) you will discover the decisive elements of preparing for networking events. Mind matters first: How to focus on commonalities, how to prepare a catchy self-introduction and some great conversational topics.

The second part of the networking tutorial (11 minutes) provides more tips on how to prepare for networking events, introduces ways to behave at events, and offers insight into the unwritten laws of networking.

Part 3 (8 minutes) shows how professional associations and networks will help you for your career, and how you maintain your network.

>> Watch the course here: [www.uni-frankfurt.de/111193989/Video\\_Tutorial\\_Netzwerken#a\\_2a356dc2-02cb2d49](http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/111193989/Video_Tutorial_Netzwerken#a_2a356dc2-02cb2d49)

5

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### Attending career fairs

Career fairs give you the opportunity to meet a variety of employers at one event and network with employees and recruiters. Students can find out about entry-level opportunities or present themselves with application documents.

The fairs will sometimes focus on a specific industry, on companies from the region or aim specifically at women. Numerous career fairs take place online, but still offer the typical elements of an on-site fair: virtual exhibitor halls, presentations and exchange. The advantage: networking from your own desk, no need to travel far.

The best way to find the right career fairs for you is to search the internet. You can find a list of events at Goethe University here:

>> Job fairs at Goethe University (in German): [www.uni-frankfurt.de/95951746/Jobmessen](http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/95951746/Jobmessen)

>> Matching Day (in German): [www.uni-frankfurt.de/95951998/Matching\\_Day](http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/95951998/Matching_Day)

## Apart from career fairs: Hackathons, barcamps, meetups

Hackathons, Barcamps, Meetups and similar events bring people together to share common interests, educate themselves, work collaboratively and develop innovations in a variety of settings. Therefore, they are a great way to expand your network.

**Hackathons and Barcamps:** not only for programmers! Hackathons and barcamps are all about finding creative solutions to problems, innovation and designing new products. Many of them aim at a broad target group with different professional backgrounds. Often, companies that use the event for recruiting and innovative input host hackathons. However, most importantly, these events offer the opportunity to try things out for a weekend, take on challenges, learn, and make new contacts. While hackathons start with a specific theme or problem, barcamps are rather open.

### Related links:

- + More information on hackathons (in German): [karrierebibel.de/hackathon/](http://karrierebibel.de/hackathon/)
- + Look for Hackathons via Internet search and here: [www.eventbrite.de/d/online/hackathon/](http://www.eventbrite.de/d/online/hackathon/) .
- + Medienkompass.de – “Was ist ein Barcamp?” (in German): [medienkompass.de/was-ist-ein-barcamp-und-wie-verhalte-ich-mich-dort/](http://medienkompass.de/was-ist-ein-barcamp-und-wie-verhalte-ich-mich-dort/)
- + Barcamps are announced here, among other places:
  - o Barcamps: [barcamp.de/](http://barcamp.de/)
  - o General overview list (in German): [www.barcamp-liste.de/](http://www.barcamp-liste.de/)

**Meetups, lectures or webinars** feature many different topics and are usually hosted by companies, associations or universities. There is usually a certain topic in the focus of the lecture but also room for exchange and conversations.

### Further links:

- + Meetup: [www.meetup.com/de](http://www.meetup.com/de)
- + Public lectures and lecture series at Goethe University: [aktuelles.uni-frankfurt.de/events/](http://aktuelles.uni-frankfurt.de/events/)
- + XING: [www.xing.com/events](http://www.xing.com/events)
- + Career events at Jobteaser: [www.jobteaser.com/de/events](http://www.jobteaser.com/de/events)

Of course, this list is not exhaustive. There are many other events and opportunities to make new contacts and expand your network.

## Online networking via Xing, LinkedIn and Co.

Professionally oriented digital networks and social media such as Xing and LinkedIn offer a useful overview of your own network and many opportunities for interaction. You can get in touch with potential employers, expand and maintain your contacts online. The decisive factor here is a meaningful and well-maintained profile.

After all, your personal profile on Xing, LinkedIn and the like is your virtual business card that tells your network what drives you and what skills you bring to the table. It is important that it is meaningful and well maintained. If it is kept up to date, you can further expand your network here and be found better yourself when others search specifically for certain skills and interests, for example.

### Practical tips to optimize your profile:

- + A professional-looking profile picture
- + Describe who you are, what you do and what you are passionate about
- + List your skills and competencies and what interests you
- + Use short concise descriptions
- + Be active: you can regularly comment on interesting posts or write articles yourself and get in touch with people you already know and new people you meet

The Career Service of Goethe University regularly offers courses on professional online networking: [www.uni-frankfurt.de/94784722/Workshops\\_und\\_Vortr%C3%A4ge](http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/94784722/Workshops_und_Vortr%C3%A4ge)

7

### Here you can find more tips on how to optimize your profile:

- + Bewerbung.com - XING Profil optimieren in nur 8 Schritten (in German): [bewerbung.com/xing-profil-optimieren/](http://bewerbung.com/xing-profil-optimieren/)
- + Karrierebibel.de – Xing Profil optimieren (in German): [karrierebibel.de/xing-profil-optimieren/](http://karrierebibel.de/xing-profil-optimieren/)
- + The Muse - The 31 Best LinkedIn Profile Tips for Job Seekers: [www.themuse.com/advice/linkedin-profile-tips](http://www.themuse.com/advice/linkedin-profile-tips)

**Podcast Tip:** The “Berufsoptimierer” Podcast "Social Media für die Jobsuche und für das Eigenmarketing" (in German): [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qqli657z\\_aw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qqli657z_aw)

**Bumble App for Networking:** Bumble is an app that offers a professional networking feature in addition to online dating and friendship search: Bumble Bizz. In this way, Bumble offers another way to get in touch for professional exchange via social media. For example, for strategic appointments for coffee drinking (see also the section "Strategic coffee drinking").

