

The most valuable career skill? Knowing who to call.

8 Ways

Behind-the-Scenes professionals build networks that solve real problems.

1

Seek diverse perspectives

Example: A risk analyst created a monthly virtual coffee with peers from three competitor companies. When faced with implementing a new regulatory requirement, she had three implementation approaches to consider instead of starting from scratch.

2

Join a functional community

Example: A lone data scientist at a small lender joined an industry-specific data community. When she needed to build a fraud detection model, she had immediate access to best practices rather than learning through trial and error.

3

Develop relationships before you need them

Example: A compliance leader regularly connected with IT and operations colleagues outside of projects. When her team needed an urgent system change to meet a regulatory deadline, these contacts prioritized her request and implemented it within hours—not the standard two-week timeline. Her existing relationships turned a potential compliance violation into a successful save.

4

Build a cross-functional brain trust

Example: An underwriter intentionally built relationships with colleagues in collections and customer service. Their frontline insights about customer hardship scenarios helped him refine underwriting models to better predict successful customers.



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5

Leverage collective troubleshooting

Example: When Diana encountered an unusual credit bureau data issue, rather than spending days analyzing it alone, she reached out to her network. Someone had seen the pattern before and immediately identified the source, saving her team days of investigation.

6

Create a collaborative analysis group

Example: Elena, outside counsel for several financial institutions, started a monthly virtual roundtable with other attorneys after the NYDFS released complex new cybersecurity regulations. The group collaboratively interpreted ambiguous requirements and shared implementation approaches. This collaboration saved each attorney days of individual analysis and gave their clients more consistent, confident guidance.

7

Maintain external professional connections

Example: Despite being an introvert, Aisha attended one industry conference annually and maintained those relationships virtually. When her company needed to replace a vendor quickly, she had immediate recommendations and introductions from trusted sources.

8

Create a personal support system

Example: Maya, a leader juggling work with eldercare responsibilities, created a monthly lunch group for peers who were also caring for aging parents.

The group shares elder law attorney recommendations, insurance navigation tips, remote monitoring tech solutions, and more. When Maya needed to make quick decisions during her mother's sudden hospitalization, she had immediate access to vetted resources, saving her precious time and reducing stress during a critical period.



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