

# Mastering the art of networking

Praveen Bhatia and Daniela Korn explain how lawyers can benefit from networking and nurturing professional connections



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In today's fiercely competitive legal industry, networking has become a game-changer for ambitious lawyers. In fact, networking through personal and professional connections is frequently cited as a crucial factor in job acquisition. Building a strong and diverse professional network not only helps to bolster your reputation and exposure but also opens the door to countless opportunities.

An imperative tool for anyone looking to thrive and progress within their chosen sector, knowing how to nurture relationships and build your community is a skill we should all have. As well as advancing one's career prospects, it also creates a supportive community that can propel us forward professionally and personally.

## BENEFITS OF NETWORKING

Crucially, networking helps us build trust and credibility; such traits are essential in the legal sector. Networking enables lawyers to establish meaningful relationships with colleagues, clients and other professionals who can vouch for their skills and expertise.

Lawyers often become trusted advisers to their clients. To be a first point of contact, it is imperative that a lawyer can guide their client to the right advice they need, be it another lawyer in another field or jurisdiction or another type of expert. The broader the network, the better the chance of helping clients connect with the right person. An adviser who can help their clients grow and develop will always be highly valued.

In addition, effective networking can lead to referrals, ultimately increasing the number of potential clients and cases. Personal recommendations carry immense weight in the legal industry, and a strong network can produce a steady stream of quality referrals.

Moreover, newly qualified lawyers are not usually told about the importance of building a network. The focus, understandably, is on becoming a good lawyer. However, the truth is that in order to be a successful private practice lawyer, one needs both the legal skills and the support of a solid network.

And perhaps most importantly, it gives us access to insider knowledge. Networking provides lawyers with invaluable insights into the legal landscape. A well-connected

network keeps lawyers informed and ahead of the curve, from staying updated on industry trends to gaining access to exclusive expertise about potential job openings or emerging practice areas.

Strong and close networks will inevitably become a source of knowledge, be that legal updates, interesting matters they come across or even sector-specific information. Lawyers who can tap into broad knowledge bases are privileged as it helps refine their skill set and value to their clients.

## LEVELLING UP NETWORKING

Make it a priority to attend conferences, seminars, and workshops where you can meet professionals from different spheres of one's own relevant industry and the legal field. Networking is all about making a lasting impression.

To effectively network in the legal sector, we must build a strong personal brand that showcases our expertise, skills and unique perspectives. Engaging in conversations and exchanging ideas with like-minded individuals can foster connections and create opportunities.

Using social media platforms, professional networking sites and legal forums to expand one's network beyond geographical limitations is also essential. Engaging in discussions, offering expertise and connecting with influential figures in the industry can significantly boost a lawyer's profile. LinkedIn is widely recognised as an essential platform for building networks. Its key advantage lies in enabling users to stay informed about others' knowledge and developments while also sharing their own insights.

Become a master in giving before you take. Authentic networking is about building relationships based on mutual support and trust. Instead of focusing solely on self-promotion, one can seek ways to add value to their network. It's imperative to offer assistance, provide referrals to others and share valuable resources. By building a reputation as a giver, one can naturally attract reciprocity from their network.

Mentorship also plays a pivotal role in career progression. Connecting with influential people within one's work sector



**Diversity and inclusion initiatives can also help build resilient networks and foster a community that supports each other's growth**

can provide guidance, support, and knowledge to navigate the challenges of climbing the professional ladder. Seek out mentors who share similar career aspirations, values, and ambitions. Engage in mentorship programs, join mentorship circles, or personally reach out to inspiring individuals for advice and guidance. And of course, upon one's own career development, giving back and helping mentor the next generation of up-and-coming lawyers becomes an option.

Engage in pro bono work when the opportunity arises. Participating in pro bono activities not only benefits those in need but also provides a chance to meet like-minded professionals who share a similar passion for making a positive impact. Networking within the pro bono sector can enhance a lawyer's reputation and lead to professional collaborations in the future.

### **MAINTAINING CONNECTIONS**

Networking isn't a one-time event; it's an ongoing commitment. To achieve this, one can regularly nurture relationships by reaching out, offering assistance and informing their circle about professional development. Remember, quality is just as important as quantity when it comes to networking.

Networking should not be limited to connecting solely with like-minded individuals. It can also include embracing diversity and actively seeking opportunities to network with professionals from different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. Indeed, engaging in conversations with individuals who challenge traditionally-held beliefs and perceptions can broaden one's horizons and enhance their understanding of the legal sector from varying angles. Diversity and inclusion initiatives can also help build resilient networks and foster a community that supports each other's growth.

By actively building valuable connections, developing a strong personal brand, embracing diversity, and giving back to their network, lawyers can unlock limitless opportunities for career advancement.

Networking is a powerful tool that propels lawyers toward unparalleled professional growth. By investing time and effort into building and nurturing relationships, lawyers can expand their visibility, access new business opportunities and gain a competitive edge in the legal industry. Embrace networking as an integral part of one's career journey and let it open doors to a world of possibilities. 