Further information: [bumble.com/bizz](http://bumble.com/bizz)



## One-on-one networking - Mentoring, job-shadowing, strategic coffee drinking

### Utilize professional mentoring/job shadowing programs

Some universities offer mentoring programs or job shadowing with alumni who can either mentor you for a while and support you in your career orientation or you can look over their shoulder at work for a day as a "shadow". In this way, you will gain an insight into specific fields of work and can benefit from the experience of people who have already entered working life. In addition, the mentors may grant you access to their own networks.

Job shadowing at Goethe-University: [www.uni-frankfurt.de/96295526/Job\\_Shadowing](http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/96295526/Job_Shadowing)

### Find a mentor yourself

No program = no mentor? Not necessarily: you can also look for a mentor yourself. Here are some tips on how to do that:

- + Karrierebibel "Mentorensuche" (in German): [karrierebibel.de/mentorensuche/](http://karrierebibel.de/mentorensuche/)
- + Edition F "Wie man die richtige Mentorin für sich findet" (in German): [editionf.com/mentor-mentee-ratgeber/](http://editionf.com/mentor-mentee-ratgeber/)
- + Tip: attend University or alumni association events to meet graduates and potential mentors.

### "Strategic Coffee Drinking" or "Never Eat Alone"

The idea for this type of networking comes from the US-American Keith Ferrazzi, who explains in his book "Never eat alone!" how to build a large, resilient network. **The basic principle:** consciously meet new people every day. Whether over coffee or lunch, both are possible. But it's important to put some thought into it beforehand. Learn more in the following posts:

- + Podcast with Keith Ferrazzi as guest: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=X487g5sX-Uc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X487g5sX-Uc)
- + Book summary: Never Eat Alone: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1TVbpZvTY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1TVbpZvTY)
- + How systematic coffee drinking really works (Lars Hahn) (in German): [www.lvq.de/karriere-blog/artikel/arbeitsmarkt-verdeckter/wie-systematisch-kaffeetrinken-wirklich-funktioniert-netzwerken.html](http://www.lvq.de/karriere-blog/artikel/arbeitsmarkt-verdeckter/wie-systematisch-kaffeetrinken-wirklich-funktioniert-netzwerken.html)
- + Blog post #neverlunchalone by Ute Blindert with her "5 commandments" for success (in German): [www.uteblindert.de/blog/never-lunch-alone/](http://www.uteblindert.de/blog/never-lunch-alone/)

## Link collection: Further tips for professional networking

Karrierebibel "Netzwerken richtig lernen" (in German): [karrierebibel.de/netzwerken-richtig-lernen/](https://www.karrierebibel.de/netzwerken-richtig-lernen/)

Absolventa "Networking für die Karriere und Privat" (in German):  
[www.absolventa.de/karriereguide/kommunikation/networking](https://www.absolventa.de/karriereguide/kommunikation/networking)

Jobmensa: „Networking für Studenten“ (in German): [magazin.jobmensa.de/total-vernetzt-networking-fuer-studenten/](https://magazin.jobmensa.de/total-vernetzt-networking-fuer-studenten/)

Podcast: Erfolgreich Netzwerken (in German): [podcasts.apple.com/de/podcast/erfolgreich-netzwerken/id944913199?l=de](https://podcasts.apple.com/de/podcast/erfolgreich-netzwerken/id944913199?l=de)

Podcast Karrierebooster Netzwerke(n) (in German): [www.uteblindert.de/blog/karrierebooster-netzwerken-startepisode/](https://www.uteblindert.de/blog/karrierebooster-netzwerken-startepisode/)

Edition F: Introvertiert und Netzwerken – wie ich meine Angst überwinden will (in German):  
[editionf.com/introvertiert-und-netzwerken-warum-mir-business-veranstaltungen-regelmaessig-schweissperlen-auf-die-stirn-treiben/](https://editionf.com/introvertiert-und-netzwerken-warum-mir-business-veranstaltungen-regelmaessig-schweissperlen-auf-die-stirn-treiben/)

Edition F: Netzwerken für Normalos – kann das womöglich sogar Spaß machen? (in German)  
[editionf.com/tipps-netzwerken-spass-macht-networking-fuer-normalos/](https://editionf.com/tipps-netzwerken-spass-macht-networking-fuer-normalos/)

7 Practical Networking Tips for Germany: [blog.frankfurt-school.de/7-practical-networking-tips-germany/?lang=de#](https://blog.frankfurt-school.de/7-practical-networking-tips-germany/?lang=de#)